



For Immediate Release:

The Johnston County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. names Nicole Neal as its 2020 Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Smithfield, NC -

The Johnston County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (JCAC-DST, Inc.) names Nicole Neal, founder of *Simply Sweet*, as its 2020 Young Entrepreneur of the Year. According to Evelyn Sanders, Chair, Economic Development, “The awards program recognizes high school student entrepreneurs who demonstrate extraordinary success and excellence in areas such as innovation, financial projections and personal commitment to their business and communities”. Ms. Neal was selected from six participants who pitched their business plan to the *JCAC’s Shark Tank*. The *JCAC’s Shark Tank* is a panel of independent judges, which consists of local business owners, bankers/financial analysts, and educators. The winner was announced at a special virtual awards program on May 17, 2020. The awards program was a collaboration between JCAC-DST, Inc. and the Brian Hamilton Foundation. Mr. Hamilton was the guest speaker. Mr. Hamilton addressed the Young Entrepreneur Program’s (YEP) participants and over 100 guests which included chapter members, parents, community leaders, and local business owners. “Having your own company is for everyone, including the youth of our country,” said **Charlie Bradley, CEO of the Brian Hamilton Foundation**. “It is extremely important that teenagers learn about the benefits of entrepreneurship. We are proud of what Johnston County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is doing locally to inspire and help these individuals early on in their lives to increase their chances of success.”

The Young Entrepreneur Program participants each received \$250 for their business start-up capital. This year’s program participants receiving the award are: Cameron Harrell, founder, ***CAM’s Customz***, Ernest Harrell, CEO, ***Ej’s Lawn Service***, Adonna Knight, CEO, ***Knights Bitez***, Nicole Neal, Bakery Chef and CEO, ***Simple Sweet***, Zephaniah Prince, CEO, ***WavoLand Co.*** and Anaiya Whitaker, CEO, ***Satin Style***.

In addition, *JCAC-DST, Inc.’s Scholarship award recipients were announced*. Pandora Pearson, Chair, Scholarship Committee, announced this year’s Academic Scholarship winners. Those winners are: Christopher Everett, Clayton High School - \$1000; Colin Beard, West Johnston High School - \$750; Zaphra Davis, Princeton Middle/High School - \$500; Lennasia Sharpless, Clayton High School - \$500 and Kyra Joyner, Smithfield-Selma High School - \$500.

About the Young Entrepreneur Program (YEP)

As part of its Economic Development Program, JCAC-DST, Inc. conducts the biennial **Young Entrepreneur Program (YEP)**. High school students between the ages of 14-19 are eligible to participate in the program. There is no cost for participating in the program and all program materials are provided. The Junior Achievement’s *Be Entrepreneurial* is the primary model to guide the implementation of the chapter’s YEP. Participants learn fundamental business and economic concepts,

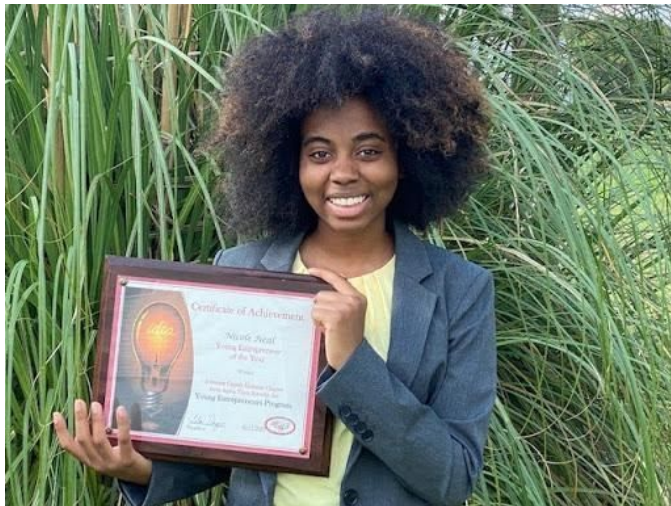
and explore career interests and opportunities. Each participant has a legally incorporated business at the completion of the program. Chapter members and community business leaders provide support and mentors up to two years following completion of the program. A Young Entrepreneur of the Year is named and recognized at the culmination of the chapter's program activities. The winner is awarded a \$5,000 scholarship to the college of his/her choice. **The judges for the 2020 JCAC's Shark Tank were: Crystal Kimpson Roberts , Chief of Equity, Information and Student Services for the Johnston County Public Schools, Diamonte Sanders, State Employees Credit Union as a Financial Service Representative, and Gabriella Woodson owner of Chefella's, LLC with locations in Clayton and Smithfield.**

About the Johnston County Alumnae Chapter

Johnston County Alumnae Chapter was chartered on April 27, 2003. The chapter is dedicated to serving the communities across Johnston County with purposeful programs while operating under the Five-Point Programmatic Thrust of the Grand Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

About Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide assistance and support through established programs in local communities throughout the world. A sisterhood of more than 200,000 predominately Black college educated women, the Sorority was founded on January 13, 1913 and currently has over 1000 chapters located in the United States, Canada, Japan (Tokyo and Okinawa), Germany, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and the Republic of Korea. The major programs of the sorority are based upon the organization's Five Point Programmatic Thrust: Economic Development, Educational Development, International Awareness and Involvement, Physical and Mental Health, and Social Action.



About the Winner

Nicole Neal, Bakery Chef and CEO of *Simply Sweet* is a 10th grader at West Johnston High School in Benson, NC. Ms. Neal fell in love with baking while helping her grandmother measure ingredients for her well known homemade cheese cakes. *Simply Sweet* is a health conscious bakery, keeping in mind those that have chronic illnesses such as diabetes and high cholesterol. Ms. Neal's bakery plans to keep southern and ethnic baking alive by collecting recipes from older generations and also publishing a variety of cookbooks. Ms. Neal was awarded a \$5000.00 Educational Scholarship.