



SIFE Community Action in Pittsburgh Helping People Help Themselves

The Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) YWCA project at Carnegie Mellon University assist the local YWCA's Enterprising Women class. The fourteen club members involved with this project advise underprivileged women on how to improve their business plans. Through this class these women learn technical, managerial, accounting, marketing, and other business skills necessary to run their businesses successfully. Additionally, the project prints yearbooks for the class, orders each woman their first set of professional business cards, and plans an on-campus showcase to promote their new businesses. This program promotes successful networking and creates an atmosphere filled with new business ideas, tricks, and advice. Finally as each semester comes to an end, the student members critique the women's business plans. The ultimate goal is to help maintain as many successful businesses as possible.

With the current state of the economy the micro-enterprise era has a huge potential for growth. Thus, on February 28th, the Carnegie Mellon University Students in Free Enterprise organization in conjunction with the YWCA of greater Pittsburgh and the SBA hosted the first annual Microenterprise Symposium. The goal was to impact one hundred female Micro-entrepreneurs in the city of Pittsburgh and provide publicity for the opportunities available with the YWCA's Enterprising Women program.

The event, held in the University Center of the Carnegie Mellon campus, offered a full day of various workshops dealing with key topics for small business. They included marketing, branding, creative financing, dealing with legal issues and internet advertising. The symposium also featured interactive seminars, a question and answer panel of successful female entrepreneurs, and a networking session for the 61 women who attended. The end result was the women were not only better equipped to run a successful business but they were also very inspired to do so.

Through their personal impact on these women in Pittsburgh, the SIFE team feels that they have enabled them to move towards success and spread what they've learned to other potential female entrepreneurs. In addition, through their fund raising efforts for the YWCA, the SIFE students believe they have helped advance their work to continue well into the future.

Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) is a global non-profit organization active on more than 1,800 college campuses in more than 43 countries and territories. Student teams develop projects to help create economic opportunity by teaching concepts related to free market economics, business ethics, entrepreneurship, personal finance and success skills.

SIFE students leverage their classroom experience, the expertise of their faculty advisor and business advisory board, and the resources of their university to develop projects that empower people to live better lives.

SIFE student projects address a variety of topics, such as market economics, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, personal success skills, environmental sustainability and business ethics. Rather than mandating a uniform set of projects, teams are encouraged to work within the framework of these topics while adapting their approach to the diverse needs of people in different communities.

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