



# Fontana Unified School District

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## PRESS RELEASE

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## **Aspiring Fontana Unified Entrepreneurs Pitch Innovations during Inaugural ‘Sparta Tank’ Jurupa Hills Sophomores Create Wildly Imaginative Products**

**FONTANA, CA** – Seventeen groups of Jurupa Hills High School sophomores recently pitched innovative products – from a Bluetooth-equipped backpack to jewelry that can detect if a drink has been spiked – during the school’s inaugural “Sparta Tank” competition, a classroom project modeled after the popular television program “Shark Tank.”

Facing a panel of Jurupa Hills English teachers posing as venture capitalists, students made formal presentations and answered questions, incorporating weeks of research and design that simulated the process real-life inventors go through when they are marketing a new product.

“Our students have big dreams and even bigger imaginations, but what they don’t realize is that there is a multitude of workplace documents that need to be attended to before you can ever approach an investor,” Jurupa Hills sophomore English teacher Wayland Peak said. “‘Sparta Tank’ is a fun way to make sense of the minutiae of business, while integrating technology, literacy and public speaking skills.”

In February, 500 10th-graders created fictitious products, researched and drafted business proposals – including a product description, budget, and brochure – to send to an existing company or individual. The proposals needed to identify consumer markets, distributors, the cost of manufacturing and the eventual selling price.

The finalists presented their projects on March 14, with winners announced the following day.

The winning project was KC’s Closets, an app that helps arrange outfits for the day using the clothes already in a person’s closet. The fashion assistant app was created by students Kaitlyn Dodgen and Cheyenne Vargas.

Honorable mentions went to Ripe and Ready, a tool that helps indicate whether fruits and vegetables are ready to eat; Anxiety Ridden, an app to help deal with anxiety; Easy Peasy, a battery-operated portable vacuum, and Elotero Man, an app that helps you locate nearby food stands.

“The ideas were tremendous and wildly creative,” Jurupa Hills English teacher Galen Shotts said. “This started as an exercise to better engage our students in the techniques of writing professionally, but they really took it to a higher level.”

Joseph Morales and Vanessa Ramos, creators of Ripe and Ready, dressed in matching lavender and black outfits, promoting a tiny gauge with a brush that could be used to determine if supermarket produce is edible.

Morales and Ramos used a PowerPoint presentation to show a timeline of product growth over a year's time, demonstrated how healthy fruits and vegetables can benefit an entire community, and how advantageous the company would be for the city where the manufacturing takes place.

"It was challenging to think of a product that is not already on the market," Morales said. "Vanessa and I worked as a team and used our imaginations to come up with an idea that would promote healthy living. It was fun because we never back down from a challenge."

Winning projects received gift cards from local businesses. Jurupa Hills math teachers have already indicated they would like to collaborate on the next "Sparta Tank" assignment.

"Jurupa Hills teachers are continually looking for exciting and effective ways to engage their students in standards-based curriculum, projects that employ critical thinking and collaborative learning," Jurupa Hills Principal Lorraine Trollinger said. "We are committed to ensuring our students will be college and career ready upon graduation."

#### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**032017\_FUSD\_SPARTATANK1:** Jurupa Hills High School sophomores Vanessa Robles and Joseph Morales prepare to pitch their company Ripe and Ready to a panel of JHHS English teachers posing as venture capitalists during the inaugural "Sparta Tank" competition on March 14. Their presentation for a tool that helps indicate if produce is ready to eat won an Honorable Mention.

**032017\_FUSD\_SPARTATANK2:** Jurupa Hills English teachers pose as venture capitalists as they listen to student groups pitch products they would like to have financed during the school's inaugural "Sparta Tank" on March 14. Seventeen groups of Jurupa Hills sophomores created fictitious products to better understand the process real-life inventors go through when marketing a new product.

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