

Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele: Milwaukee County pilots BOSS Program to help build entrepreneurial skills, career paths for students

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MILWAUKEE – Five female high school students earned the title of entrepreneur this week as their winning vision for an airport concessions business, Yummy Care, came to life at General Mitchell International Airport (MKE), Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele announced today.

Tuesday's showcase event was the final reward for a group of students participating in career pathway program designed to give business experience using real-world projects.

Authorized by the Wisconsin State Legislature, the BOSS (Building Occupational Skills for Success) program piloted in Milwaukee County earlier this year, with five groups of high school sophomores creating and presenting business concepts for airport concessions. They performed market and consumer research to create business plans, which they then pitched to airport and County officials. The winning students got to transform a current food-and-beverage space at MKE for one night into their winning concept.

Their idea for Yummy Care was to give families with kids a place where they can not

only relax and play, but also find healthy food options - all in one place.

“These students did an outstanding job in thinking through a concept that would resonate with people - and since I have three young daughters, that includes me,” said Abele. “It’s exciting to see a business concept come to life, and I’m grateful that Milwaukee County could be part of that.

“We have incredible entrepreneurs in Milwaukee County, of all ages and experience levels. I’m glad that the BOSS program could pilot here to show the quality of ideas our kids have and help them develop real-world business skills,” he added.

The winning students, who attend Tenor High School in Milwaukee, were: Ruth Arias, Desteny Cruz, Joselena Ortiz, Karina Reyes and Islena Zepeda. In addition to seeing their business concept come to life, the young women each received a certificate presented by Abele.

A coffee shop in the airport was temporarily converted into the Yummy Care concept for the showcase event. MKE Airport retailer Paradies Lagardère and restaurant operators HMSHost and SSP America invested countless hours of staff time and provided food for the event.

Additionally, Milwaukee County’s Community Development Business Partners (CDBP) was instrumental in creating the partnership between the County and the BOSS program.

“It’s great to see this vision become a reality for these young women, they represent the future of Milwaukee and we couldn’t have selected a better city to launch this pilot,” said Pete Bellavia, BOSS program director.

ABOUT THE BOSS PROGRAM

In 2017, the Committee on Joint Finance of the Wisconsin State Legislature gave unanimous bipartisan support to a Milwaukee pilot of the BOSS Program, launched in January 2018 and successfully completed June 2018. The goal was to create an anchor point that aligns all state career pathways initiatives in a practical and efficient framework, including Wisconsin Academic and Career Planning and Career and Technical Education programs. The BOSS Program brings together the ACP vision, with total integration of its Know-Explore-Plan-Go! model. As a CTE program, BOSS achieves all six Wisconsin Common Career Technical standards, and consolidates the core academic standards for three CTE programs: Business and

Information Technology, Marketing, Management and Entrepreneurship, and Family and Consumer Sciences. Additionally, BOSS has full coverage of Employability Certification standards, and is designed to transition participants into summer employment. For these reasons and more, BOSS is well positioned as Wisconsin's Career Pathways Foundation Stone.