

Knox County IL CEO Program

2024/2025

**6TH
YEAR**

over 50 students
from 6 area
school districts

1,000 hours at
site visits
and
speakers



FACILITATOR

Jeremy Kleine

Country Financial
Legion Baseball Head Coach

find us at:

WWW.KNOXCOUNTYILCEO.COM

Letter from the Facilitator

Heeyyy CEO!,
Year #6 was a rousing success!
Year #1 as the Facilitator for me was a true honor. The unbelievable amount of support this Program has from all involved was a pure blessing to see in action. All of the credit for the success of this class is due to the CEOs first and foremost, but also to the Team behind the scenes including Ken Springer and Abby Colvin, the Board Members and previous Facilitators (Tiffany Springer and Scott Cramer) sharing their wisdom and guiding me through my first year. I can't thank you all enough for your support!

The 11 CEO Students we had that completed the Program met the ultimate goal of being Hardworking, Trustworthy and Motivated which allowed them to become Learners, Owners, Creators, Communicators and Connectors. They each embraced the idea of "Becoming comfortable being uncomfortable." Seeing the growth of each CEO over the course of the academic year through the 80+ site visits and guest speakers was an awesome journey to be a part of. I could not have asked for a better group of willing students to share this experience with. They will share a special place in my heart and memories for the rest of my days.

To the Business Owners that shared their stories of success and failures, I thank you very much. Even though I grew up in Galesburg, I didn't realize the amount of highly successful Entrepreneurs we have in Knox County. Not only did the CEOs learn a great deal from each of you, I did as well.

To the Mentors for each CEO, thank you for investing your time and talents and pouring into the lives of these young people. From listening to the CEOs talk about their interactions with you, it was easy to know that you each had a huge impact on your student.

For all involved, feel proud of what this Program stands for and introduces to these future CEOs. It is one of the most impactful programs I have ever seen and been involved in, and it will lead to great things for the CEOs and the Knox County community.

To those of you reading this report, I look forward to continued interactions and support of the Program. None of this would be possible without **you**.



Meet & Greet Event



Class Pictures



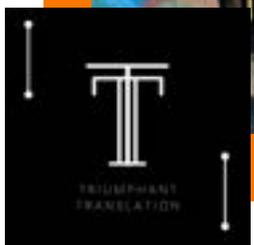
My name is Lizzie Aigner, I am 16 years old, and I am a Junior at Knoxville High School. In school, I am in drama, book club, student council, and orchestra. I have played the violin for seven years and have played the clarinet for four years. I have been an Irish Dancer for over 10 years. I love baking, reading, and being with my family. In the summer, I also swim and kayak. After high school, I am planning on going to college to be a food stylist or a culinary chemist. I applied to CEO because I wanted to learn business firsthand, work on my social skills, and become a better version of myself. I am so excited to see how much I learn and change throughout this experience!



My name is Raylee Donaldson. I am 16 years old, and I am a Junior at Knoxville High School. I am the class president of my Student Council, and I am also involved in Drama Club, Scholastic Bowl, Book Club and Orchestra. I have played the violin for seven years, and I have played the piano for ten years. I enjoy making jewelry and sewing in my spare time, and I plan to go to college to major in Business and Fashion Design. I have started a small business making jewelry, and I am planning to expand it and create an online platform as well.

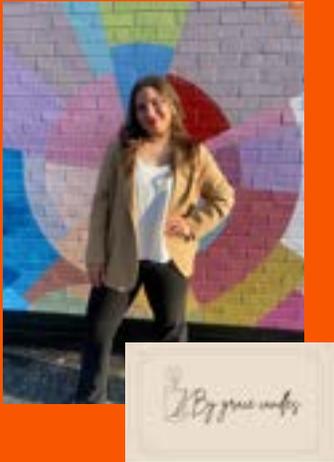


Hello, my name is Triomphe Mulata. I am 17 years old and a junior at Galesburg Jr/Sr High School. I am a part of the George Washington Gale Scholars, the French National Honor Society, Student Council, and Trio Upward Bound. A little bit about myself: I was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I spent the majority of my childhood. I later moved to the US in the fourth grade. The big change was definitely scary, but I had great help and an amazing teacher to guide me in a way to be a successful student. I eventually learned English and can now speak three languages fluently: French, Lingala (with a somewhat strong accent), and, of course, English. After high school, I want to apply to a four-year university and major in Architectural Engineering while minoring in French. For as long as I can remember, I've always wanted to become an architect, and one of my goals is to open my own architectural firm.





Hi, my name is Cora Johnson, and I am a Junior at Galesburg Junior Senior High School! I am involved in varsity basketball and varsity golf. I am very passionate and committed to my sports, I always want to improve and get better. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my friends and family, as well as crocheting and sewing. Outside of school I work in the Golf Shop at Lake Bracken, I have been working there for two years and enjoy meeting new people. I also started a crocheting class for people in my community. I love teaching people passion. I applied to the CEO program because I wanted to learn more about what the business world is like. I knew people in the program and they highly recommend this class. I wanted to meet new people and understand how business works more. Through this class I hope to start and grow my business more. I sell my crochet creations now but I want to turn it into a business. Through this class I know I will learn how to and get more connections from the people of Galesburg.



Hello my name is Mia Lujan, I am 17 years old. I am currently a senior at Abingdon-Avon High School. I am involved in Varsity Volleyball and am currently the president of my FFA chapter. In my free time, I love to go thrift shopping go to animal shelters, and work out and eat healthy food. During school, I help out with kindergarten children and help and inspire them! I'm very passionate about helping people and being a leader. After High School I plan on attending college I want to become an EMT/paramedic, it's a passion of mine to make the world a better place and to help anyone and everyone I can. I applied for the Knox County CEO program to enhance my knowledge of entrepreneurship, I'm excited to start experiencing the business world and to grow within it! I can't wait to learn and meet new people, within this program!



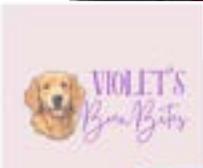
My name is Isabella Glomchit. I'm 16 years old and a Junior at Galesburg High School. In school I'm involved in the Galesburg High School Marching Streaks, Varsity Girl's Swim and Dive, Varsity Basketball Cheerleading, and Wind Symphony Concert Band. I'm also a camp counselor for my youth group in the summer and a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I've been playing the clarinet for 6 years and the piano for 7 years. During my free time, I love to read and write. When I was younger I was involved in dance, Student Council, and The Science club. After High School, I plan to go to a two-year college and then transfer over to a four-year at BYU Provo, Utah. I plan to study medicine, business, and psychology. I applied for the CEO Program to grow in my knowledge of business, to get better at public speaking, and to get hands-on experience. I'm so excited to see where this program takes me as a person individually, in my business, and in my development of the subject business!



Hi, my name is Eleazar Zuniga. I am a Galesburg high school student. I am 18 years old. I am involved in the trio program and the Knox County, Illinois, CEO program. I joined your program because, all my life, I've known that I am a great leader, I just didn't know how to apply it in my life. The CEO is helping me achieve my goals and expectations for your class. This class has given me the opportunity to see other parts of the community, the part that works, the part that grows. This awesome program has helped me overcome my fear of public speaking. So far, I have tried to be the best version of myself.



Hello! My name is Teagan Fineran and I'm a junior at ROWVA High School. I love being involved and staying busy. Within school, I'm a class officer, student council representative, and an officer in ROWVA's FCCLA. I'm the digital media coordinator for my school's FCCLA and just attended Nationals, this summer. I took part in a STAR event (Students Taking Action with Recognition) with two other members and we reached Nationals, where we placed 8th in our category! Once I heard about the CEO Program, I knew I would love to experience this opportunity. I'm so excited to grow and better myself through this program! I can't wait to see what opportunities are to come.



Hi, my name is Madison Springer! I am currently a senior at Galesburg Junior Senior High School. I am involved in Fellowship of Christian Athletes, National Honors Society, Varsity Girls Tennis, and Varsity Boys Tennis. In my free time I love to bake, spend time outside, hang out with my family and friends, go to my Church, and go get coffee. I love serving at my church, Bethel Baptist Church. I serve on Sunday mornings with preschoolers and elementary aged kids, I am a leader for 6th grade girls, and serve in Vacation Bible School. Serving is one of the most important things in my life, so that's what I spend most of my time doing. After high school, I plan on going to a four year college to double major in finance and marketing, with a minor in either Spanish or culinary arts. I am looking forward to the experiences and opportunities the CEO Program provides and am looking forward to a great year!





My name is Dakota Hawk. I am a senior at Galesburg Christian School. I Play soccer, basketball, and baseball. I plan on attending college in the fall of '24 at St. Ambrose University for Sports Management. I became interested in the CEO Program under a teacher's and fellow classmates' guidance.



Hi, I'm Abigail Cain, but call me Abbie! I'm a junior at Rowva High School and, along with the CEO Class, am involved in NHS, volleyball, track, FFA, student council, and many more. I became interested in CEO when I watched my brother complete the program in 2019. I saw how much he learned and was immediately interested. Then, in 2021, my sister also took the program. Watching them learn so much about entrepreneurship has nothing short of inspired me to join the program myself. This class was the perfect opportunity for them, and the perfect opportunity for me to learn how to efficiently run my own small business. Although I don't know what lies ahead, I know this class will do an amazing job of preparing me for whatever that is.



CEO Photoshoot | Cora and Class Speaking at Sunrise Rotary | Site Visit to Yemm Automotive
 Dakota Hawk, Galesburg Christian School | The Class with Ryan Follis at Regional CEO Conference
 Class with Ken Springer at KCAP | Mia Lujan, Abingdon-Avon High School | Madison, Cora and Mia at
 WGIL | Class at Watson-Thomas Funeral Home | Abbie Cain & Teagan Fineran, ROWVA High School
 Class at the Abingdon location of Ben Forney State Farm on a Site Visit



CEO ALUMNI

2018-2019

Mason Martinez
Benjamin Beebe
Brayden Bledsoe
Dalton Sims
DJ Cain
Gracie Gibbons

2019-2020

Grant Robinson
Jake Potter
Janice Abel
Kyler Smith
Lucas Kelso

2020-2021

Alexandra Cain
Casey Folger
Connor Sterr
Dasha Paige
Donavon Henry
Mackenzie Musser
Nathaniel Beebe
Ryan Nash
Toby Henry

2021-2022

Clara Asplund
Sterling Cramer
Jordyn Crooks
Mia Haneghan
Clara Kuelper
Lilyan McNally
Emma Seiboldt

2022-2023

Plamedi Nseka
Olivia Owen
Payton Parish
Kate Potter
Haven Powell
Sully Powers
Kaidence Wilson

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of your business



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G & M Distributors
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Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce
Galesburg Broadcasting
Galesburg Public Schools Foundation
Galesburg Rotary Foundation
Galesburg Community Foundation
Hinchliff-Pearson-West

KCAP
Knox County Farm Bureau
Landmark Café
Mark & Celia Godsil
McClean Family Endowment
Midwest Bank
Orange Cup Side Hustle
Old National Bank Foundation
Orion Renewables
OSF Healthcare
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Jim and Suellen Purlee and Purlee Farm
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ROWVA Public Schools Foundation
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 Tricia Thomas
 Damon Tomeo

Dick Anderson
 Scott & Melanie Baldwin
 Autumn Scott
 Jodi Scott
 Ken & Tiffany Springer
 Lance Oetting

Board Members

We would like to thank all of our site visits, speakers and other community connections for a great year. Without hands on expertise and experience, our class wouldn't be able to have the impact that it does. We thank the community for showing up for our first Meet and Greet Event, Pitch Day and Tradeshow. Your support of our program is how we can keep offering this dual-credit program at no cost the the student, families or school districts.

Class Business



It was awesome to watch the Class Business come to fruition. From the initial brainstorming session, much discussion, to making a final decision, the class put so much thought into this business. The class came up with the idea to do a "Holiday Hop" in partnership with The Vault that was hosting a family event with Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. For the Hop, each student would host a "station", which was geared towards children, to enjoy the Holiday Season and give parents a wonderful experience of watching their kids have clean, wholesome fun. Once that was agreed on, we started with a very interesting class discussion on roles for each of the students, which was one of the more entertaining days as the Facilitator for me. The students discussed, lobbied for, and eventually decided on roles for the Class Business CEO, CFO, CMO and COO. It was amazing to see how well the class chose these roles and the amazing job each student did in those roles. The class then put together their Business Plan and presented it to the CEO Board, which was another fantastic step in the process. The Board asked penetrating questions that caused some discomfort and new thoughts on the best way to move forward for the business.

Each student had a definite job, some that could be done individually, and some that needed multiple hands to get accomplished. They truly came together as a Team to pull this off. The event was very well attended and the class learned several business related lessons that helped them be successful. The money they made from this business was then used as Seed Money for each of their individual businesses. Each student was able to make \$427 as Seed Money! This was the most successful Class Business to date and the lessons learned will last a lifetime for each student. The community involvement and support was amazing as well. Thanks to all who were a part of this process, this is what the CEO Program is all about!






**OLD NATIONAL BANK
 FOUNDATION**



Earlier this year, our team applied for an Old National Bank Foundation Grant. We found out we were awarded \$10,000 and were able to attend a financial literacy class. We are extremely grateful to have Old National Bank in our community and we thank the Foundation for their generosity.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

The Dress for Success Drive has been coordinated through Abby Colvin and the Young Professionals Network for the past four years. They seek donations of business clothing and purchase individual needs. The CEO class then get to pick up clothes, shoes and more for FREE. Most students had a blast and are now stocked with business casual to business professional dress. The CEO Program gets the first access at the closet, then it is open to the community.

