

nfte!



West
YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CHALLENGE 2025

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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.

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

Agenda

NFTE West Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Saturday, May 31, 2025

- Host** Solonia Allen
Founder, ALMNDMLK
NFTE Class of 2024
- Judges** Dulari Amin, **Sidelines**
Antonia Castro, **SoLa Foundation**, *NFTE Class of 2013*
Devang Gaur, **Adobe**
Amir Mossanen, **Truist**
Brittany Trick, **U.S. Bank**
- Finalists** **Soberband** - Jamie Jimenez - Florence Nightingale Middle School
NatureHue - Cicily Yu & Raymond Cheung Wu - Abraham Lincoln High School
Mindi - Andre Cheng - Florence Nightingale Middle School
Mischee Film - Lychee Lee - Los Angeles Urban League
Smart Swing - Noelle Kanon - Joseph A. Gregori High School
- Volunteer and Teacher Recognition**
Emma Hunt, **Program Director, NFTE West**
Kristina Caberto Wallace, **Development Director, NFTE West**
- Guest Speaker**
Charles Choice, **Do-Or-Dier Visionary Foundation**
NFTE West Advisory Board
NFTE Class of 2001
- Winner Announcements and Closing**
Dr. J. D. LaRock, **President & CEO, NFTE**

Finalist Businesses

Soberband - Jamie Jimenez - Florence Nightingale Middle School

Soberband is a wristband that uses light technology to accurately measure a driver's blood alcohol content. The wristband pairs with your vehicle's app through Bluetooth, and if it detects that your BAC is over the legal limit, it will automatically disable your car, preventing you from driving under the influence.

NatureHue - Cicily Yu & Raymond Cheung Wu - Abraham Lincoln High School

NatureHue is determined to provide teachers, artists, children, parents, and any individual who uses markers with an eco-friendly and non-toxic alternative. We achieve the state of being eco-friendly by manufacturing our markers out of biodegradable and natural materials. Our mission as a sustainable marker brand is to reduce plastic waste while providing users with a marker that's not toxic to inhale.

Mindi - Andre Cheng - Florence Nightingale Middle School

At Mindi, our mission is to tear down the barriers to wellness. We understand how devastating mental health issues can be, and by offering a mental health app that is low pressure, accessible, and anonymous, we can address barriers to mental health head on, and make achieving wellness easier than ever.

Mischee Film - Lychee Lee - Los Angeles Urban League

Mischee Film is a film production company that will produce 12 short films per year, each one focusing on a specific perspective or type of crime. While the films will be self-standing with their own storyline and point of view, they will all be connected to form a feature crime series.

Smart Swing - Noelle Kanon - Joseph A Gregori High School

Smart Swing is a gadget that is attached to a tennis player's racket. It uses AI to accurately pinpoint whether the ball is in or out. It connects to an app where you can go back and check previous points. It allows the player to focus on the game without the frustration of human error and missed calls.

Event Host

Solonia Allen

Founder

ALMNDMLK

NFTE Class of 2024



Solonia is known as the founder of ALMNDMLK, an all-vegan cake brand with a mission to make plant-based desserts exciting, flavorful, and unforgettable.

She launched ALMNDMLK after perfecting a lemon cake that changed how her family viewed vegan baking. Since then, she's grown her business from home kitchens to the Brentwood Farmers Market, captivating customers with her colorful aesthetic and crave-worthy creations.

Solonia is also a proud NFTE alumna entrepreneur who has competed in regional and national pitch competitions, winning many and gaining recognition for her creativity, determination, and business intelligence. Her journey has taken her from local stages to national spotlights.

With ALMNDMLK, Solonia aims to make vegan baking mainstream and inclusive—one cake at a time.

Judges

Dulari Amin

Co-founder

Sidelines

Dulari Amin is a C-suite Executive, Entrepreneur, and Investor with over 20 years of experience scaling companies from early-stage to IPO across consumer, technology, and healthcare. She is the co-founder of Sidelines, a growth advisory platform that connects strategic angel capital and support services to high-potential startups.

Previously, Dulari was part of the executive team at Cue Health, where she helped scale the company from R&D to a \$3B IPO (NASDAQ: HLTH). As a Series B investor turned operator, she led marketing, enterprise growth, and investor relations.

Prior to Cue, she founded Phenomenon, a business transformation agency, scaling it to \$100M+ revenue and 200 employees before successfully exiting to private equity. She has personally invested in healthcare, CPG, and technology startups with three IPOs in her portfolio.

Dulari served as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees at Woodbury University and a board member at Beyond Capital, a social impact fund. Recognized by Ad Age, Inc. 500, and LA Business Journal, she is a frequent speaker at industry conferences.

She graduated from Harvard Business School and FIT.



Antonia Castro

Senior Program Manager

SoLa Foundation

NFTE Class of 2013

Driven by purpose and rooted in community, Antonia currently serves as the Senior Program Manager at the SoLa Foundation, where she leads high-impact initiatives in entrepreneurship, workforce development, and financial literacy for youth and adults across South Los Angeles.

With a strong focus on equity and innovation, Antonia designs and oversees programs that equip individuals—especially those from historically underserved communities—with the tools, skills, and confidence to succeed in today's economy. Her work spans from managing career pathways for high school and college students to launching entrepreneurship and cybersecurity programs for adults.



Devang Gaur

Product Manager

Adobe

Devang Gaur is a Product Manager at Adobe leading global payments and machine learning initiatives. With experience at both Adobe and PayPal, he specializes in payment optimization, fraud prevention, and cross-border commerce.

Devang architects AI-powered payment solutions and is a recognized industry speaker who regularly shares insights at conferences and through digital content. When not solving payment challenges, he enjoys long drives, competitive badminton, and exploring new cuisines.



Judges, continued

Amir Mossanen

Senior Wealth Advisor

Leader, Transcendent Wealth Team

Truist

With over \$11 billion in M&A experience, Amir Mossanen leads the Transcendent Wealth Team at Truist, specializing in guiding middle-market business founders through complex transitions—typically businesses valued between \$50M to \$300M, though his expertise extends beyond this range.

Amir and his team take a deliberately selective approach, working with around 40 clients. Their philosophy is rooted in depth over breadth—prioritizing long-term partnerships rather than transactional engagements. They view wealth as a catalyst for fulfillment, not simply a financial metric, and remain trusted advisors long after the business sale, helping founders and their families lead rich, meaningful lives beyond their entrepreneurial journey.

Grounded in the 3Cs—Care, Communication, and Competence, Amir’s approach ensures each client feels supported through every stage of their transition.



Brittany Trick

Small Business Sales Manager - VP

U.S. Bank

Brittany Trick is an accomplished Small Business Sales Manager - VP at U.S. Bank, where she leads a high-performing team dedicated to supporting small business clients across Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties. With over 12 years of experience in the financial services industry—most of it focused on small business banking—Brittany is passionate about helping entrepreneurs succeed and thrive.

As the daughter of a small business owner, Brittany brings a personal understanding of the challenges and rewards that come with entrepreneurship. She is deeply committed to adding value to the businesses she serves and takes pride in seeing them create lasting, positive change in their communities.

Brittany leads with a servant’s heart, dedicating time outside of work to volunteering and giving back to the local communities she supports. Her leadership is rooted in empathy, service, and a genuine drive to uplift others—both professionally and personally.



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Guest Speaker

Charles Choice

Executive Director

Do-Or-Dier Visionary Foundation

NFTE West Advisory Board

NFTE Class of 2001



Charles Choice is the Executive Director of the Do-Or-Dier Visionary Foundation, which he helped found alongside entrepreneur and media personality Rob Dyrdek. The foundation supports underrepresented entrepreneurs and youth through mindset development, strategic partnerships, and transformational programming.

A proud NFTE alum, Charles launched his first venture-backed tech startup after leaving JPMorgan Chase and has since held leadership roles at Uncommon Schools in Brooklyn and WeWork. His career spans education, technology, and philanthropy, and he remains deeply committed to creating access and opportunity for the next generation of visionary leaders.

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, visit www.nfte.com.

NFTE West Advisory Board

Gary Rabishaw (Chair), Intrepid Investment Bankers

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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, Chris Boyd** of Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati!



For more than 15 years, Chris has been a tireless and enthusiastic champion for NFTE West. Not only has he served as an involved Advisory Board member, but he has personally committed to coaching our finalists and hosting field trips for our students. He took students under his wing and truly committed to their individual growth and success. As a board member, he leads by example and is an invaluable member of our team.

We are also proud to honor our **Corporate Volunteer of the Year, BMO**



BMO cannot be matched in their eagerness to help grow the experiences of NFTE West students. With leadership from one of our Advisory Board members, John Finley, BMO recruits a large number of volunteers, both for the West and for NFTE nationally. Their generous financial support of NFTE West also makes them truly invaluable to what we do. BMO always shows true dedication to NFTE's mission, and their "how can we help" approach proves their intent in making a difference for NFTE West students.

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



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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



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.

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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.





Network for Teaching
Entrepreneurship

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