



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Winners selected for local high school and community business competitions

SKOWHEGAN—Skowhegan Savings Bank and town revitalization organization Main Street Skowhegan recently announced winners of two local business competitions.

Amanda Leigh Clark was named the winner of the Main Street Skowhegan Savings Entrepreneur Challenge. Clark will receive more than \$23,000 in benefits and incentives, including a \$10,000 forgivable loan from Skowhegan Savings Bank to start her business, River Trail Counseling and Wellness Center.

Matthew Gallant, a junior at Mt. Blue High School in Farmington, was selected as the winner of the Junior Entrepreneur Challenge for his business idea, Gallant Media. He plans to use his first-place prize money—awarded via a grant from Skowhegan Savings Bank—to fund his start-up.

"We are proud to sponsor and support these business competitions," said Vicki Alward, senior vice president at Skowhegan Savings Bank. "It's important to educate our local entrepreneurs about what it takes to start, own, and maintain a successful business."

Both competitions included educational components that provided entrepreneurs with information about the nuts and bolts of owning a business. Junior entrepreneurs took entrepreneurship classes and met with local business leaders. Participants in the Main Street Skowhegan Savings Entrepreneur Challenge attended business seminars where they learned about insurance needs, required permits, cash flow and financial analyses, and marketing strategies.

"I was honored to be a part of the Entrepreneur Challenge, standing beside other extremely talented entrepreneurs," said winner Amanda Leigh Clark. "I learned a lot throughout the process and am excited to take what I have learned and implement it into my counseling and wellness center."

Clark, a licensed clinical social worker with a clinical concentration in child and family therapy, developed her business plan for River Trail Counseling and Wellness Center over the course of five Entrepreneur Challenge business seminars in the fall of 2017. She met with the Main Street Skowhegan Business Enhancement Committee to further refine her plan before making her final pitch to a selection committee made up of local economic development professionals.

Clark will open her new business in Skowhegan in summer 2018. She will specialize in helping clients overcome challenges and set goals that will improve their quality of life, personal capacity, and productivity. In addition to counseling, River Trail will offer health and wellness services, including community workshops, massage therapy, and yoga. Main Street's Business Enhancement Committee will continue to work with Clark and provide guidance and mentorship as she prepares to open and throughout her first few years in business.



As the winner of the Main Street Skowhegan Savings Entrepreneur Challenge, Clark will receive a benefits package that features a \$10,000 forgivable loan from partner and leading sponsor Skowhegan Savings Bank. Other incentives include consulting from Kyes-Carpenter Insurance; three months of payroll services from Total Payroll Solutions, Inc.; consulting services from H&R Block; carpentry services from Dionne & Son Builders; a one-year membership to the Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce; computer supplies and business backup software from Computer Improvements; legal consulting from Mills, Shay, Lexier & Talbot; three months of internet access and up to two phone lines from Bee Line Cable; storefront signage design and development from York Signs; photography services from Brandie Burrill Photography; a promotional video produced by Somerset Community Television; reduced rent from a participating property owner; and website design, marketing consultation, and promotional services from Main Street Skowhegan.

Developed by Main Street Skowhegan's Business Enhancement Committee and sponsored by Skowhegan Savings Bank, the Entrepreneur Challenge is designed to strengthen Skowhegan's economy and spur business development in the region.

Junior Entrepreneur Challenge winner Matthew Gallant, a participant in Mt. Blue High School's Entrepreneurial Program, pitched his startup idea in early March to the Main Street Skowhegan Business Enhancement Committee, which served as the selection committee for the three student finalists. Gallant plans to use the \$1,000 first-place prize to start Gallant Media, a business that will provide computer services—including website and mobile app development and computer network and software installations—to small- and medium-sized businesses in western Maine. Gallant's homegrown all-in-one tool, Gallant WebMaster, will also allow clients to build and manage their own websites without any programming experience.

The selection committee also awarded second- and third-place prizes in the junior challenge. Second place went to Smart Planner, an organizational app for students conceived by Madison High School students Emily Edgerly, Shelby Belanger, and Katie Worthen. Madison High School will receive \$450 of the \$750 second-place prize, and the remaining money will be split among the three student entrepreneurs.

Third place was awarded to L. Enright Photography, a business idea developed by Skowhegan Area High School (SAHS) sophomore Lauren Enright. A portion of the \$500 cash prize will be awarded to Enright as a scholarship for college, and the remainder will benefit the Entrepreneurship Class at SAHS.

The Junior Entrepreneur Challenge was developed by Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) in partnership with Skowhegan Savings Bank and supported by Main Street Skowhegan's Business Enhancement Committee. Prize money for first, second, and third place winners came from a grant from Skowhegan Savings Bank. Sixty-three students from the three schools participated in this pilot program.

"Skowhegan Savings Bank is to be commended for sponsoring the entrepreneur challenge for high school students in western and central Maine," said Gary Perlson, education consultant at the



MELMAC Education Foundation. "Innovation and entrepreneurship are the cornerstones of the American economy. Fostering these attributes in our young men and women is vital to the future of our state and nation."

About Skowhegan Savings

Skowhegan Savings Bank has been dedicated to strengthening Maine's families, businesses and communities by providing personalized and competitive banking services to the regions of which they serve for over 140 years. An independent mutual savings bank based in Skowhegan, with 11 branches throughout the state, their mission is to provide customers with exceptional service in an innovative banking environment that effectively and efficiently puts the financial needs of the customer first. Named one of Maine's Best Places to Work, they take pride in not only being a great place to bank but also a great place to work. For more information on Skowhegan Savings in the community or how they can assist you with your financial needs, please visit SkowheganSavings.com or contact their live Customer Service line at 800.303.9511.

About Main Street Skowhegan

Main Street Skowhegan is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on the ongoing revitalization of Skowhegan, Maine. In 2015 we expanded our purview to include the entire town—not just the downtown—enabling us to serve all Skowhegan businesses and implement town-wide projects. Our mission is to grow a vibrant, inviting town by encouraging innovation and economic development. We spearhead collaborative efforts to support businesses and diversify the economy, stimulate tourism, and tell Skowhegan's story. For more information, visit MainStreetSkowhegan.org.