

# Nonprofit Tampa Bay Wave Inspires Local Youth Entrepreneurs with CEOs in Schools and Hillsborough Education Foundation

*After working with 450+ tech startups, Tampa Bay Wave helps the next generation of entrepreneurs at local K-8 school in Hillsborough County Public Schools.*

TAMPA, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, May 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Tampa Bay Wave](https://www.tampabaywave.com/), Inc. (Wave), Florida's #1 Accelerator, is a nonprofit helping entrepreneurs transform innovative ideas into real-world solutions and scalable businesses, is proud to announce that it launched its first Kids Entrepreneurship Club this school year in partnership with [Hillsborough Education Foundation](https://www.hillsborougheducationfoundation.org/)'s CEOs in Schools. The inaugural cohort of the Kids Entrepreneurship Club started at [Rampello](https://www.rampello.com/) K-8 Downtown Partnership

School as an after-school program and concluded on May 24, 2023, with five business ideas that were pitched to a panel of judges by middle-school aged children who are tackling challenges such as affordable healthy eating, clean waterways, and safer flea control solutions for pets. Guest judges include representatives from the Tampa Bay Wave, Hillsborough Education Foundation, and Tampa Bay Rays.

CEOs in Schools was founded in 2019 by Brian Butler, CEO of Vistra Communications. Now led by Hillsborough Education Foundation, in partnership with Vistra and the school district, the program invites business leaders to get involved with their future workforce, learn more about challenges and opportunities facing public schools and explore ways to make a difference. "Now more than ever, our teachers and students need community support from our business partners," said Butler. "Business leaders provide knowledge, innovative ideas and resources that are key to the success of our schools, principals and students."



After working with more than 450 tech startups, Tampa Bay Wave is helping to inspire the next generation of local entrepreneurs at local K-8 school within Hillsborough County Public Schools.

Each year, more than 150 CEOs and senior executives take part in the initiative, positively impacting schools and thousands of staff, students, and families. CEOs are encouraged to participate in this program designed to forge relationships to help strengthen our schools.

Tampa Bay Wave CEO, Linda Olson, has been participating in CEOs for Schools since it began and has been paired with Rampello K-8 all four years..

“Tampa Bay Wave is on a mission to turn Tampa Bay into a world-class hub of tech entrepreneurship,” says Linda Olson, Founder and CEO, Tampa Bay Wave. “I am so proud of programs like our Kids Entrepreneurship Club that helps our region build a strong pipeline of next-generation entrepreneurial talent by connecting local kids with local been-there, done-that entrepreneurs who can serve as inspiration and mentors.”



Five middle-school aged children pitched their entrepreneurial ideas for tackling challenges such as affordable healthy eating, clean waterways, and safer flea control solutions for pets.

“

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*Justin Youmans, Principal,  
Rampello K-8 Downtown  
Partnership School*

Tampa Bay Wave, which first launched its programs for tech startups in 2013, has worked with 470+ startups in the last decade. Collectively, the participating companies have raised more than \$700 million and created over 4,200 jobs in the last 10 years. During that time, several companies have been acquired, most for undisclosed amounts, which has helped many entrepreneurs enjoy some new-found wealth and looking for “what’s next.” The majority of these successful entrepreneurs enjoy giving back to Tampa Bay, especially if it can inspire local kids. For this particular Kids Entrepreneurship Club, the volunteer entrepreneurs who co-led the club with Rampello staff include Aaron White, formerly of Script, and Ben Goldman, formerly of 180byTWO.

“The relationship that Ms. Olson has formed with students and the Rampello administration is the exact kind of partnership we envisioned to take CEOs in Schools to the next level—from a one-day event to year-round support for our public schools through experiences like this Club,”

said Hillsborough Education Foundation CEO Kim Jowell. "Continued involvement from our business leaders enhances learning opportunities today for the next generation of entrepreneurs."

Rampello K-8 Downtown Partnership School's principal, Justin Youmans, was very enthusiastic about launching this club as his school.

"I'm so thankful for the partnership with Linda Olson from Tampa Bay Wave. CEO's in Schools brought us together and we were able to create a high-interest club that appealed to so many students. It was great getting to see their genuine excitement as they learned what it takes to be an entrepreneur., said Rampello K-8 Downtown Partnership School Principal Justin Youmans. "There was so much growth in these students over the last few months due to the investment of time of Aaron and Ben in sharing their talents for creating a business."

Gabrielle Fagagure, the school's Lead Magnet Teacher, led the club for Rampello including leading the student recruitment as well as all club administration.

"Partnering with Tampa Bay Wave in creating Rampello's Entrepreneurship Club has created a great impact on our student participants. It is such a joy getting to watch student creativity come to life and watch their minds at work. We had the pleasure of getting to watch the students grow in their presentation skills, collaboration, and confidence. These kids will change the world one day!"

The final pitch event was held on May 24, 2023, at Rampello K-8 Downtown Partnership School, with prizes being awarded for the business ideas that are the "Most Likely to Become a Million-Dollar Success", "Most Innovative", "Best Presentation", "Best Salesmanship", and "Overall Top Entrepreneur". Prizes were supplied by Hillsborough Education Foundation.

#### ABOUT TAMPA BAY WAVE:

Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing entrepreneurs with facilitated access to the resources, expertise, and capital they need to grow vibrant technology-based companies in Tampa Bay. Since March 2013, Tampa Bay Wave has supported more than 460 tech startups thanks to grant funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), plus support from its economic development partners Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa. Tampa Bay Wave also receives support from individuals such as Michael and Korrine Fraser, as well as from partners such as A-LIGN, Bank of America, Encore Bank/STi, EY, Florida Blue, Florida Business Development Corporation, Florida Funders, Foley & Lardner, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, KnowBe4, Nielsen Foundation, Rays/Rowdies Foundation, Southwest Airlines, Trenam Law, Truist Foundation, and Vinik Family Foundation. Tampa Bay Wave is also a member of Morrow (formerly Global Accelerator Network) network of accelerators. For more information, visit [www.tampabaywave.org](http://www.tampabaywave.org)

#### ABOUT HILLSBOROUGH EDUCATION FOUNDATION:

Established in 1987, Hillsborough Education Foundation (HEF) is a nonprofit focused on strengthening public education by supporting teachers and empowering students to achieve academic and personal success. Together with our community partners, HEF strategically invests in initiatives that impact teaching quality, increase graduation rates and build equity in education—bolstering a thriving workforce of tomorrow and the sustainable prosperity of Tampa Bay.

Cesar Hernandez

Omni Public

+1 (813) 277-6540

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