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Young Innovators and Entrepreneurs Receive Top Honors and Continuing Opportunities During 2018 Conrad Spirit of Innovation Summit

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. – Five teams of young entrepreneurs from around the world received top honors at the 2018 Innovation Summit, April 25-28 at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. Hosted by the Conrad Foundation, the Summit is the final competition round for the 2017-2018 Conrad Spirit of Innovation Challenge.

The annual competition provides young innovators and entrepreneurs a platform to share their commercially-viable, technology-based solutions to global and local challenges. This year 191 student teams, ages 13-18, created new products and services focused on the following five categories: Aerospace & Aviation, Cyber-Technology & Security, Energy & Environment, Health & Nutrition and Smoke-Free World. Twenty-six finalist teams attended the 2018 Summit to present their products to a live panel of judges with expertise in business, industry, research and academia.

“Traditionally there have been two ways of thinking about a challenge: inside the box and outside the box,” said Nancy Conrad, founder and chairman of the Conrad Foundation. “Our students are what I like to call ‘no box thinkers.’ They are not constrained in their thinking nor in their creative process. And that is why their ideas are so impressive. From improving storage efficiency on the International Space Station to a mobile app addressing unemployment in the autism community, it is apparent to all in attendance that these students will be the trailblazers in science, engineering, mathematics and technology.”

The following teams were recognized as Pete Conrad Scholars, the competition’s top award in honor of Apollo 12 astronaut, Charles "Pete" Conrad, and his three-decade pursuit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

- **Aerospace & Aviation:** *LEAF Systems, North Carolina School of Mathematics, Durham, North Carolina*
- **Cyber-Technology & Security, sponsored by Nokia Bell Labs:** *Speechability, St. Aidan’s Anglican Girls School, Brisbane, Australia*
- **Energy & Environment:** *Gryffindor, Seven Bridges Middle School and Ardsley High School, New York*
- **Health & Nutrition:** *Genolytics, Watchung Hills Regional High School, Warren, New Jersey*

Each winning team received a distinctive medal in honor of Conrad, a free market research assessment from the Wisconsin Innovation Service Center and a one-year associate



membership to Sigma Xi. In addition, all winning teams have the opportunity to apply for various awards from the following partners: an Arent Fox pro-bono patent application; the Dentons' Patent Prize providing professional consultations to the teams to further their product development; a \$3,000 scholarship from Camp BizSmart to attend one of their entrepreneurship academies in Silicon Valley this summer; and the Smart Technologies' Transforming Education through Technology Award which provides an all expense trip to an event this summer in Calgary, Alberta Canada.

As the lead sponsor of the challenge for the second year in a row, America's Navy continued its commitment to STEM education and innovation. Navy experts served as competition judges in each of the five categories, sharing their experience and knowledge through insightful questioning and feedback. Students had the unique opportunity to hear about two Sailor's surprising career paths from Navy nuclear engineer, Lieutenant Hamilton Gubanc, and Navy Director of Tropical Diseases, Lieutenant Commander Nehkondi Adams, MD. Captain Matt Boren, the Chief Marketing Officer at Navy Recruiting Command, presented the America's Navy Gemini Award for Distinguished Innovation in the Spirit of Captain Pete Conrad.

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World sponsored a special category this year inviting students to design 21st century solutions to re-purpose global farmland that is currently used for tobacco production, especially in African countries. The winning team was *Aqualirio Labs* from Mission San Jose High School in Fremont, California who created a line of topical skincare products created from tobacco-derived squalene. The Foundation awarded the student team with an all-expense paid trip to the World Food Prize event in Des Moines, Iowa, which occurs every October as part of the Borlaug conversations.

The Foundation also presented "Power Pitch" awards in each category to the team(s) who presented the best pitch on-stage in front of the live judges, their peers and industry professionals. The following teams were recognized for their presentation skills:

- **Aerospace & Aviation:** *Downey Space Innovators, Downey High School, Downey, California*
- **Cyber-Technology & Security:** *Vurse, Christopher Columbus High School, Miami, Florida*
- **Energy & Environment:** *Super Silk, Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School, Plainview, New York*
- **Health & Nutrition:** *Los Altos Academy of Engineering, Hacienda Heights, California*
- **Smoke-Free World:** *Team Neon, Whitesands School, Lagos, Nigeria*

In addition to the Conrad Foundation awards, the following special awards were also distributed at the three-day event:



- **America's Navy Gemini Award** for Innovation in the Spirit of Captain Pete Conrad was awarded to LEAF Systems (North Carolina), the team that best demonstrated the Navy characteristics of teamwork, innovation, and hard work. The award recognizes their exceptional ingenuity, collaboration, and commitment to solving an important and complex challenge.
- **The NASA Goddard Technology Award** recognized *LEAF Systems* (North Carolina) and *Pectora* (India) as the teams who best incorporated existing NASA technologies made available to the Finalists.
- **SMART Technologies** awarded *CrossCheck* (Virginia), *Gryffindor* (New York), and *Speechability* (Australia) with all-inclusive trips to Calgary, Canada to join an education challenge.
- **Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex's Good Citizen Award** was presented to *Team Neon* (Nigeria) for exemplifying team spirit, support and respect to all fellow students and event participants.
- **Chairman's Innovative Teacher Award** was awarded to Tim Anglin from the North Carolina School of Mathematics in Durham, North Carolina. Anglin was presented this honor for being an example of passion and dedication to students. This year, he coached three finalist teams: two teams in Aerospace and Aviation and one team in Health and Nutrition. Anglin was also awarded the Apollo Science Teacher Award by Tranquility Lodge no. 2000 which sponsored his travel to the 2018 Conrad Spirit of Innovation Challenge Summit.

The 2017-2018 Spirit of Innovation Challenge was made possible by America's Navy, Bezos Family Foundation, the Foundation for a Smoke Free World, NASA, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, Delaware North, Nokia Bell Labs, Battelle, Carter Ledyard & Milburn LLP, Griffin Communications Group, Sigma Xi, Dentons, Arent Fox, Wisconsin Innovation Service Center, and Tranquility Lodge #2000.

For more information on the winners, visit conradchallenge.org.

About The Conrad Foundation

The Conrad Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to immersive learning and the opportunity for students to use the lessons they learn in the classroom to create commercially viable products in sustainability. The Foundation is the only organization of its kind whose programs combine science and technology-based education, innovation and entrepreneurship to inspire solutions for achieving global sustainability. For more information, visit www.conradfoundation.org.

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