Finalists Named in Boomer Entrepreneurs Contest

Silicon Valley Boomer Business Plan Competition draws students and entrepreneurs from around the world; ventures focus on medicine and other needs of aging boomers.

Santa Clara, CA (PRWEB) June 12, 2007 -- Ten start-up ventures have advanced to the final round of the 2007 Silicon Valley Boomer Business Plan Competition.

The annual competition draws entrepreneurs, early-stage companies and university students who are developing products and services aimed at the fast-growing baby boomer and senior markets. Contestants target a range of industries poised for change and growth as the population ages, including medicine, technology, fashion, romance and financial services.

This year's finalists include five early-stage companies that are developing innovative medical technologies to address health conditions commonly associated with aging. These ventures - all of which are affiliated with top-tier universities - include:

- CellThera, a biotech venture based at UC San Francisco, is developing cell-based transplants for severely disabled stroke patients.
- Curant, a Stanford-based venture, is developing device-based therapies for people with urinary incontinence.
- cVision Medical Solutions, a Johns Hopkins-based venture, is developing a non-invasive ultrasound procedure that measures central venous pressure.
- Optimal Vision, a University of Illinois at Chicago-based venture, is developing a non-invasive laser procedure that reshapes the cornea and corrects near-vision loss.
- SeroNostics, a UC Berkeley-based venture, is developing a hand-held diagnostic device that allows physicians to quickly analyze bodily fluids and diagnose diseases such as influenza.

Also tapped for the final round are start-ups in the competition's "general" category. This group includes:

- eLegacy, a Lewis Center, OH-based firm, is developing software that makes it easier for estate holders and their executors to manage and settle estates.
- Celery, a Troy, NY-based firm, has developed a device that enables users to send and receive handwritten letters as email and receive printed color photos without a computer.
- AmeliaPlex, an Orlando, FL-based company, is developing and marketing software solutions that send medication reminders to users' cell phones, pagers and other mobile devices.
- Prime Footwear, a Stanford-based venture, is developing therapeutic footwear with clinically validated technologies for consumers with joint problems.
- World Hearing Organization, a San Jose, CA-based venture, is developing mobile centers that come to hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare venues to test patients' hearing and sell hearing aids at discounted prices.

"Just as the baby boomer market continues to grow and become more defined, so have the business plans in the 2007 Silicon Valley Boomer Business Plan Competition. This year's finalists successfully reached this stage because they address key concerns facing this demographic - from vision and hearing loss to joint pain and estate planning," says Peter Ziefelman, partner at Palo Alto Venture Partners, a leading VC firm based in Palo Alto, CA. "The finalists not only are competitive amongst each other, they are the work of innovative
entrepreneurs who are using cutting edge solutions to differentiate themselves in the marketplace."

"Many of the answers for innovation in aging will come from entrepreneurs," says Charles F. Baird, Jr., founder and managing partner of North Castle Partners, a Connecticut-based private equity firm that invests in consumer-driven product and service businesses benefiting from healthy living and aging trends. The Silicon Valley Boomer Business Plan Competition "is an extraordinary environment to find and meet entrepreneurs with great business ideas that serve the enormous boomer and senior markets."

Enormous business opportunities are being created around the world as populations age. The number of Americans age 65 and older is set to double by the year 2030, and the country's affluent baby boom generation - which now ranges from 43 to 61 years old - spends more than $2 trillion per year on goods and services.

In total, the 2007 Silicon Valley Boomer Business Plan Competition attracted more than 60 business plans from around the United States and eight other countries, including Egypt, Germany, India, Israel, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore and the United Kingdom. Finalists were selected after all the plans were reviewed by top Silicon Valley venture capitalists and boomer market experts.

The competition is co-produced by Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business and Mary Furlong & Associates. For more information, please visit www.boomerventuresummit.com/competition.

The 10 finalists will present their business plans to a panel of judges at the 2007 Silicon Valley Boomer Venture Summit, which takes place on June 19 at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California. The judges will name two $10,000 grand prize winners at the Summit, one for the health category and one for the general category. For more information about the summit, please visit www.boomerventuresummit.com.

Finalists from previous Silicon Valley Boomer Business Plan Competitions have found the experience very helpful in launching their ventures. "Winning the Boomer Business Plan Competition provided us with unique exposure to investors, pharma partners and perhaps most important of all, potential customers," explains Onne Ganel, CEO of MicroMRI, Inc., winner of the 2004 competition. "This gave us more credibility with our investors than any expert opinion we could have gathered."

This year's panel of finalist judges includes Charles (Chip) F. Baird, Jr., Managing Partner, North Castle Partners; Bill Elkus, Managing Director, Clearstone Venture Partners; James P. Firman, Ed. D., President and CEO, National Council on Aging (NCOA); Jody Holtzman, Director of Knowledge Management, AARP; Nancy U. Kamei, Sector Director - Digital Health, Intel Capital; James L. Koch, Executive Director of the Center for Science, Technology & Society and Professor of Management, Santa Clara University; Emilio Pardo, Chief Brand Officer, AARP; Bijan Salehizadeh, MD, Partner, Highland Capital Partners; Jon Staenberg, Partner, Rustic Canyon Partners; Robert Stein, President & CEO, American Society on Aging; Brad Vale, Ph.D., VP, Johnson & Johnson Development Corporation; Vance Vanier, MD, Partner, Mohr Davidow Ventures.

Sponsors of the 2007 Silicon Valley Boomer Venture Summit include AARP; North Castle Partners; Posit Science Corporation; Hewlett-Packard; MetLife Mature Market Institute; Morrison & Foerster; Silicon Valley Bank; Sun Microsystems; Decision Street; The Entrust Group; Petplan; ALCiS Health, Inc.; and LifeBio.

In-kind contributors include BMW; Les Concierges; Four Seasons Silicon Valley; and Southwest Airlines. Marketing partners include AIPMM; American Society on Aging and its Business Forum on Aging.
CXOnetworking; EBIG; Mary Furlong & Associates; Patti Wilson, Career Company; San Francisco Chapter of the American Marketing Association; and SmartSilvers Alliance.

About the co-producers
Founded in 1926, the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University was one of the first business schools in the country to receive national accreditation. Its undergraduate business program was recently acknowledged among the best across the U.S., and its MBA and Executive MBA programs are ranked 12th and 21st, respectively, in the nation among graduate business programs. More than 80 percent of its 1,100 MBA students are working professionals in Silicon Valley. More information is available at www.scu.edu/business.

Founded in 2003, Mary Furlong & Associates (MFA) is a proven team of business innovators, comprised of talent from marketing, editorial, business, online content and community. Mary Furlong, Ed.D., the firm's founder and CEO, has guided the offline and online 40+ market strategies of leading corporations and nonprofit organizations for more than 20 years. Furlong is Dean's Executive Professor of Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business, and previously founded SeniorNet and ThirdAge Media. Her latest book, "Turning Silver into Gold: How to Profit in the New Boomer Marketplace," was published in February 2007. More information is available at www.maryfurlong.com.

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