



YAVAPAI COLLEGE SBDC CLIENT ELAINE O'CONNOR WINS THE GRAND PRIZE AT THE STATEWIDE MOONSHOT PIONEER PITCH COMPETITION

Posted on June 22, 2022 by Ruth Ellen Elinski, Director of the Yavapai College Small
Business Development Center



The Yavapai College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) congratulates Elaine O'Connor who competed Friday night at the final Moonshot Pioneer Pitch event in Flagstaff, Arizona as part of the 2nd Annual Shoemaker Awards Ceremony hosted by Moonshot at NACET. Ms. O'Connor pitched alongside six other Arizona entrepreneurs and took home the grand prize of \$10,000 to support her start-up Prescott Bark.

Ms. O'Connor entered the local Quad Cities competition in March 2022 and placed first, opening the doorway for her to compete at the state level. The final competition included entrepreneurs from communities across Arizona including Globe, Winslow, Verde Valley, Rim Country, Flagstaff, Joseph City, Holbrook, and South Navajo County.

"I was thrilled to win the grand prize on Friday on behalf of Prescott Bark," said O'Connor. "While winning the Pioneer Pitch series certainly provides a financial boost to my business, simply being a participant has proven to also be a great gift. I have received so much support and encouragement from my fellow Pitchers and know that they are a group I can count on going forward."

The AZ Pioneer Pitch Competition Tour, sponsored by APS, Arizona Commerce Authority, and LivePlan, is an entrepreneurship contest similar to ABC's *Shark Tank* and facilitated by Moonshot at NACET. The tour welcomed entrepreneurs with a moonshot start-up idea or seasoned founders with business expansion plans. Participants prepare, practice, and perfect a 5-minute pitch presentation for a panel of judges.

Entrants to both the Verde Valley and Quad Cities competitions received start-up and pitch education led by Ruth Ellen Elinski, Yavapai College SBDC Director, and her team. Ms. O'Connor has met with Marie Platowski-Beals, SBDC Business Analyst, regularly since December of 2021.

"It was my Yavapai College SBDC Business Analyst who first introduced me to Moonshot and the Pioneer Pitch competition," O'Connor noted. "Her support and the pitch preparation workshop series hosted by the Yavapai College SBDC team were instrumental in helping

me shape my pitch for both the regional and state-wide events.”

“Elaine delved into her business plan full steam ahead with industry data, and realistic numbers from various nationwide studies,” said Platowski-Beals. “She was precise and incredibly coachable, taking suggestions and incorporating them into her plan.”



The AZ Pioneer Pitch Competition Tour kicks off again this October 14 and 15, 2022 in Verde Valley and will include a stop again in the Quad Cities in the spring of 2023. Area entrepreneurs can find out more information about the complete tour and participating communities at moonshotaz.com.

Yavapai College SBDC offers no cost, confidential consulting for businesses of all sizes with locations across the county. Register for services at yc.edu/sbdc or call 928-717-7232.

About Yavapai College: Yavapai College offers life-changing personalized education, career training, lifelong learning and workforce development opportunities online and in person at six locations across beautiful Yavapai County, AZ.

About Moonshot: Moonshot (www.moonshotaz.com) is a 21-year-old 501(c)3 non-profit. The mission of Moonshot is to assist both entrepreneurs in building and scaling start-ups as well as developing entrepreneurial ecosystems for economic development purposes across Arizona.