

Community support key for early-stage entrepreneurs at StartingBlock

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Community support is key to some of the earliest-stage startups working in the recently opened StartingBlock space in Madison.

“All the faces that you see everyday — it keeps the mood up,” said Clay Burdelik, CEO of YoEats, which has been working out of the space for the past three weeks as construction crews finished up. “Entrepreneurship can be up and down. If there’s a friendly face, that adds a comraderie aspect because they’re going through the same thing.”

Organizers for StartingBlock held a launch event yesterday evening at the new Spark Building, which has several floors dedicated to the Madison-based entrepreneurial group. The space is envisioned as a hub for entrepreneurs and established companies to interface and make connections, ultimately strengthening the area’s startup ecosystem.

Over 400 people attended the event, which featured food, drinks, product demonstrations, live music and comments from StartingBlock leaders.

Scott Resnick, entrepreneur-in-residence for StartingBlock, said “this has been years in the making.”

Five years ago, organizers were looking for promising real estate projects to house the proposed startup hub. Three years ago, American Family Insurance decided to

join the endeavor. Less than two years ago, building construction began at 821 E. Washington Ave., several blocks away from the state Capitol.

“Now, we’re finally ready,” he said.

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