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Media Contact: Janet Redwine

303-321-2265

jredwine@yacenter.org

NEWS RELEASE

Pivoting to Make Lemons out of Lemonade: Youth Entrepreneurs Participate in Online Marketplace

May 5, Denver – Young Americans Center for Financial Education has held a Marketplace for youth business owners for decades. It's a place where young people can sell their hand-crafted products to the Denver metro area community, gaining hands-on experience in sales, customer service, and business ownership.

When COVID-19 cancelled the in-person event this spring, Young Americans Center utilized technology to provide an online sales environment for youth. More than 33 young people, ages 6-21, signed up to offer their products at the first-ever YouthBiz Online Marketplace, hosted on the Sharetribe platform.

“The entrepreneurs worked incredibly hard preparing for Marketplace, so we couldn't just call it off,” says Anna Leer, who oversees this biannual event as Vice President of YouthBiz at Young Americans Center. Instead, the youth pivoted, quickly getting up to speed on the basics of e-commerce to set up their online shops.

The youth haven't just learned, they have excelled. After just one week, business sales totaled more than \$3,600.

Numbers aside, the true success of the Marketplace is the ability of the entrepreneurs to experience an alternative, real-world selling environment at a young age. Reina Crowley, age 14, owns Mile High Freeze Dry, LLC, a business that “turns ordinary foods into fun, yummy snacks” such as freeze-dried apple slices and even skittles. According to Reina, “The YouthBiz Online Marketplace has been such a great experience because it has encouraged me to be more social media and e-commerce involved, which is a really good market to be in right now.”

Fifteen-year-old Andrew Kurtz agrees. He designs greeting cards with his own art that are drawn with precision using a machine. “The YouthBiz Online Marketplace is a great opportunity to learn about e-commerce, which is a crucial skill in today's digital world,” reports Andrew. “I've gotten orders as far away as Maine!”



Andrew Kurtz, age 15, designs greeting cards for the YouthBiz Online Marketplace at his home in Denver. He has sold his products to customers as far away as Maine, learning crucial skills along the way.

Young entrepreneurs stay safely socially-distant, awaiting orders through the YouthBiz Online Marketplace through Saturday, May 9. Shop and support these hard-working youth at <https://youthbiz-spring-marketplace.sharetribe.com/>.

About Young Americans Center

Young Americans Center for Financial Education is a nonprofit organization committed to developing the financial literacy of young people, up to age 22, through real life experiences and hands-on programs. The Center fulfills its mission by offering programs that complement and reinforce each other to build life skills, work skills and financial self-sufficiency. These include Young AmeriTowne, International Towne, YouthBiz, Money Matters classes, summer camps and more. In addition, Young Americans Center houses the only real bank in the world for young people, Young Americans Bank, which shares the same educational mission of teaching children to be financially responsible. Since 1987, more than 800,000 youth have participated in the programs or bank. For more information on the Young Americans Center for Financial Education, visit www.yacenter.org.

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