

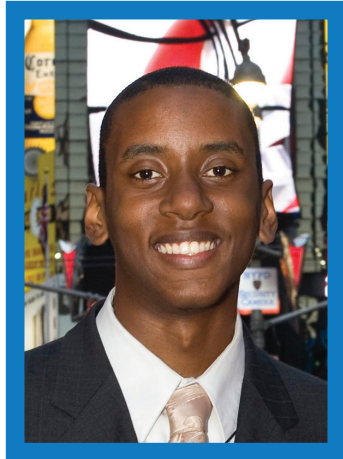
## Rodney Walker

### 2nd Place

In my 18 years of life, I have been placed in over 15 foster homes and have attended more than 10 elementary schools. Growing up, I really didn't have a true family to rely on, to go to for comfort, or to teach me things I would need to know later in life. These experiences have taught me not to be dependent on others, but rather, self-reliant. By not having the opportunity to have a life with my own family, I feel like I've been able to find myself as an individual, and that's why I am so ambitious about going to college and succeeding.

I was born and raised in Chicago. Before my senior year in high school, I knew nothing about what it meant to own your own business. Then I was introduced to NFTE, and from that program I was able to develop a business plan and establish a business. In January 2008, I launched Forever Life Music & Video Production, which creates videos and music for special occasions and events. The unique aspect of this business is that we produce original songs for your special event. We also produce your event as a movie-like video, to help bring out the true emotion of the event. So far my business, which has grown with the help and support of so many people, has generated \$5,000 in gross profit. The business is not currently at full operation due to my school commitments – I'm in my freshman year at Morehouse College - but plans for full operation will begin after I graduate.

I feel this business can fulfill its ultimate purpose, which is to help customers realize how blessed they are despite the challenges they might face. My business is meant to help instill a sense of gratitude and appreciation in people, and to influence positive energy, love, and happiness to all that come in contact with this service. In my life, I've experienced pain, sorrow, misery, turmoil, and tragedy, but from everything I've gone through, I still have so much hope and gratitude for everything and everyone that has touched my life. This feeling and this hope are what drive me to expand my business and to go further in life.



## Amanda Loyola

### 3rd Place

I'm Amanda Loyola, and I am 15 years old. Two years ago, my dog Princess died of cancer. I was heartbroken, and wanted to know what caused her to get sick, so I did some research online and found out that red meat is one of the leading causes of cancer in dogs. The process of raising cattle is also really harmful to the environment – the chemicals that cattle ingest are released back into the environment and can damage the earth's ozone layer.

In 2007, I took a NFTE BizCamp as part of New York City's Prep for Prep program, which was tons of fun, and taught me so much. When it was time to come up with an idea for a business plan – I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I had attended the Live Earth concert that summer, and it made me to make my own mark on the world – that feeling, combined with the loss of my dog and what I had learned about her illness, inspired me to found EcoDog Treats LLC, a line of vegetarian dog treats. My dad is a chef, so he helped me figure out the best recipe. The treats are made of peanut butter, eggs, flour, oil, vegetable broth, and peas and carrots. After I had perfected the recipe, I went to the corner and offered them to the dogs walking by. They all ate them really fast, so I knew I had a good product!

I was really surprised when I won first place in the NFTE New York Metro regional business plan competition, and even more surprised when I was one of the three finalists at the national competition. It was a great experience and I met a lot of other great NFTE students from all over the country.

When I go to college in two years, I want to study economics, and hopefully I will get the necessary pet food licenses that will allow me to make and market more flavors of dog treats. Eventually I want to expand into making healthy dog meals as well. My advice to other aspiring young entrepreneurs is this – if you believe in your business idea, then you should go for it! □

