



# THE **START** SOMETHING CHALLENGE

## 2016 Media Kit

[StartSomethingChallenge.com](http://StartSomethingChallenge.com)

[SSC@RisingTide Capital.org](mailto:SSC@RisingTideCapital.org)

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# What is The Start Something Challenge?

The Start Something Challenge (SSC) is a business pitch competition for small businesses with annual revenues below \$250,000 per year. The goal of the challenge is to assist and encourage small business owners to build-out their social media presence, grow and strengthen their professional network, and develop a bullet-proof elevator pitch.

## The Prizes

**Grand Prize:** \$10,000 Business Grant

**Second Place:** \$7,500 Business Grant

**Third Place:** \$5,000 Business Grant

**People's Choice Prize:** \$1,000 Business Grant

**All Finalists:** Finalists who place 4<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> receive an Apple iPad

## The Story

The Start Something Challenge was launched in 2012, with 78 individuals competing across 11 cities in New Jersey. In just the first year, the competition and its participants amassed over fifteen million media impressions. Now in its fifth year, the SSC has grown in both size and prestige – covering over 32 cities, and making sixty four million impressions in 2015. This year's sponsors include Blackstone Charitable Foundation and JP Morgan Chase & Co.

The competition sets out not only as a way to inject money into worthy small businesses, but also as a method to teach and guide small businesses through the basics in networking, social media promotions and elevator pitching – all important elements in developing a business capable of growth.

From accommodation bookings for tourists, to motorcycle gear, past winners and participants have been extremely diverse in their product and service offerings. The one constant, however, has been an unequivocal willingness to learn, and push themselves far beyond their comfort zones.

The Challenge culminates at the annual Start Something Champions Gala, which celebrates the winners and honors innovators in the sphere of entrepreneurship.

## The Facts

- Website: [StartSomethingChallenge.com](http://StartSomethingChallenge.com)
- Contact Phone: 201-432-4316 ext 110.
- The Start Something Challenge is run by Rising Tide Capital from their Jersey City headquarters.
- Eligibility: Any New Jersey business with annual revenues amounting to less than \$250,000. New Jersey individuals who have not yet started a business may also compete.
- Since 2012, The SSC has generated over 120 million media impressions.
- Average Number of Cities Participating: 26.25; Ranging between 11 and 38 Cities
- Average Number of Contestants Participating: 86.25; Ranging between 72 and 107 Contestants
- Average Number of Impressions: 30.25 million; Ranging between 15 million and 64 million impressions
- Over \$90,000 in business grants have been won, to date.
- Over the past 5 years, the annual Start Something Champions Gala has raised more than \$1.5 million to support rising entrepreneurs with scholarships to Rising Tide Capital's Community Business Academy.

# Assets and Brand Guidelines

The logos and images below can be found at the following link for download.

<http://bit.ly/28hNfUw>



**THE START  
SOMETHING  
CHALLENGE**

Official SSC Logo – To be used, as is, without change.



Alfa Demmellash, Rising Tide Capital's CEO, addresses the audience at the 2015 Start Something Finalist Showcase at JPMorgan Chase's headquarters in New York City



City of Jersey City's Deputy Mayor Marcos Vigil at the 2015 Start Something Challenge Grand Finale at New Jersey City University



2015 Start Something Challenge Judges



2015 Start Something Challenge finalist Crystal Jones delivers a pitch for her business Loving Heart Patient Advocacy Group



2015 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner Angela Huggins (right) embraces her volunteer pitch coach Marcela Zuchovicki



Jersey City Deputy Mayor, Vivian Brady Phillips, addresses the audience during The 2014 Start Something Champions Gala at the Hyatt Hotel in Jersey City



Start Something Challenge Champions at the 2015 Gala



Joel Hammernick, Executive Director of Sunshine Enterprises, RTC's replication partner in Chicago, with RTC's CEO Alfa Demmellash at the 2015 Start Something Challenge Finalist Showcase



# Former Winners

## 2015

1. Omar Ruffin – Biarte Biker Gear Corporation
2. Angela Huggins – Angel Hugs 4 All
3. Myani Lawson -- Bergen-Lafayette Montessori School

## 2014

1. Ninotchka Johnson – Top Notch Designs
2. Kimberly Sumpter – Wax Kandy
3. Joanna Chmarzewska – Crazy for Italia

## 2013

1. Coretta Owusua – SuiteStay
2. Nicole Silva – DollyMoo
3. Elizabeth Migliore – Jersey City Veggie Burgers

## 2012

1. Moira Brett – GreenShave
2. Samantha Mills – New Life Journeys
3. Hyacinth Mills – Spine-O-medics



# Quotations

## **Alfa Demmellash Rising Tide Capital's CEO**

“Over the past four years, the Start Something Challenge has touched hundreds of business owners throughout the state of New Jersey, and they in turn have used the competition as a platform to spotlight their businesses. We want these entrepreneurs to have the confidence to come out and share their innovative ideas with confidence, to start building an audience around what they are doing, and to be able to clearly communicate across various marketing platforms. And this is why the Start Something Challenge has been engineered to be more than a business competition with a cash prize, because even the entrepreneurs who don't win can benefit from this opportunity to grow and strengthen their businesses.”

## **Alec Forrester Rising Tide Capital's COO**

“Every business needs customers and capital, and the Start Something Challenge focuses on both -- working with entrepreneurs on how to articulate their business ideas in a way that can put them out into the marketplace, introduce their businesses to potential customers and compete for the cash prizes that the competition offers that will help them take their businesses to the next level. We deeply appreciate the supporters and sponsors that have made the Start Something Challenge a success. They have really enabled us to not only expand, but enhance what we do each year.”

## **Myani Lawson – SSC 2015 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner -- Bergen-Lafayette Montessori School**

“Having the passion for something will get you started, but I really needed the 'know-how' to keep this whole thing going. I got that “know-how” from my experience with Rising Tide Capital and The Start Something Challenge.”

# The Start Something Competition: In the Press

## Reviving a lost art: *Local woman turns her childhood doll-making passion into a business*

Angela Huggins believes in a twist on the old adage: “A stitch in time saves lives.”

“Sewing is a lost art that people need to know,” said Huggins, who has turned her lifelong sewing habit into a local business.

Although she makes her living as a nurse, Huggins said sewing has been a big part of her life since she was a small girl.

### **Read More:**

[Hudson Reporter - Reviving a lost art Local woman turns her childhood doll making passion into a business](#)

## Jersey City woman turns hobby into personalized candle business

What began as a hobby for Kimberly Sumpter quickly turned into a business and, with the help of Rising Tide Capital, a thriving one.

Wax Kandy, Sumpter's line of handcrafted and keepsake photo candles, are manufactured in Jersey City and offered at Pooka Pure and Simple in Newark and Shuga Shoppe Salon in Rahway.

### **Read More:**

[http://www.nj.com/hudson/index.ssf/2015/01/jersey\\_city\\_entrepreneur\\_achieves\\_sweet\\_scent\\_of\\_s.html](http://www.nj.com/hudson/index.ssf/2015/01/jersey_city_entrepreneur_achieves_sweet_scent_of_s.html)

## **BiArté: A Business That's Breaking Cycles: *An Interview with Omar Ruffin, Rising Tide Capital Graduate***

Omar Ruffin is the President & CEO of BiArté Biker Gear Corporation, a startup committed to outfitting motorcyclists safely and stylishly. In July 2015, Ruffin won first place in the Start Something Challenge competition, earning a \$10,000 business grant.

Ruffin describes himself as a “Renaissance man of sorts.” He is a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., served in the United States Army National Guard, and is currently employed as a Flight Attendant with Delta Air Lines, which allows him not only the flexibility required to run his business, but also the opportunity to promote his brand worldwide. Through his business, he is working to build upon his own dream and create a legacy for his family.

**Read More:**

**[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-mariotti/biarte-a-business-thats-b\\_b\\_9209484.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-mariotti/biarte-a-business-thats-b_b_9209484.html)**

# Media Contact

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## About Rising Tide Capital

Rising Tide Capital (RTC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist struggling individuals and communities to build strong businesses which transform lives, strengthen families, and build sustainable communities. Since 2004, RTC has been building a replicable model for high-quality entrepreneurial development services that can be locally adopted in other low-income communities and used as a catalyst for economic and social empowerment.

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