

UNITED WAY OF METROPOLITAN DALLAS CELEBRATES WINNERS OF NINTH ANNUAL 'THE PITCH' SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETITION

Housing Connector Named Social Innovator of the Year, Taking Home a Total of \$110,000 in Prize Funding to Expand and Accelerate Their Social Impact Work

[Click here](#) for press kit.

DALLAS (APRIL 9, 2025) – In a night filled with energy, inspiration, and community celebration, [United Way of Metropolitan Dallas](#) – alongside an esteemed panel of judges and enthusiastic audience participation – proudly crowned the winners of the ninth annual The Pitch, the region's premier social innovation competition. The event, held on April 9 at The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory in Irving, Texas, awarded a total of \$295,000 in funding to support visionary social entrepreneurs dedicated to improving access to education, income, and health in North Texas.

Following compelling presentations by five finalists, **Housing Connector** was named **Social Innovator of the Year**, earning a total of **\$110,000** in prize funding, including the **\$60,000 Social Innovator of the Year award**, delivered by **Amazon**. The Housing Connector's innovative approach to creating a collaborative affordable housing model for low-income community members by working with property owners to reduce application criteria stood out as a transformative solution to one of North Texas' most pressing challenges.

"The Pitch is one of the most inspiring events in the Southwest, showcasing bold, forward-thinking solutions to challenges facing our community," said Jennifer Sampson, McDermott-Templeton President & CEO of United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. "Each finalist tonight demonstrated ingenuity, passion, and a commitment to driving meaningful change. While we celebrate the winners, the real victory is for the North Texas community that will benefit from these groundbreaking initiatives."

Additional Awards Presented at The Pitch

In addition to the Social Innovator of the Year award, several other outstanding social entrepreneurs were recognized for their innovation, impact, and entrepreneurial spirit:

- **The \$30,000 Audience Choice Award**, sponsored by **Sara & Gary Ahr**, went to **La Tiendita**, a nonprofit grocery store and resource center, empowering at-risk Latino students with internships and support to graduate from high school. This award was selected by the live audience voting for their compelling pitch and vision for change.
- **The \$25,000 Entrepreneurial Spirit Award**, sponsored by **Satori Capital**, was awarded to **Housing Connector**.
- **The \$20,000 Impact Award**, sponsored by **Toyota**, was presented to **Learning Bridge**, an innovative video game that assists students in navigating college access and planning their educational future.
- **The \$20,000 Innovation Award**, sponsored by **Vistra Corp.**, was awarded to **The GEMS Camp**, which provides access to quality STEM education for underrepresented girls in North Texas.
- **The \$15,000 Presentation Prize**, sponsored by **Accenture**, was given to **La Tiendita**.

[Each finalist](#) also received a **\$25,000 Accelerator Prize**, sponsored by **March**

Tocqueville Fellows, in recognition of their journey through the Social Innovation Accelerator and their commitment to scaling their impact.

A Legacy of Social Innovation

The Pitch is the culminating event of **United Way's Social Innovation Accelerator**, a program designed to empower and equip social entrepreneurs with the resources, funding, and mentorship they need to create scalable solutions in education, income, and health. Since its inception in 2013, the Accelerator has supported **83 nonprofit organizations**, helping them raise over **\$75 million in additional funding**, form **2,620 partnerships**, and positively **impact nearly 508,000** North Texans.

This year's competition was powered by generous support from sponsors, including **Accenture, Sara & Gary Ahr, Amazon, Cruise, Fossil Group, Goldman Sachs, March Tocqueville Fellows, PepsiCo, Sammons Enterprises, Satori Group, Melanie & Scott Schoenvogel, Toyota, and Vistra Corp.**

The panel of distinguished judges for *The Pitch 2025* included:

- **Mike & Kass Lazerow**, Co-founders of Golf.com and Buddy Media, Founders and Partners of Velvet Sea Ventures
- **Vipin Nambiar**, founder and managing partner of HN Capital Partners
- **Jamie O'Banion**, Founder and CEO, BeautyBio
- **Megha Tolia**, Board member; Co-founding director, Spears Institute for Entrepreneurship

During the competition, each finalist had five minutes to present their groundbreaking ideas, followed by a Q&A session with the judges. Pitches were evaluated based on **impact, innovation, sustainability, and presentation**.

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas remains committed to fostering social innovation as a key driver of progress for North Texas. Nonprofit organizations interested in applying for the next cohort of the **Social Innovation Accelerator** can find more details at [Social Innovation Accelerator - United Way of Metropolitan Dallas](#).

In 2025, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas is proudly celebrating [100 years](#) as the leading force for social change in North Texas. The centennial anniversary represents a milestone year that will include a dynamic line-up of volunteer and community events – including our Centennial Celebration, presented by PepsiCo – that will not only honor our rich legacy but also shine a spotlight on the bold, innovative ways we're shaping the future of our region. With our committed partners, we're setting the stage for the next century of positive, long-lasting change, ensuring that we create the access and opportunity for North Texans to thrive for generations to come.

###

About United Way of Metropolitan Dallas

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas is a social change organization that unites the community to create access and opportunity for all North Texans to thrive. We bring together passionate change-makers alongside corporate, civic and nonprofit partners to drive lasting change and equity in education, income and health – the building blocks of opportunity. United Way is committed to leading a fully inclusive, multicultural movement right here at home. We invite all North Texans to Live United and be part of this change. To give, advocate or volunteer, visit UnitedWayDallas.org.

CONTACT:

Dandy Killeen | Tony Fay PR | 817.307.4645 | dandy@tonyfaypr.com

Tony Fay PR | 1 | Dallas, TX 75074 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!