



nfte!

Capital Region

**YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CHALLENGE 2025**

PRESENTED BY:



**Shape the future
with confidence**

SIGNATURE SPONSOR:



WITH ASSOCIATE SUPPORT FROM:





Serving communities.
Changing lives.
What matters to
you matters to us.

At EY, we're proud to support the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. It's one of the ways we're helping to make our community a better place to work and live. A better and brighter future starts with all of us.

ey.com

© 2025 Ernst & Young LLP. All Rights Reserved. ED None



Shape the future
with confidence

■ ■ ■
The better the question.
The better the answer.
The better the world works.

Agenda

NFTE Capital Region Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

- Host** Mary Blackford, **Founder, Market 7**
NFTE Class of 2006
- Judges** Hillary Brennan, **E*TRADE / Morgan Stanley**
Lisa K. Kelly, **EY**
Bryan Pyncheon, **EagleBank**
Tonia Wellons, **Greater Washington Community Foundation**
Tien Wong, **Opus8, Inc.**
Vennard Wright, **PerVista AI**
- Student Finalists** **Carry Confidence** - Elijah Parker & Kymani Otano-Charity
Francis Scott Key Elementary Middle School
ScholarSync - Arlo Pangilinan
Oxon Hill High School
- Volunteer Awards** Meg Stewart, **Executive Director, NFTE Capital**
presented to: Matt Aaron, LUX Wealth Planning
E*TRADE from Morgan Stanley
- Fast Pitch Chat** **Blysse** - Mariana Phipps & Paige Dickensheets
Francis Scott Key Elementary Middle School
Paws and Claws - Jazlyn Ramirez
Falls Church High School
- Teacher Awards** Carolyn Meadors, **Program Manager, NFTE Capital**
- Winner Announcements and Closing**
Dr. J. D. LaRock, **President & CEO, NFTE**

Your prosperity is our purpose.

Santander applauds Network for Teaching
Entrepreneurship for making a real difference.



santanderbank.com

Santander Bank, N.A. is a Member FDIC. ©2022 Santander Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. Santander, Santander Bank and the Flame logo are trademarks of Banco Santander, S.A. or its subsidiaries in the United States or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. 705501 04/2022

Host

Mary Blackford

Founder, **Market 7**
NFTE Class of 2006



Mary Blackford is the Founder of Market 7, Washington, DC's first Black-owned food hall that features Black-owned food and lifestyle businesses for the purpose of alleviating food and retail deserts in DC.

Mary graduated from Babson College with a BS in Business Management. As a student she also taught entrepreneurship courses to high school students in Ghana and South Africa. She began her career in the socially responsible finance industry as an Analyst. In 2013, Mary became one of the founding chapter leaders of the DC Chapter of Women Investing for a Sustainable Economy (WISE), a women-led professional group committed to providing resources to women working within the impact investing industry. In the summer of 2017 she launched her most recent venture Market 7. Market 7 has worked with 60 Black-owned businesses in the DC area to create alternative community pop-up markets that include fresh food, lifestyle products, and home essentials in Ward 7 (DC). Market 7 is currently building a new 7,000 sq ft food hall slated to open in 2021. Market 7 has been highlighted by the DC Mayor Muriel Browser, The Washington Post, Forbes, CNBC, Black Enterprise, The Washingtonian, Essence Magazine, NBC, FOX, and WUSA.

In 2019, Mary created a partnership with Whole Foods Market (Mid-Atlantic) to bring more Black-owned brands to their stores. Mary has also developed training partnerships with Google and the Greater Washington Urban League to provide entrepreneurial training in underserved communities in 2020-2021. Mary is a proud NFTE alumna from the class of 2006.

Judges

Hillary Brennan

Managing Director, Non-Financial Risk
*E*TRADE / Morgan Stanley*

Hillary Brennan is a Managing Director and Head of Global Privacy Compliance at Morgan Stanley. She is responsible for managing the Firm's global privacy compliance program, including policies and procedures, regulatory change management, monitoring and testing, privacy risk assessments, and training designed to help the Firm comply with global privacy laws and mitigate privacy-related risks to Firm clients and employees. Ms. Brennan joined Morgan Stanley from E*TRADE, where she was the Chief Privacy Officer and head of the Cybersecurity and Privacy Legal Team.

Prior to joining E*TRADE, Ms. Brennan was a partner in the global cybersecurity practice at Baker & McKenzie LLP where her practice focused on incident response, crisis management, internal investigations, and complex criminal, civil, and administrative litigation.

Ms. Brennan received a BSPH in Environmental Engineering from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law.



Lisa K. Kelly

Partner, Assurance Services
EY

Lisa is a Partner in the Assurance practice at EY with 20 years of experience in public accounting, specializing in high-growth companies within the Technology (TMT) and Real Estate sectors. She has a proven track record of guiding both public and private firms through transformational changes, including significant acquisitions, initial public offerings, and market expansions. As the Program Director for the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ program in the Mid-Atlantic region, she is dedicated to supporting and connecting local entrepreneurs who exemplify vision, leadership, and success.

Lisa holds a Bachelor of Science from Elon University and is a licensed CPA in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. She is also Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt certified and a member of the American Institute of CPAs.



Bryan Pynchon

1st Senior Vice President and Maryland Market Executive
EagleBank

Bryan Pynchon has had a 30-year Commercial Banking career in the Great Washington Region. In his current position as 1st Senior Vice President and Maryland Market Executive for EagleBank he is responsible for managing a team of bankers in the Commercial & Industrial sector.

Previously, Bryan served board roles at the Greater Washington Board of Trade and NFTE Capital Region. He lives in Falls Church with his wife and 2 adolescent teenagers.



Our 2024 finalists and judges (c) Exposure Photography

Judges, continued

Tonia Wellons

President & CEO

Greater Washington Community Foundation

Tonia Wellons is the President & CEO of the Greater Washington Community Foundation, that directs \$80 million in annual grants. Her leadership has strategically focused the foundation's work on addressing the racial wealth gap.

With over 20 years of experience in public-private partnerships and financial inclusion, Tonia previously served in the Obama Administration leading global partnerships at the Peace Corps and as a fund manager at the World Bank Group.

Tonia serves on multiple prestigious boards while actively participating in influential DC organizations. She has earned significant recognition for her leadership, including recent honors from top regional publications. A longtime Prince George's County resident, she holds advanced degrees in Public Administration and International Development from the University of Delaware following undergraduate studies in Political Science at North Carolina A&T State University.



Tien Wong

Chairman & CEO

Opus8, Inc.

Tien Wong is a tech investor, entrepreneur, and CEO. He is Chairman and CEO of Opus8, Inc., a private investment and advisory firm investing in life science and tech enabled services companies and specializing in raising capital for promising tech companies and alternative investment fund managers. He is also Founder of CONNECTpreneur, a global community of 25,000+ founders, investors, and executives known for organizing the world's largest monthly virtual investor pitch events. Over 1,200 companies have presented, and half received funding from the CONNECTpreneur network.

Mr. Wong is a Venture Partner at IronGate Capital Advisors, serves on advisory boards including Virginia Venture Partners and advisory councils including the Washington Institute for Business, Government & Society and The Universities of Shady Grove. He is Chairman of Lumious, an ed tech company. Additionally, Mr. Wong serves on the boards of organizations including the Austin Venture Association, Association for Enterprise Growth (Chair), and Junior Achievement. He was appointed by Governor O'Malley to the Maryland Venture Fund Authority, overseeing \$84 million in VC allocations, and mentors at accelerators like Mach37 and Conscious Venture Labs. He is a former Chair of the Executive Leadership Committee for NFTE.

An Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year honoree and Montgomery County Business Hall of Fame inductee, Mr. Wong has been repeatedly recognized as a "Tech Titan" by the *Washingtonian* and a Power 100 leader by the *Washington Business Journal*. He lectures on entrepreneurship and venture capital at the University of Maryland and Georgetown University, where he is an Entrepreneur in Residence.

Previously, Mr. Wong co-founded and led CyberRep, Inc., one of the world's largest privately held CRM outsourcing companies, which was acquired by a Fortune 500 company. Mr. Wong is a graduate of Dartmouth College.



Highlights from the expo 2024 (c) Exposurely Photography

Judges, continued

Vennard Wright

Founder & CEO

PerVista AI



Vennard Wright is the Founder & CEO of PerVista AI. Prior to founding PerVista, he served as President & CEO of Wave Welcome. His professional experience is comprised of multiple executive leadership roles including serving as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) & Vice President of Operations for Iron Bow Technologies, CIO for WSSC Water, CIO for Prince George's County Government (MD), and Director of Technology for Hillary Clinton during her successful United States Senate re-election campaign and subsequent 2008 Presidential Campaign. Lastly, he served as the Chief Technology Officer for Electronic Data Systems (EDS).

As a complement to his decades of IT leadership experience, Vennard is a USA Track & Field (USATF) and Roadrunners Club of America certified coach.

Vennard Wright resides in Clinton, MD as husband to his beautiful wife, Janelle, with whom he shares four amazing, adult children.

NFTE Capital Region Advisory Board

Matt Aaron, CFP, LUX Wealth Planning

Anthony Calderazzi, EY

Keith James, Coalition Properties Group

Finalist Businesses

FULL PITCH PRESENTATION:

Carry Confidence - Elijah Parker & Kymani Otano-Charity - Francis Scott Key Elementary Middle School

The mission of Carry Confidence is to provide one-of-a-kind custom bags that will allow the owner to confidently and stylishly carry their belongings. We will provide a fully customized bag based on your description or design. It can be a tote bag, book bag, or drawstring bag, in whatever color(s) you want, and can include anything you like that could be put on a bag.

ScholarSync - Arlo John Pangilinan - Oxon Hill High School

ScholarSync offers a mix of digital planners and online consultations that enlightens burnt out, anxious, and procrastinating high school students by creating time management tools to get their lives in a more detail-oriented, ordered fashion. ScholarSync is a mix of schedules, task lists, and helpful routines through the Notion workspace that we make you within a day. These can all be fully optimized through our 30-minute online consultation sessions. We want the most optimized experience through our services so that a high school scholar's coursework can be lightened through the most effective management of time.

FAST PITCH:

Blysse - Mariana Phipps & Paige Dickensheets - Francis Scott Key Elementary Middle School

At Blysse we create perfumes made from all natural ingredients such as flowers and olive oil, that will not harm you or the environment during use. We can make you feel confident in your own skin and not worry about casualties. Our mission is to improve the world around you while pursuing the dream of a happy body and clean mind.

Paws and Claws - Jazlyn Ramirez - Falls Church High School

At Paws and Claws, we are dedicated to providing exceptional care for every pet, ensuring their well being and happiness. Providing pet grooming, boarding, and training services, we strive to put the Paws and Claws first, making premium pet care accessible to all.



Empowering youth through entrepreneurial education to foster economic resilience and growth in a rapidly changing world.

We are inspired by these students' drive to make a positive impact and excited to see their solutions unfold in the real world. - Zuora

www.zuora.com



We are pleased to support NFTE's efforts to help activate entrepreneurial mindsets through volunteerism.

We are proud of our employee volunteers who contribute their time and skills to advance NFTE's impact.

PayPal



 Community Impact

Volunteers of the Year

We are immensely grateful to all of our volunteers. This year, we are especially proud to celebrate our **Individual Volunteer of the Year, Matt Aaron** of LUX Wealth Planning.



Matt has been a committed member of the NFTE Board since 2022. He is deeply aligned with NFTE's mission and is particularly passionate about empowering youth from underserved communities by equipping them with essential financial skills that pave the way for future success. Matt has generously volunteered his time as a guest speaker and judge for NFTE students throughout the Capital Region. As a board member, he has worked diligently to expand support for NFTE's programs, organizing two fundraising events and actively recruiting volunteers to engage with students.

We are also proud to honor our **Corporate Volunteer of the Year, E*TRADE from Morgan Stanley**

E*TRADE[®]
from Morgan Stanley

E*TRADE from Morgan Stanley became a partner of NFTE in 2005 and has since remained a dedicated supporter of the Capital Region. Over the years, they have contributed numerous volunteers who have served as business coaches and judges. Four different members of the E*TRADE team have also served on the Capital Region Advisory Board. In recent years, E*TRADE's generous increase in funding has significantly accelerated the growth of our programs, enabling the Capital Region to double the number of students enrolled in NFTE programs across the region.

[JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY! CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Thank You Challenge Sponsors

PRESENTED BY:



WITH SIGNATURE SUPPORT FROM:



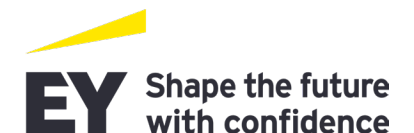
AND ASSOCIATE SUPPORT FROM:



NFTE National Supporters

Thanks to the commitment of NFTE's national donors, an increasing number of young people are prepared with the entrepreneurial mindset and startup skills required to succeed in today's innovation economy.

Entrepreneurial Leaders (\$1,000,000+)



Equity Investors (\$500,000+)

Citi Foundation



INTUIT



Learn more about NFTE

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) ignites the entrepreneurial mindset with unique learning experiences that empower students to own their futures. A global nonprofit founded in 1987, NFTE provides high-quality entrepreneurship education to middle school, high school, and postsecondary students.

NFTE brings the power of entrepreneurship to students, regardless of family income, community resources, special needs, gender identity, race, or ethnicity. NFTE has educated more than a million students, delivering our programs in school, out of school, in-person, online, or through hybrid models. To learn more or make your own gift, visit www.nfte.com.



Network for Teaching
Entrepreneurship



@NFTE

#RoadToNationals

#ChallengeMe

For more information about NFTE,
please visit www.nfte.com.

Follow us

