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MBI Team Named SIFE Regional Champions, Sets Sights on Nationals in Minneapolis

Students from Montgomery College's Macklin Business Institute earned Regional Champion honors at the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Regional Competition in Philadelphia. The Montgomery College team was led by students Alex Grant, Walter Pineda, Bertha Flores, Crystal Quinones, Seda Kojoyan, Ksenia Prokunina, and Marcos Moya. The MBI students will next compete at the SIFE USA National Exposition in Minneapolis, May 11-13.

"Winning the regional competition was exhilarating and I thought, as a team, we did a great job," said MBI student Seda Kojoyan. "We truly created and implemented some great projects this year and I hope we can showcase them in the best possible light. That, in my opinion, would give us a shot at winning the nationals in Minneapolis."

SIFE competitions allow students from both two and four-year colleges and universities to showcase the positive impact that they are having in the community

through service projects. Business leaders judge student teams on their overall presentation and their projects in the categories of market economics, success skills, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, business ethics, and environmental sustainability.

"The SIFE team improves each year," MBI Director Stephen Lang said. "The students were amazing, by far the most polished team that has represented the College at the SIFE regional competition, and it was apparent that the judges were impressed by their poise."

In preparing for the 2010 SIFE competition, the students focused on making a global impact with their SIFE service projects. Their "One Hen" project has provided microloans to entrepreneurs in 28 different countries through the nonprofit Kiva. As part of "One Hen," students also taught market economics to elementary school children. In addition, they collected more than 1,000 pairs of shoes for people in Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Haiti on behalf of the nonprofit

Walk in My Shoes. Finally, the students successfully managed a small on-campus business called Macklin Café, which employs other students to sell coffee and pastries in the campus cafeteria. Profits from the café support the Macklin Business Institute program.

"The results of the competition were amazing, and it is always great for the students to be recognized as a regional champion for their efforts," Lang said. "But first and foremost, SIFE is about students making a difference in their communities, whether on campus, locally, or even globally. This group was successful in that regard before they even made the trip to Philadelphia."

Student teams are also judged on their individual service projects. Montgomery College was named national finalist in the market economics category for the "One

Hen" project and in the success skills category for the Macklin Café project.

Teams chosen as regional champions will advance to the SIFE USA National Exposition. Through a competitive process, teams will present their projects before a panel of top U.S. business leaders. The winning team will be chosen as the SIFE USA National Champion team and will represent the United States at the SIFE World Cup.



SIFE regional team, front row, left to right, are Ksenia Prokunina, Seda Kojoyan, Crystal Quinones and Bertha Flores. Back row, left to right, are Marcos Moya, Walter Pineda and Alex Grant.