

# THE MACKLIN BUSINESS INSTITUTE AND CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP at Montgomery College



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## MBI Scholars' 'Classroom Café' Teaches Entrepreneurship

Macklin Business Institute (MBI) scholars are reveling in the success of their latest Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) project, a business simulation called Classroom Café. The project aims to teach other students the basics of starting and operating a small business through dynamic and interactive classroom activities. First launched for fellow college students in February, the program was then adapted for elementary and middle-school students.

After receiving rave reviews from their college-level students at the first workshop, the team immediately sought out their next target audience. Through a partnership with the MCPS Connection Resource Bank, they found their next group of participants in the Montgomery County school system.

By March, the Classroom Café presentation won even more fans, this time, among the students at Little Bennett Elementary School in Clarksburg, Md., and Julius West Middle School in Rockville, Md.

"They are just as enthusiastic, if not more, than the college students," said MBI Scholar Amanda McThenia after introducing the Classroom Café to 55 third and fourth graders at Little Bennett Elementary School.

One week later, the scholars facilitated another Classroom Café workshop for 35 seventh graders at Julius West Middle School. During the workshop, teachers commented on how much they appreciated the scholars coming into the classroom and serving as role-models for the children.



**MBI scholar and SIFE team president Purva Narula assists Little Bennett Elementary School students in preparing pretend smoothies for their business during Classroom Café workshop.**

The scholars were pleased with the children's overall performance and were surprised to find how quickly the children picked up on the business concepts introduced to them.

"All elementary and middle-school students earned more cumulative and monthly profit than the college students," said McThenia. Moreover, "third graders listened the best and made the most profit overall." MBI Scholar Purva Narula said,

"The progression from not knowing much to understanding basics was amazing."

The Classroom Café is one of many community outreach programs the scholars have developed and implemented for the Montgomery College community. They apply what they've learned from running the marketing, accounting, and operations of the MBI Café, a We Proudly Brew Starbucks® coffee bar on the Rockville Campus, and incorporate it into their innovative approach for teaching entrepreneurship.

During the workshop's development, the Macklin scholars focused on devising a program that could be adapted in length and difficulty for various age, grade, and learning levels, as well as limitations in time. The Classroom Café business simulation they designed introduces basic business topics such as cost, revenues, and profits, and it allows for the exploration and incorporation of business concepts like effects of technology, supply and demand, advertising, and taxes.

"The Classroom Café is ultimately more than a business simulation," said MBI Director Steve Lang. "It's a hands-on experience where participants become business owners. . . . They have to manage their costs, borrow from the bank, produce a product and market it. They gain financial literacy, operate ethically, build communication skills, re-discover team-building and acquire success skills that will benefit them for years to come."



**Back row: (l-r) Professor Brian Baick, MBI Director Stephen Lang, Daniel Cleveland, Ronan Jenkins, Fernando Merino, Amit Sharma, James Overly**

**Front Row: (l-r) Shehani Selvarajah, Amanda McThenia, Purva Narula, Assiatou Diallo, Sarah Vandy.**

## Congratulations SIFE Regional Champions

The Montgomery College MBI SIFE team triumphed Friday, March 30, 2007 at the SIFE USA Regional Competition, in Philadelphia, Penn. Named regional champions, the team has been invited to represent Montgomery College in the SIFE National Exposition.

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