

FIU'S PINO GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER CONGRATULATES THE WINNERS OF THE 2014 MIAMI HERALD BUSINESS PLAN CHALLENGE

FIU TRACK



FIRST PLACE XDG TECHNOLOGIES

FIU Alum: Carlos Hondal (pictured) & Dr. Juan C. Roig



SECOND PLACE SUMMER CAMP LIVE

FIU Alumna: Vicky di Colloredo-Mels (pictured),
Carlo di Colloredo-Mels, Felipe Ospina & Juan Pablo Villegas



THIRD PLACE GROOVE CADDY

FIU Alumni Team: Jose Espin (pictured),
Carlos Martell & Mike Lowell

THE PINO CENTER WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE 2014 MIAMI HERALD BUSINESS PLAN CHALLENGE FIU TRACK JUDGES:

Lourdes Balepogi, Founder, Chispa Marketing & LulyB • John C. Fleming, Technology Practice Lead, Biztegra Partners
Robert H. Hacker, Managing Partner, GH Capital Partners & former CFO, One Laptop per Child Association
Heather Schwarz-Lopes, Chief Strategy Officer, EarlyShares • Ricardo Weisz, President, Northvest

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SECOND PLACE: SUMMER CAMP LIVE

Couple forges a connection between summer camp fairs and virtual realm

■ Summer Camp Live is an online directory and virtual event space for summer camps.

BY MADISON FANTOZZI
Special to the Miami Herald

Vicky di Colloredo-Mels worked as a camp referral agent traveling back and forth to Latin America. Quickly, she saw a need to streamline the connection between families and summer camps.

Despite her travel schedule and busy life as a mother of two, she co-founded Summer Camp Live, an online directory and virtual event space for summer camps with her husband, Carlo di Colloredo-Mels. Their goal: reduce marketing, travel and referral-agent costs while increasing camper enrollment.

Summer Camp Live's team won second place in the Miami Herald Business Plan Challenge's FIU Track. "They have identified an opportunity that is underserved and are well on their way to proving their business model," said Robert Hacker of GH Capital and a veteran Challenge judge.

The co-founders noted their platform's unique features. "Online directories have heavy subscription fees and the user still has to do a lot of the leg work," said Vicky di Colloredo-Mels, who has a bachelor's in management from FIU and has worked in the summer camp, education and banking industries. "Summer Camp Live...

works in a more efficient manner with industry experts and has a much wider reach."

Summer Camp Live allows users to search for camps and live-chat with directors like a physical camp fair, but the virtual booths are open 24/7 year-round. The site includes camps in Latin America, the U.S. and Europe.

Since summer camplive.com's April 2013 launch, it has registered about 3,300 camp-seekers.

Nory Contractor, a Coconut Grove resident, said Summer Camp Live helped her find a day camp for her visiting 12-



PETER ANDREW BOSCH/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

'UNDERSERVED' MARKET: Summer Camp Live's founders Vicky di Colloredo-Mels and husband Carlo di Colloredo-Mels.

year-old stepson.

"I don't have a kid year-round, and then it comes time to find a summer camp and I'm pretty much out of the loop," Contractor said. "The site has all the resources a parent would need from the leisure of their home. You can link to a camp's website, watch videos and chat with someone in real-time all in one place. It's really easy to navigate."

Her stepson will attend a local sailing camp this summer.

The site also offers a free online directory service for camp owners. The directory currently lists camps from around the world, including the U.S., Colombia, Puerto Rico, France, Switzerland, Greece and Spain.

Felipe Ospina, Vicky di Colloredo-Mels' managing partner, said the 40,000+-page directory is meant to encourage traffic to the virtual fair.

Thirty-three camps are currently subscribed to virtual booths. The team's goal: 500 by 2017.

Camps can join the virtual fair with a yearly subscription ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000, depending on the membership package. The team estimates this can save a residential camp on av-

• TURN TO CAMP, 186



Summer Camp Live takes camp-fair experience to virtual realm

• CAMP, FROM 166

erage \$27,000 a year in marketing expenses, assuming referrals make up 40 percent of enrollment and traditional referral fees are 15 percent of tuition per camper.

Scott Ralls, director of South Woods, a sleepaway camp located in the Adirondack Mountains of Upstate New York, subscribed to the

virtual fair in the fall. While he said it is too early to hash out the numbers, "my gut tells me Summer Camp Live is something we'll stick with."

"Our market is all over the world, and Summer Camp Live is actively marketing in multiple places that have our customers," Ralls said. "They did a very thorough job of looking into who we are and

what we're all about and have attracted a lot of people who are interested in our program."

Ospina said Summer Camp Live doesn't merely drive "clicks" to a camp website, but also provides pre-qualified leads, directly connecting parents to a camp's booth, where they may find videos, podcasts, additional marketing material and ap-

plication forms, and can schedule appointments to live chat.

While the team is targeting residential camps like South Woods, Vicky di Colloredo-Mels said she hopes Summer Camp Live will be a first point of contact for South Florida day camps within a few years.

The online directory features about 160 camps in

Florida, with 35 percent in South Florida.

"It may take some time for people to catch on to the idea," she said. "But when camps start asking why they're spending all that money on marketing when there's Summer Camp Live, we'll know we have implemented change."

Summer Camp Live is the only listed provider of virtual

camp fairs through the American Camp Association.

The couple, Ospina and partner Juan Pablo Villegas, a management consultant and University of Miami alum, have financed the company with partner equity and are looking for potential investors to continue growing their business.

Future plans include a summer camp job fair.

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SPECIAL REPORT

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BUSINESS PLAN CHALLENGE

AND IN THE WINNERS' CIRCLE ARE...



BY NANCY DAHLBERG
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We are pleased to introduce you to the winners of the 16th Annual Miami Herald Business Plan Challenge.

The winners' circle contains concepts in healthcare, fashion, athletics and tech. One theme running through many of the plans: community connection. To rise to the top, winners had to make a strong case for how they planned to execute their business plan.

This year, among 196 entries received, there were food products, spaces for artists and makers to gather, restaurants, green products, sports-related ideas, social entrepreneurial ventures and plenty of apps. The plans in our Challenge, sponsored by Florida International University's Eugenio Pino and Family Global Entrepreneurship Center, were judged by experts from our community — successful entrepreneurs, investors, executives and academics (see their bios on page 15) — as well as by the mobile via our

well as businesses that have a greater chance of achieving their goals."

Munchkin Fun, a community site to help parents choose, book and pay for kids' classes, won the Community Track and also was named the Challenge Champion, based on judges' scores and People's Pick voting. Fashion-tech company Fitting Room Social — an online shopping platform solving the question "will it fit me?" — came in second and AthleticSelect, linking future athletes with private coaches, was third.

On the FIU Track, XD G, a medical product to relieve polydactyly, the condition of extra fingers or toes, and remove skin tags, was the winning plan. Coming in second was Summer Camp Live, a platform that provides a virtual summer camp booking service, and Groove Caddy, with a new way to clean golf clubs, was third.

For the first time in the FIU Track, the judging included a live pitch session for the six finalists. Each team received up to 10 minutes to present their companies, and the sessions also included five minutes of Q&A time and feedback.

Over on the High School Track — which is co-sponsored by the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship — the winner was Word Avenger, by Miami Edison Senior High students. Word Avenger is an app that makes vocabulary building into a game.

through a medium that is familiar and comfortable to the age group," said Mercedes San Miguel, a CPA and judge, noting the creativity of all the winning plans. Moodpoint, an app to help track mood swings and combat depression, and Chinese Picture Dictionary, an app for learning the Chinese language, both by Ransom Everglades students, took second and third place.

In the People's Pick, which attracted 11,302 votes, it was neck-and-neck but the fashion-tech companies prevailed. Fitting Room Social edged out Munchkin Fun on the final day of voting, and Klost Karma, a marketplace for trading clothes that uses points as currency, emerged the winner in a tough race with Groove Caddy and Moonlighter, a co-working/maker space specializing in 3-D printing and design.

Although the contest was based on votes cast — and getting out the vote in social media is a key component — the two winners also drew the most video views in their respective tracks. Overall, Fitting Room Social drew the most views, 1,904, and Snap-score also on the Community Track was a close number two with 1,878 views at the close of voting.

Some of today's winners and finalists are first timers and others are serial entrepreneurs with decades of industry experience. But all are in the early stages of their businesses — we'll be watching

popular People's Pick video competition (see videos on

MiamiHerald.com/challenge). "Since I began judging the Business Plan Challenge seven years ago, the quality of the submissions has greatly increased," said judge Melissa Krinzman of Venture Architects, who led the Business Plan Bootcamp the last few "It's been quite exciting to see better business summaries as

"This mobile app will be popular with teens who dread SAT prep classes. It teaches

how they do! Read about all the winners on the following pages.

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