

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **Wando Student Going to New York City After Winning YEScarolina Competition**

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**Charleston, SC** — If you can make it in New York City, you can make it anywhere (at least that's how the saying goes). Colin Posnanski, a rising senior from Wando High School, will get a chance to show off his business knowledge in the Big Apple, thanks to winning YEScarolina's sixth annual State Business Plan Competition, presented by the Mark E. Motley Foundation, on June 17, 2017.

"When I found out I won, I was first in shock," remembered Posnanski. "Then, when I realized what had happened, I gave my dad the greatest fist bump of all time; I could not contain my smile for the rest of the day. The best thing about winning the state competition is the fact that I will be working with people that will help my business grow, which could really be beneficial."

Posnanski earned a \$3,000 award and an all-expenses paid trip to New York City in October for his first-place finish. His entry, Shoelace Society, offers premium quality, limited run, shoelace-based fashion accessories. For every pair of shoelaces sold, one dollar goes to charity.

"I think that I have a really strong brand and product, and that appealed to the judges," Posnanski added. "I think my business model stood out because of the detail of my financials. I think the judges thought it was interesting that my target market is Generation Z (consumers born after 1995). I also believe the way that the business could be expanded helped solidify my presentation. Finally, I think we were supporting a great social cause through the non-profit *ShoesThatFit*."

Fourteen students from around the state participated in three rounds of competition at the College of Charleston's School of Business. Each of the young entrepreneurs presented their business plans in front of judges; they were vying for seed money to help them launch their venture.

As the students waited for the results to be finalized, YEScarolina leaders announced this year's Kathy Elsner Spirit Award winner was Amanda

Bennett, a student from West Ashley High School, and the Bill Hall Culinary Entrepreneurship Award was given to Rebecca Salazar Yata, graduate of St. John's High School. Both students will attend Trident Technical College in the fall.

Organizers also spoke with two entrepreneurs from Thomas C. Cario Middle School, Colton Pedro and Maya Khaskhely, about their experiences in their recent Cario Biz Club Competition. Pedro earned \$250 for winning that event, and Khaskhely (along with her classmate who could not attend) came in third place and won \$100.

Posnanski will compete against students from all over the country on October 12, 2017 in the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship National Entrepreneurship Challenge; grand prize award is \$10,000.

"Colin took the feedback he got after the in-class competition and worked hard to improve his plan," said David Fralix, a Career and Technology Education teacher at Wando. "He went far above and beyond what was expected, and brought packaged, shelf-ready samples of his laces for the judges to see. He has been busy negotiating with suppliers and retailers to get his business going. He has taken the skills he learned in class and is turning his idea into a business. I am so proud of him for his efforts."

For more information about YEScarolina or the state competition, please contact YEScarolina Executive Director, Austin Stone, at (843) 805-4901.

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and several specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities led by associate superintendents. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.

#### **About YEScarolina**

Youth Entrepreneurship South Carolina, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is the leading organization in South Carolina dedicated to teaching youth the principles of entrepreneurship and free enterprise. Recognizing that South Carolina's future is dependent upon a vibrant entrepreneurial economy, YEScarolina is preparing today's youth to be tomorrow's business owners and business leaders. YEScarolina has helped thousands of young people from communities statewide build business skills and fuel their entrepreneurial spirit. To date, YEScarolina has trained and certified over 925 South Carolina teachers on the subject of entrepreneurship. These educators in turn have touched and inspired tens of thousands of young South Carolinians with a thirst for entrepreneurship. YEScarolina offers entrepreneurship training to public school teachers statewide without charge. YEScarolina is a program partner of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship.