



May 19, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nadia Osman, (478) 361-1313 or nosman.yea@maconchamber.com

**MACON'S FIRST YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ACADEMY RECEIVES
NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND HOSTS CELEBRATORY EVENTS**

MACON, Ga – The first Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) program for Macon-Bibb County, and the state of Georgia, received a national award for the success of its inaugural year earlier this month, as part of the YEA! National Conference. YEA! Macon, which was launched by the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, was selected as only one of five programs to receive a YEA! Director's Award, out of the over 100 cities in which YEA! operates in the United States and India.

The YEA! Macon program began in 2016 and, since September, has worked with 20 middle and high school students to help them start their own companies. The participants applied and were selected from area public, private and home schools based on the entrepreneurial characteristics they already exhibited, including creativity, enthusiasm, maturity and commitment.

Throughout the program, the students have learned business skills from both YEA! National's curriculum, which is backed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as real world applications from over 50 community volunteers. The business and community leaders who volunteered for the program presented, hosted field trips, mentored and even invested in the students' companies.

Thanks to the support of local partners and volunteers, the YEA! Macon students have grown their business ideas into viable business opportunities, feasible business plans, funded business pitches and newly launched entrepreneurial ventures. From new inventions to creative services, the student companies are as diverse and unique as the community of Macon-Bibb County.

The first YEA! Macon program will culminate with two events designed to celebrate and showcase the accomplishments of the student entrepreneurs who have launched 16 new companies in the area.

The YEA! Macon Graduation will be held on Wednesday, May 24, at 6:30 p.m., at the Mercer University Innovation Center. The event details for the YEA! Macon Trade Show are still being determined, as inclement weather prevented the event from coinciding with Open Streets Macon on May 21. Both events are free, and the entire community is encouraged to attend and celebrate Macon's newest CEOs.

For more information about YEA! Macon, including a full list of sponsors, as well as future opportunities for student participants, sponsors and community volunteers, please visit: www.maconchamber.com/young-entrepreneurs-academy.html.

About the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

Established in 1861, the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce is the area's largest business services organization and primary advocate for the Macon business community. The Chamber supports the growth and development of business by offering networking and marketing opportunities, providing valuable benefits to its members, advocating for legislative issues that will promote a healthy business climate, and participating in the economic development efforts for Macon-Bibb. For more information, visit www.maconchamber.com.

About the Young Entrepreneurs Academy

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a 501(c)3 offering groundbreaking year-long classes that teach middle and high school students how to start and run their own businesses. Throughout the class, students develop business ideas, write business plans, conduct market research, pitch their plans to a panel of investors for startup funds, and launch and run their own, fully formed companies and social movements. The project-based program empowers students to take charge of their futures.

Founded in 2004 at the University of Rochester with support from the Kauffman Foundation, YEA! today serves thousands of students nationwide. In 2011, the United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation became a national sponsor and partner of the Academy to help celebrate the spirit of enterprise among today's youth and tomorrow's future leaders.

YEA! bridges the business and educational communities to fulfill its mission of teaching more students how to make a job, not just take a job. YEA! is made possible by the Kauffman Foundation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and E. Philip Saunders Foundation. For more information, visit www.yeausa.org.

About the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is dedicated to strengthening America's long-term competitiveness and educating the public on how the free enterprise system improves society and the economy.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.

About Sam's Club

Sam's Club®, a division of Walmart Stores, Inc. (NYSE: WMT), is a leading membership warehouse club offering savings and services to millions of members in 651 clubs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Sam's Club offers affordable access to innovative services for families and small business owner, including travel, payroll and HR services, protection plans, legal solutions, cash rewards and more. To learn more about time and money with Sam's Club, visit www.samsclub.com/services.