

From Vision to Action: Hyde School EntreX Students Join Local Entrepreneurs for a Panel at Union + Co

BATH, ME, UNITED STATES, November 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just a week after visiting Union + Co to hear from Sean Ireland and Mandy Reynolds about their career experiences and real estate development opportunities in Bath, Hyde's EntreX students returned to the foot of Center Street for another unique opportunity to learn about what it means to be an entrepreneur—this time from a live panel of experienced professionals, featuring some of Midcoast Maine's most dynamic small business owners and entrepreneurs, as well as local financial and municipal leaders.

Moderated by Mandy Reynolds, Co-Founder of Union + Co, the event brought together an inspiring array of panelists:

Morgan Miller, Founder/Owner, Soft Corner Midwifery

— Michael Walton, President, First Federal Savings & Loan

— Haley Blanco, Founder/Owner, White Spruce Design Studio

— Kimberly Becker, Founder/Owner, Kimberly Becker Designs



Local Business Leaders talk with Hyde's EntreX students



EntreX student Brady '26

— Misty Parker, Economic Director, City of Bath

— Colin Graham, Project Manager, Polestar Maritime

— Gina Longbottom, Owner, Five Islands Lobster

Each shared their unique entrepreneurial journey — the risks they took, the lessons learned, and the values that continue to sustain their work. Mandy guided the light-hearted, yet serious conversation, drawing out key ideas from the assembled experts about what it takes to launch and sustain a business in today's world and in Midcoast, Maine.

Some of the most powerful insights from the panel included:

Identifying real problems and making sure you're addressing the root cause, not just the symptoms.

— Proving the market before diving into a solution.

— Staying humble and curious — and remembering your position and power as a leader.

— Understanding that entrepreneurship comes in many forms and that failure is simply another way to learn.

— Recognizing that problem + solution = the vehicle in between — and it's your job to build it.

Students were quick to pick up on the message that good entrepreneurs are not defined by a single product or idea, but by their willingness to adapt, ask questions, and think differently from people who are just ok with working a 9-5 and filing a W2. Students learned that their proposed solutions, and unique value hypotheses, whether APP or AI-based, are not always going to be so obvious, but staying with the problem you're trying to solve is essential for doing this kind of work. One group reflected that "it's not failure to rethink your idea — it's growth." Another observed that "changing your perspective on a problem can reveal entirely new solutions."

After the panel wrapped up, students stayed to network and share their own venture ideas, receiving generous feedback from the panelists. Several local business owners — including



Local Business Leaders answer questions about entrepreneurship

Michael, Morgan, and others — expressed interest in continuing the collaboration, possibly through a follow-up event in the Winter trimester where the student teams could workshop their ideas in their smaller venture groups, make a “case for support,” or a mock pitch for seed funding, and receive hands-on coaching before presenting back to the larger group.

Hyde is deeply grateful to Union + Co and its network in the local business community for opening their doors and modeling the entrepreneurial mindset in action. The City of Bath continues to be an incredible resource for our students — a living classroom where curiosity meets community and ideas turn into opportunity.

As students reflected afterward, the lessons extended well beyond business: to lead, one must listen; to innovate, one must observe; and to grow, one must be willing to risk, reevaluate, pivot, and reach beyond what’s comfortable.

The future of youth entrepreneurship — and of leadership — looks bright in Bath.

Hyde School is an independent, coeducational college preparatory boarding school for grades 9 - 12 and Postgraduate. Hyde has pioneered Character Development, leading to life-changing outcomes for students and families. Our emphasis is on helping students discover their strengths and grow as confident leaders prepared for the future. We believe that for students to succeed - now and for the rest of their lives - they must develop the integrity, habits, and resilience that are the hallmarks of successful adults. We are focused on the belief that character, attitude, and effort will lead to academic excellence, meaningful achievement, and personal fulfillment. The Hyde difference is seen in the peer culture and parent involvement, which connects our students to a remarkable support system.

Union + Co was founded on the belief that when people come together, good things happen. We support economic and community development and believe that art and culture play a critical role in making a community strong, resilient, and interesting. By providing a flexible environment at Union + Co, we enable members to build relationships that not only enhance their personal and professional lives but also contribute to a vibrant community. Our focus on innovation and relationships lays the groundwork for a thriving local economy, where ideas can flourish and partnerships can thrive.

Shaw Bridges is a history educator at Hyde School and certified teacher for its Entre-X and Lead-X dual-enrollment courses with the University of Delaware’s Horn Entrepreneurship. A former PhD candidate in American business, technology, and environmental history at the University of Georgia, he brings over a decade of experience in teaching, coaching, and student development.

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