World Entrepreneurship Day

"It's about time we had a day for the people who brought us the car, the computer, the cheeseburger, the cellphone, the airplane, banking, software, email, the pill, indoor plumbing..." On April 14, this quote was displayed on a poster board that greeted attendees as we entered the Economic and Social Council Chamber at the United Nations on World Entrepreneurship Day (WED). And this quote was made by Tim Draper, of Draper, Fisher, and Jurveston, a venture capital firm, who invested in the development of Skype and is a WED Advocate.

WED, now in its second year, is a 24 hour celebration created to connect and recognize the accomplishments of the many entrepreneurs all over the world. This year, one of the many celebrations took place at the United Nations and consisted of an elaborate panel of successful entrepreneurs in the areas of social entrepreneurship, new investment capital ventures, artists, corporate innovators, technology innovators, and more. And early registrants received a free copy of the book "Behind the Cloud: The untold story of how salesforce.com went from an idea to a billion-dollar company and revolutionized an industry" by Marc Benioff, Chairman and CEO of salesforce.com.

The day-long event began with a panel of the supporters who made WED at the UN possible. This included Troy Byrd, co-founder and advisor for WED; Wendy Diamond, Chief Pet Officer of Animal Fair Media; Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the UN Office of Parnterships; Tyler Metcalf, Arizona State University junior and co-chair of the entrepreneurship club; and Theo Oliphant, Director of Public-Private for Oakland California Mayor Ron Dellums. They discussed the importance and benefits of connecting entrepreneurs across the world. They further explained the excitement they had in helping put together the all day panel for WED.

Next, was a presentation from Peter Thum, Founder of Ethos Water and Giving Water. He spoke of his passion for helping people obtain clean water across the globe, and how he tied this into an business venture. He noted the many challenges of water awareness in comparison to other issues of AIDS, cancer, and other health issues that served as great competition for his movement. But through a well developed business plan and with perseverance, Thum was eventually able to gain support from Whole Foods and the Starbucks Foundation which helped Ethos Water sustain and grow. The results of his efforts made it possible for $6.2 million in grants to be received, 420,000 people to be given sanitation and hygiene education, and saved over 3,000 lives.

The third portion of WED was a presentation from Howard Lee Morgan, Partner of First Round Capital and Director of Idea Lab. Morgan is an Angel Investor who focuses on investing with technological entrepreneurs. He has nearly 30 years of experience in the area, and believes that "failure is inevitable. In the US you can fail and start again. In areas like France, if you fail at a business, no one will invest with you again." He offered much inspiration to those who are interested in establishing their own business. But he focused much on listening to your customer, adhering to their responses, and responding to their needs. These tips he feels are what make any business successful.

We then heard from photographer Asa Mathat who and showed us a beautiful slide show of his work. What was most meaningful to him were the images of women
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by  
Althea Kitchens

Painted in pink who were breast cancer survivors sharing their story through visual art. Mathat was also contracted to photograph the WED event.

And finally, we heard from a panel of entrepreneurs who were passionate about and took action toward improving education through the influence of their businesses. Moderating the panel was Ira Sockowitz, Consultant in the areas of PR, Marketing, Communications and Start Up Ventures. The panel consisted of four speakers including Leonard Brody, Clarity Media Digital; Mark Ecko founder of Marc Ecko Clothing line and Enterprises; Don Moody, creator and CEO of WordWorld, LLC; and John Petri, Board Member for the Harlem Success Charter School.

The event overall was enlightening for those of us who aspire to establish our own businesses. We learned of the failures and successes of what it takes to be an entrepreneur, we obtained more information for support and resources to help us attain our goal, and we were able to connect with entrepreneurs whose paths we hope to follow. Five astute Fairleigh Dickinson, Silberman College of Business MBA students attended the WED conference at the United Nations. Traveling from the College at Florham and the Metropolitan campuses were Natalie Benham, Chintan Bhatt, Mayur Gandhi, Althea Kitchens, and Somaya Sharma The concept of WED derived from a young college student, Lauren Amarante, who is now a junior at Arizona State University. Together with her mentor Troy Byrd, the initiative of hosting a World Entrepreneurship Day was developed. For more information about World Entrepreneurship Day, please visit [www.worldshipday.com](http://www.worldshipday.com), [http://wed2010kickoff.org/](http://wed2010kickoff.org/) and to watch a viewing of the panels visit [http://fora.tv](http://fora.tv).