

Bronxite wins student competition with cases that move a crowd (Photos)

[Charity & Volunteerism](#) - June 18, 2013

By: [Elischia Fludd](#)

Each year in the United States, thousands of social enterprises start up. These [entrepreneurs](#) create valuable services that impact a wide variety of communities. Meet one Bronxite recently awarded for a social enterprise that is not only a crowd-pleaser, but an awareness tool.

Dwight Peters is an entrepreneur major at Baruch College and the \$5,000 grand prize winner of the [11th annual Smart Pitch Challenge](#). The Bronx native competed among a cohort of student entrepreneurs from February until the final competition on June 6.

View slideshow: [Crowd Cases designs](#)

Students had to complete milestones designed to help them shape their businesses and were mentored by professionals.

Peters won the competition with his enterprise [Crowd Cases](#), a cell phone case accessory brand with a social mission. Crowd Cases provides a product that causes can use to raise funds that will impact communities in need.

Each week, Crowd Cases partners with a nonprofit and issues a 7-day design challenge to a crowd of graphic designers that sign up with the site. Designers gain a connection to the nonprofit so that they can create a product that communicates the impact of the organization.



Dwight Peters is congratulated by Rolando Franco of IBM, a partner for the Smart Pitch Challenge.

Photo credit:
CUNY IVE

The goal of each case design is to communicate awareness for the cause and draw the attention of new audiences. The winning designer receives five hundred dollars and the collaborating organization receives a percentage of profit each time a case is sold.

Crowd Cases has produced chic, eye-catching cases for a few clients, their latest for the [Prostate Cancer Foundation](#). Shavaun Rigler, Director of Annual Giving and Advancement, worked with the company to start a design challenge.

“We are always looking for new ways to engage people and let them show their support of prostate cancer. This was a great way to test how our supporters would respond to both a design competition and a new awareness product. The response has been very enthusiastic and the design competition was a fun way to get new and creative representatives of our mission”, says Rigler.

Prior to joining Smart Pitch, Peters spent years leading up to activism and academic scholarship. At 13, Peters studied in Jamaica and graduated from high school there at 16. Upon his return to the Bronx, Peters landed a job and enrolled for a short stint at Bronx Community College before dropping out.

“I just wasn't focused,” admits Peters.

Peters says he re-gained focus to return to college after reading the autobiography of Malcolm X. Peters soon became an active student that contributed to robust life on campus.

During his time [fighting against tuition hikes](#), Peters' perspective of how to do good in the world was unexpectedly shifted by a strange bedfellow.

“One of the Board of Trustees said to me one day, ‘Dwight, there is a difference between being loud and being effective. You are doing a great job at being loud, but you’re not being effective”, recalls Peters.

The remark forced Peters to think about the broader purpose of raising awareness, and after graduating from Bronx Community College, he enrolled in Baruch College to major in entrepreneurship. From there, Peters founded and [hosted a show about social entrepreneurs](#), until he wanted his own social enterprise.

“I felt like if they can do it, I can do it”, Peters explains.

From a show about entrepreneurs Peters became one. He now hopes to create sizable impact for the next generation of donors.

“There are millions of us that need help, but there are billions of us that just watch. Our generation does not just click on the donation button”, proclaims Peters. “We want to provide a tool that people can actually use and Crowd Cases provides that tool.”