

COMMUNITY CELEBRATES ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT AT HAVASTARTUP 2022-2023 BUSINESS PLAN SHOWCASE AND AWARD CEREMONY, ASU AT LAKE HAVASU

By: Ribka Drisha Shewamare



Lake Havasu City, Arizona, was abuzz on the evening of March 29, 2023, as entrepreneurs, business leaders, and community members gathered at the ASU at Lake Havasu Campus for the Annual Business Plan Showcase and award ceremony. Dr. Carla Harclerod, the director of ASU at Lake Havasu, set the tone for the event with her opening speech, welcoming attendees and highlighting the significance of the occasion for local entrepreneurs and community. The mayor of Lake Havasu, Cal Sheehy, then took the stage to share the city's history, growth, and future plans. Mayor Sheehy spoke about the city's ambition to continue to support growth at ASU at Lake Havasu and highlighted the ABC (America's Best Community) project, a nationwide competition to improve quality of life. He outlined the five pillars of change, including economic development, education, health and wellness, infrastructure, and quality of life.

The Business Plan Showcase Award began in earnest following the mayor's speech, with the aim of recognizing and celebrating the most promising business plans created by entrepreneurs from the region. Lisa Krueger, CEO/President of Lake Havasu Chamber of Commerce, gave a speech emphasizing the importance of building traits for future applicants and the need to focus on skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and adaptability to succeed in the business world. Ms. Krueger also acknowledged the sponsors of the event, including Walmart and Craig Plumbing, who saw the potential of the ideas presented and believed in their ability to bring about positive change. During the event, Ms. Krystyna Hook, the Director of Media Relations for the Better Business Bureau serving the Pacific Southwest, addressed the audience and discussed the BBB's mission, including its dedication to promoting ethical business practices and providing scholarships to support students.

The winner of the HavaStartup 2022-2023 Business Plan competition is Ms. Andrea Helart, a dedicated and passionate entrepreneur with diverse experience, including being a former school principal and current communication and community outreach coordinator at Lake Havasu Unified School District. She owns Ulu Consulting, a company that provides leadership skills, mentoring, and goal-setting services.

She presented her business plan, which focused on developing a sustainable and eco-friendly product line for the local community. Andrea's plan included detailed market research, financial projections, and a clear vision for the future of her business, Ulu Consulting. Ulu

Consulting is an organization that provides customized coaching and professional development to individuals and organizations, to help them achieve their full potential. The community still has room to grow in meeting the needs of professionals, businesses, and developing leaders who require mentoring and support, and Ulu Consulting aims to fill that gap with its tailored services.

Andrea Helart expressed gratitude towards the HavaStartup Committee Members for organizing the event, and then Dr. Leepsa invited Ms. Krystyna Hook to announce the prize money, gifts, and certificates. Mayor Cal Sheehy presented the award to the winner, followed by a group photo session with the winner, the mayor, and the steering committee members. This year, the prize money of \$1500 was sponsored by the Better Business Bureau. Dr. Leepsa Madhabika then announced the mentors' names and presented gifts, souvenirs, and certificates to Ms. Jeanette Pigeon and Ms. Lisa Card. Other mentors who are part of the HavaStartup Competition are Ms. Tami Urnsenbach, Ms. Lisa Van Ella, Ms. Regan Ross-Robertson, and Mr. Kevin Myers.

Overall, I believe the Business Plan Showcase and Award ceremony was a remarkable event that brought the Lake Havasu City community together to celebrate innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship. The event's success is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the organizers, partners, sponsors, mentors, faculty staff, and students who contributed to making it a memorable and impactful event.

ASU at Lake Havasu will continue the competition next year, so if you know anyone who may be interested in applying, please do not hesitate to reach out to Leepsa Nabaghan Madhabika at Imadhabi@asu.edu.



Photo Credit: Tao Chen, Undergraduate Business Administration Student, ASU at Lake Havasu.