

# 2025 YFL Expo Empowers New Orleans Students with Financial Literacy, Scholarships, & IRAs for Future Wealth-Building

NEW ORLEANS, LA, UNITED STATES, March 26, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2025 Young Financial Leaders (YFL) Expo, hosted by [Wall Street Connection](#) at Southern University at New Orleans, concluded with a powerful message: financial literacy and wealth-building are not just concepts but life-changing opportunities for students in New Orleans. The event, which attracted interest from eleven local New Orleans schools (up from four schools in 2024), brought together aspiring young professionals, educators, and industry leaders and awarded over \$2,500 in cash prizes, providing young students with their first individual retirement accounts (IRAs). Through the success of this event, Wall Street Connection doubled down on its unique mission to address financial literacy gaps in New Orleans by creating spaces for youth to gain hands-on experience relevant to college preparation and pursuing a gainful career in financial services & advisory.



“Having built my career in investment banking and private equity, I’ve gained financial stability and opportunities I never imagined growing up in New Orleans,” said Chris West, President & Director of Wall Street Connection. “Now, it’s my mission to ensure students in our community have early exposure to these life-changing career paths.”

The highlight of the day was the Edward F. Frank Award presented by JP West (Insurance, Risk Management, and Surety), a \$1,000 first-place scholarship, which was awarded to Team Apple (McDonogh 35). Team Lululemon (McDonogh 35) secured second place, earning a \$500

scholarship provided by NewCorp. Taking home third place, Team Amazon (Bricolage Academy) earned \$250.

Additionally, a special sponsorship from NewCorp ensured that all student participants received real money to invest through their first Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)—an initiative designed to instill long-term financial planning habits from an early age.

Bricolage Academy Educator Ms. Burgess said, “I’m incredibly proud of our students and how they leveraged our Maker Studio at Bricolage Academy to prepare for the YFL Expo. This space is designed to go beyond basic arts and crafts—it equips students to innovate, problem-solve, and build real-world skills that can impact their futures. This highlights the power of hands-on, experiential learning.”

“At Wall Street Connection, we’re committed to closing the financial literacy gap in New Orleans,” said Curtis Johnson, Treasurer & Director of Wall Street Connection. “Financial literacy alone isn’t enough. True wealth building requires financial knowledge paired with stable and strong income sources. Through the YFL Expo, we’re giving students the tools to understand and leverage both.”

Wall Street Connection extends a heartfelt thank you to Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) and Dr. Igwe Udeh for providing an exceptional venue and supporting this initiative. Additionally, Wall Street Connection is deeply grateful for this year’s sponsors - JP West (Insurance, Risk Management, and Surety), NewCorp, Inc., Golden Web Capital, The Container Companies, Sean Blondell Law Firm, Blaylock Van Investment Bank, Don A. Rouzan & Associates, Faith Works, Omni Wall Street Advantage, and New Orleans City Councilmember Lesli Harris.



Lastly, Wall Street Connections extends thanks to the judges who gave their time to engage with students; they represented a number of businesses including Ragsdale Holdings, LongueVue Capital, New Orleans BlackChamber of Commerce, Maroon Venture Fund, Detangled, NewCorp, Inc, Omni WallStreet Advantage, and University of New Orleans.

"I'm committed to giving back to New Orleans because this city shaped who I am," West added. "Providing young people with the resources and mentorship I wished for at their age isn't just an opportunity—it's a responsibility I'm honored to fulfill."

For more information about Wall Street Connection and future events, please visit [wallstreetconnection.org](http://wallstreetconnection.org) or follow us on Instagram at @WallStConnection.

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