

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **B-Start Winning Startup Pitches Announced for Bloomington Demo Day**

**Bloomington, Indiana (March 8, 2018)** – Bloomington’s B-Start program announced its Demo Day winners on Tuesday evening after nine participating teams submitted business plans and delivered a 5-minute presentation on their startup projects. The event was hosted at Indiana University’s Cyberinfrastructure Building.

The winning teams announced were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: BotMaven, Tom Fennewald and Asaf Beasley - Software that creates chatbots for event marketing and news publications
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Adventure Field Guides, AJ O’Reilly - software that helps people plan outdoor trips
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Eqlsr, Dominic King, Davide Behr, and Eric Wood - Blockchain platform to share, curate, collaborate and listen to music

First, second and third place winners received \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$500 respectively while all graduating B-Start participants received a \$500 stipend to continue to develop their businesses. This year the program also gave a \$100 prize to the team with the business plan and to the team that was the audience favorite pitch. Bot Maven received the award for best business plan and Adventure Field Guides won the audience favorite of best pitch.

“Starting a business can be a daunting task, but what I hope we have shown every participant is that Bloomington has an abundance of resources that can help you start and grow businesses here.,” said Anne McCombe, project manager of the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC). B-Start is a program of the BEDC. “The future of our economy and job creation is through innovation driven businesses, the types of businesses that we help to start through our B-Start program.”

Chris Walls, CEO and co-founder of 39 Degrees North delivered the keynote address for the event. A panel of judges included Jason Whitney, IU Research & Technology Corporation; Cindy Kinnarney, First Financial Bank; and Rob Dorocke, Cook Medical. Graduation stipends and pitch prizes were made possible through financial support from Cook Group, The Gayle and Bill Cook Center for Entrepreneurship at Ivy Tech Community College-Bloomington, and Indiana University Innovate Indiana. Additional supporting sponsors of the program were Blue Burro, Cornerstone Information Systems, Envisage Technologies, Form Assembly, Future Wonder, Hanapin Marketing, Net Irrigate, Platformatics, Rock Paper Scissors, and Sintact Medical Systems.

Demo Day serves as the conclusion of the B-Start pre-accelerator program for community members, IU and Ivy Tech student startups. Graduating startups will continue to participate in group workshops and networking opportunities to continue development of their business and integration into the Bloomington entrepreneurial ecosystem. The next B-Start session will begin Fall 2018. For more information on B-Start, visit [www.b-start.org](http://www.b-start.org).

#### **About B-Start**

B-Start is a pre-accelerator program of the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) designed for community members startups as well as Indiana University and Ivy Tech student technology startups. B-Start participants are at the earliest stage of their business development and are coached through a rigorous comprehensive process of cohort activities and individualized mentorship over the course of the program to build a foundation for accelerating the growth of their startups. For more information, visit [www.b-start.org](http://www.b-start.org).

#### **About the BEDC**

The BEDC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the retention, development and attraction of quality jobs in Monroe County. The BEDC is led by a partnership of private industry leaders, the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana University and Ivy Tech Community College–Bloomington. For more information, visit [www.bloomingtonedc.com](http://www.bloomingtonedc.com).

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