



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Harker DECA Welcomes New Members to the 2017-2018 DECA Year with Annual DECA Launch

San Jose, California – From Monday, August 21, to Tuesday, August 22, over 50 students attended Harker DECA's fourth annual DECA Launch, a program designed to introduce students to DECA and Harker's Business and Entrepreneurship programs and to prepare potential members for the upcoming DECA year. This two-day event consisted of various challenges, presentations, guest speakers and workshops hosted by the Harker DECA Officer Team.

“DECA Launch is an event that introduces students to not only the Business and Entrepreneurship program but also the Upper School as a whole since most attendees are incoming freshmen or new students,” said Shreyas Chandrashekar (12), Harker DECA's co-Chief Executive Officer. “This event is a great way to give these students a head start on their first year at this campus.”

Monday began early in the morning in Nichols Atrium, where students mingled with the chapter advisors, guest speakers and officers while enjoying fresh bagels from Noah's. Everyone then went into the Auditorium where co-Chief Executive Officers Ashna Chandra (12) and Chandrashekar began the Opening Ceremony with a brief introduction to DECA. Then, the first two speakers were announced. The first was past Harker DECA Co-CEO, Riya Chandra (17), who shared her DECA journey through high school; afterwards, former California DECA President Moksh Jawa spoke about the impact of DECA in his own life and how he will carry that into college.

Afterwards, the officers led a fun icebreaker to get everyone excited for the activities they would participate in during the next couple of days. The Introduction to Events lecture followed, with each member of the Competitions team presenting on their respective positions: Roleplay, Examinations and Written Event. Students also got to see a live roleplay performed by sophomore Phil Han, Director of Roleplay Events.

After the Intro to Events lecture, everyone went to the Innovation Center to learn and begin the Idea Challenge, where students grouped up in teams of six to come up with an innovative idea using popsicle sticks. Students received 100 DECA Dollars to buy supplies to build their product. An additional part of the challenge was to create a presentation to pitch to a panel of judges at the Closing Ceremony.

“Seeing the students share their ideas with their teams was very surprising since not a lot of freshmen show this kind of teamwork and all the groups ended up combining their ideas and interests into a product they were all passionate about,” said Shania Wang (11), Harker DECA's Vice President of Public Relations.

After getting started on their projects, everyone enjoyed Chipotle burritos for lunch. The Scavenger Hunt was next, in which students were to find the Harker DECA Officers who were spread out around the campus. When found, each officer asked the students a question



about DECA to educate them more about the chapter. This also gave participants a chance to explore the campus and learn more about the officer team.

The students then attended lectures on the different clusters: business management and administration, hospitality and tourism, marketing, and finance. At the end of the day, students had another chance to work on their Idea Challenge products before they went home.

The next day, students arrived early in the morning to attend the DECA Debrief in the Innovation Center, a presentation about conferences and leadership in DECA. Everyone then learned more about written events with by rotating through six different lectures. Afterwards, student entrepreneurs, including Mahi Kolla (10) of The Minty Boutique and Nirban Singh (12) from Xpress Chef presented their own experiences as a high school entrepreneur. After having lunch from Pizza My Heart, participants were given more time to work in their Idea Challenge groups.

“It was really interesting to see all the officers talk to us, educate us and ensure all the freshmen were understanding the material and having a great time,” said attendee Ashley Gauba (9). “Their hard work really paid off.”

One of the last events of DECA Launch was the Roleplay Tournament. Officers and associate mentors worked with small groups of students to help prepare them for roleplays. Then, they paired up and prepared case studies before presenting to a judge.

Following this, the students received some time to finish up their products and presentations for the Idea Challenge. Parents arrived to watch their children present their projects, have dinner, and recap the conference in the Closing Ceremony. Students presented their Idea Challenge final products and were judged on innovation, sustainability, and teamwork and presentation. As the judges calculated the scores, parents and students were shown a Launch recap video highlighting the main events of the conference. Finally, the winners of the Roleplay Tournament and Idea Challenge were announced. Chandra, Chandrashekar and Mr. Juston Glass, the Chapter Advisor, gave closing remarks, concluding the event.

“This was an amazing experience. We came all the way here from another state, and DECA was the first event that we attended at Harker,” said Mr. Sid Biswas, parent to attendee Sayon Biswas (11). “It was great to see this organization and event that the school put together, and all the students really did well.”

Harker DECA is thrilled to welcome all the new and recurring members and looks forward to another successful year as a community and chapter.

“Seeing what they have accomplished in the last two days, just imagine what these students will accomplish throughout the year. They truly are #limitless,” said Mr. Glass.

Students that won awards are as follows:



Roleplay Tournament:

- 1st Place: Karan Bhasin (9), Billy Fan (9)
- 2nd Place: Andrew Sun (9), Aditya Singhvi (9)
- 3rd Place: Benjamin Gicqueau (9), Sayon Biswas (11)

Idea Challenge:

Best Innovation: Hannah Sobczyn (9), Elaine Zhai (9), Anvitha Tummala (9), Julia Yusupov (9)

Best Sustainability: Benjamin Gicqueau (9), Sayon Biswas (9), Reina Joseph (9), Emma Andrews (9), Aria Wong (9), Arushi Saxena (9)

Teamwork and Presentation: Ashley Gauba (9), Emma Boyce (9), Zoe Kister (9), Gowtham Irrinki (9), Arjun Virmani (9), Arya Tandon (9)

Overall: Jacqueline Au (9), Luisa Pan (9), Michelle Si (9), Aditya Singhvi (9), Andrew Sun (9), Bryan Zhang (9)

About The Harker School DECA

Harker DECA is an International Competitive Business Organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in four fields of business: marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. Our DECA chapter integrates classroom instruction, applies learning, connects to business, and promotes competition in order to prepare the next generation to be academically prepared, community oriented, professionally responsible, and experienced leaders.

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