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Children's Center, Tech Tutors, Butcher Shop + Design Firm Win 2021 QEDC's StartUP! Contest

Each One Gets \$10,000 To Grow Their Businesses

A children's center, a butcher shop, a design firm, and a tech-design agency were the big winners of Queens Economic Development Corporation's annual StartUP! Business Competition last Thursday. Thanks to support from Resorts World Casino New York City and Srivastava Technology Fund, each entity will receive \$10,000 to grow their businesses.

Thuy Petersen's [House of Playful Soul](#) took top honors in the Community category. The Forest Hills learning and development center provides parents with flexible play, class, party, and event options for children between the ages of six months and four years.

Jamaica resident Abou Sow and [Prince Abou's Butchery](#) won in the Food category. The online retailer specializes in local Halal meats sourced from small, family-run farms just a few hours from New York City. Sow slaughters, butchers, and delivers meat to customers within a week of ordering to ensure that the products are fresh.

[Terrart NYC](#), which is owned by Fresh Meadows residents Charly Uzcátegui and Tim Chu, emerged victorious in the Sustainability category. They devise beautiful, natural floral arrangements inside terrariums for commercial, office, and residential spaces. Their collection features recycled containers such as liquor bottles, light bulbs, and jars.

[She Designs Creative Agency](#), which is led by Sharae Gibbs of St. Albans, triumphed in the Tech category. The all-female company offers UI and UX online courses, mentorship, and coaching to women of color and non-binary people.

Now in its 15th year, StartUP! is a four-month instruction course and competition for Queens-based startup founders and small business entrepreneurs who are in the early stages of development. After attending at least four workshops on such topics as Branding and Financial Forecasting Marketing, contestants submitted their applications to a panel of judges consisting of local entrepreneurship and commerce experts. They selected 12 finalists (three in each category) from a pool of almost 50 teams to enter a final round where a second panel picked one winner from each of the four categories.

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“I’m inspired by the winners’ entrepreneurial spirit,” stated Genting New York State President Robert DeSalvio. “Their innovation and ingenuity are why startups are the lifeblood of any economy, and on behalf of Resorts World Casino New York City, I want to congratulate the winners on this amazing achievement.”

“It is an honor to work alongside QEDC and watch as new generations of entrepreneurs realize their dreams and fulfill their potential,” stated Bill Singh, the Director of Planning and Analysis for Genting Americas. “These winners represent the very best of the future of Queens, and I wish them continued success in years to come.”

“Congratulations to this year’s winners and best of luck during your next steps,” added QEDC Executive Director Seth Bornstein. “At the same time, I’d like to remind the participants who didn’t win that they can try again next year.”

One of QEDC’s signature programs, StartUP! provides entrepreneurship education, one-on-one consultations, mentoring, and the chance to win \$10,000 in seed funding. In addition to Resorts World Casino NYC, it is supported by the Srivastava Technology Fund.

Founded in 1977, QEDC’s mission is to create and retain jobs through programming that grows neighborhoods, assists small businesses, and promotes tourism and business development. The nonprofit agency believes that inclusion is an economic imperative and entrepreneurship is open to everyone, regardless of gender, race or birthplace.

For more information on these programs and other services, go to www.queensny.org.