



GWINNETT COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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MEDIA ALERT

NEW START ENTREPRENEURSHIP WINNERS AWARDED START UP MONEY

August 19, 2024 - The Gwinnett County Public Library, through its foundation, awarded a total of \$3,000 to two recent graduates of the New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator program.

The New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator (NSEI) provides business education for formerly incarcerated individuals through in-person classes, online coursework, and a robust network of mentors and community partners. NSEI is specifically geared towards the reentry population, which, in Georgia, is disproportionately minority populations and people of color.

The program's culmination occurs at Launchpad, an event where the budding entrepreneurs pitch their businesses to community business leaders. They are judged on several criteria, and the strongest pitches win.

AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Johanna Ortiz - CEO and founder of America's Choice Roofing \$2,000 Outstanding Business Pitch, First Place

After working for a roofing company and becoming the top sales rep within a year, Johanna started noticing things she thought should be done differently. With a small amount of funding and a big passion, she started America's Choice Roofing in December of 2023. Johanna says her inspiration is her mother, who brought them to the United States when Johanna was very young. They arrived with nothing more than a suitcase and a blanket, but her mother worked incredibly hard to make sure they never went to bed

hungry. Johanna says the best lesson her mother taught her is that if you put in the effort, nothing is impossible.

Juliette Sims-Owens - Founder of CleverGirl Virtual Assistant Service

\$1,000 Outstanding Business Pitch, Second Place

Juliette worked in administrative support for more than 25 years, before deciding to start her own company. With a passion for organization and efficiency, she helps businesses streamline their operations and achieve their goals. CleverGirl Virtual Assistant Service offers project-based work solutions tailored to the unique needs of the gig economy. As the demand for freelance and subcontract work continues to grow, so does the need for support for those providing it. CleverGirl provides scheduling and calendar management, precise data entry, transcription, crafted communication, website content oversight, and email handling.

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