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OECS tech startups shine in Silicon Valley

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OECS entrepreneurs with Dr. Nicholas Brathwaite (second row, fourth from left)

Eight entrepreneurs from the Eastern Caribbean completed a five-week accelerator Hero Program at Draper University Campus in San Mateo,







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candidates served as a pilot phase of the larger program which is expected to expand in the coming years.

The OECS Global Startup Hub comprises two components. The first is a two-week Virtual Accelerator Program in which 47 OECS entrepreneurs were given the opportunity to learn and network with hundreds of other entrepreneurs around the world in September 2023 while studying the Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship. The online program involved online lectures and included live group activities around global challenges with over 50 Silicon Valley mentors.

The second component is the Draper University Hero Program which is a five-week, in-person accelerator training course which provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to explore and learn how to develop businesses from Silicon Valley founders and experts. Eight of the most innovative entrepreneurs from the Virtual Accelerator Program moved on to the Hero Program in Silicon Valley. This training provides assistance to accelerate business models through networking and mentoring with global industry experts, mentors and investors committed to supporting the participants' entrepreneurial journey. The program also provides access to the Draper University Ventures pre-seed fund which is dedicated to investing up to $100,000 in chosen alumni companies.

The Hero Program culminated with a demo day pitch event where over 30 entrepreneurs from around the world had the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a panel of investors. The OECS Commission commends Stephen Felix, founder of Medial Health, on winning the overall competition. Medial Health provides digital solutions to challenges in the global healthcare industry.

The OECS Commission also organised a mentorship session with JetBlue Ventures in San Francisco which is a major sponsor of the OECS Global Startup Hub. The mentorship session allowed entrepreneurs to learn more about the JetBlue Ventures ecosystem and to receive guidance on their business models from experienced venture partners at JetBlue.

The OECS Commission also facilitated an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to meet Dr. Earl Nicholas Brathwaite who is an outstanding Grenadian technologist, entrepreneur, and the founding managing partner of Celestia Capital, a venture capital firm operating in Silicon Valley. This session allowed the OECS entrepreneurs to receive advice from a highly successful Caribbean entrepreneur who has built several billion-dollar technology companies in the diaspora. This was a significant opportunity for the entrepreneurs to learn about Dr. Brathwaite's journey and ask profound questions to inspire their own entrepreneurial pursuits.

These are the eight entrepreneurs from the OECS who participated in the Hero Program:

Name	Country	Business Name	Description
Elijah James	Antigua and Barbuda	The Local App Inc.	We are focused on developing digital country local information access through digital country portal infrastructure, utilizing GPS-enabled mobile community guide apps and NFC-enabled e-wallets for peer-to-peer digital transactions.



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Javier Galloway	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Nuwaay	Nuwaay aims to develop a platform that moderates the global street food industry. Nuwaay is an app that solves the problems that event businesses, charities, and music festivals have where eventgoers may not know which street food vendors are good.
Kimron Corion	Grenada	Corion and Co Ltd	Transform the OECS from digital consumers to digital innovators by demystifying tech education.
Sophia Searles	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Searles Agro Products	An agro-processing company that manufactures peanuts, coconut oils, and shredded coconuts.We also aim to set up a sustainable coconut farm as a primary source of raw materials.
Maricia Wilson	Saint Lucia	Yes	Urban Herbs Nursery provides a quality choice of a wide variety of medicinal and culinary herb plants for people looking to start up their home herb gardens.
Annesta Fergus	Montserrat	Phannestic Consulting/ Montserrat Creative Nexus	The business idea aims to establish a collaborative digital platform to transform Montserrat. Through the power of technology, this venture seeks to harness the expertise of both local and diaspora individuals and organizations to tackle challenges and enhance the island's prospects.
Shianna Edgings	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Sculpt By Stush/ Stush Online Beauty Academy	Online beauty academy offering courses in fields such as cosmetology. Students can access their classes and coursework online with practical and hands-on training. The courses will be a fully digital product and will allow the academy to reach potential customers seeking to be certified in these fields worldwide.
Stephen Felix	Saint Lucia	Medial Health	Medial is a decentralized health information system that enables medical centers to go digital through a modern, user-friendly user interface. Medial uses the international standard for health information exchange (FHIR) and can integrate with other health tools and systems, to share data.

Applications will soon open for the 2024 OECS Global Startup Hub where up to 150 entrepreneurs will earn a spot in the two-week Virtual Accelerator Program and the opportunity to qualify for the five week Hero Program. The OECS participation in the 2023 Draper University Fall Hero Program was made possible in partnership with Caribbean Development Bank and JetBlue Ventures, and supported by Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility through the OECS TECHIE Programme. In June 2024,

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