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Pure Pitch Rally selected as honorable mention in Impact Investing category of Fast Company's 2021 World Changing Ideas Awards

The awards honor products, concepts, companies, policies and designs pursuing innovation for the good of society and the planet

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (May 4, 2021) — The winners of Fast Company's 2021 World Changing Ideas Awards were announced today, honoring the businesses, policies, projects and concepts that are actively engaged and deeply committed to pursuing innovation when it comes to solving health and climate crises, social injustice, or economic inequality.

Pure Pitch Rally, a pitch competition in its sixth year offering more than \$1 million in cash funding and resource packages to early-stage tech startups, earned an honorable mention in the Impact Investing category of the award program. Seeking innovators from across all aspects of technology who are creating solutions to enhance our communities and improve quality of life, Pure Pitch Rally aligned with the ideals of the World Changing Ideas Awards.

"From the very beginning, Pure Pitch Rally showed promise to disrupt the local economy as a funding equalizer and a networking game-changer. I'm humbled and honored that the program was recognized as world-changing," said Karen Fenaroli, founder of Pure Pitch Rally and CEO of Fenaroli & Associates. "Every startup thinks that funding is the cure and launch of their cap table. It isn't! The best and most unique feature of the Pure Pitch Rally is the networks that startup founders create. New networks create funding. Funding creates opportunity. Opportunity creates equity.

"Fifty percent of our funders are diverse, and 50 percent of our startups are diverse. We recruit them to expand opportunity throughout Kansas City. This awesome ecosystem drives

participation and anticipation from our land sharks and sponsors as we prepare to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Pure Pitch Rally.”

Now in its fifth year, the World Changing Ideas Awards showcase 33 winners, more than 400 finalists, and more than 800 honorable mentions. A panel of *Fast Company* editors and reporters selected winners and finalists from a pool of more than 4,000 entries across transportation, education, food, politics, technology and more. Several new categories were added, including pandemic response, urban design and architecture. The 2021 awards feature entries from across the globe, from Brazil to Denmark to Vietnam.

Showcasing some of the world’s most inventive entrepreneurs and companies tackling exigent global challenges, *Fast Company*’s Summer 2021 issue (on newsstands May 10) highlights, among others, a lifesaving bassinet; the world’s largest carbon sink, thanks to carbon-eating concrete; 3D-printed schools; an at-home COVID-19 testing kit; a mobile voting app; and the world’s cleanest milk.

“There is no question our society and planet are facing deeply troubling times. So it’s important to recognize organizations that are using their ingenuity, impact, design, scalability and passion to solve these problems,” says Stephanie Mehta, editor-in-chief of *Fast Company*. “Our journalists, under the leadership of senior editor Morgan Clendaniel, have discovered some of the most groundbreaking projects that have launched since the start of 2020.”

Pure Pitch Rally is now accepting applications for its 2021 cohort. Enterprising startups based in the Kansas City area can apply for the opportunity to be one of eight companies selected to pitch at the event at PurePitchRally.com/apply. **Applications will be accepted through Friday, Aug. 13.**

Pure Pitch Rally brings together more than 130 CEOs, VIPs, angel funders and investors to network and collaborate while supporting the local tech startup community. This one-of-a-kind event facilitates entrepreneurship by offering non-dilutive spot-cash funding to pitchers. In keeping with its mission to put entrepreneurs in the room with decision-makers and investors, Pure Pitch Rally is planned as an in-person event Oct. 18 in the City Beautiful Ballroom at the Loews Kansas City Hotel with appropriate safety measures in place.

Bringing together an exceptional number of leading executives and investors, Pure Pitch Rally underscores Kansas City’s commitment to expanding its role as a national tech leader. Playing

off ABC hit show Shark Tank and Kansas City's landlocked location, a pre-selected panel of executives called "land sharks" will judge the startups' pitches. Each land shark will directly fund and donate \$1,000 to the start-up pitcher of his/her choice, while attendees will vote to award an additional funding prize to the People's Choice winner.

On top of cash funding, selected pitchers will be invited to four exclusive events that aim to help founders to make the most of the PPR spotlight:

- **Pitch Bootcamp:** In preparation for the big event, Eric Morgenstern, CEO of Morningstar Communications, will share his Generally Accepted Presentation Principles to help pitchers understand the 10 core principles of GAPP and be able to develop and deliver more persuasive presentations with this proven process. He will then provide individual pitch coaching for refinement.
- **Brand Bootcamp:** Following the event, marketing experts from Circle Sideways and partners will team up to break down each pitcher's biggest marketing challenges and brainstorm ways to turn them into opportunities for solidifying the brand and positioning the company successfully for growth.
- **Fund Bootcamp:** With a pitch and brand well on their way to being perfected, our participants will have the opportunity to pick the brains of professionals from sponsors BKD and Polsinelli to address their funding and financial accounting needs. This bootcamp encourages collaboration across pitchers to identify pressing questions that will get answered.
- **Product Dev Bootcamp:** An essential part of success in building a tech startup is strategically executing product development. Land sharks and sponsors will divulge the secrets of building a winning tech stack that positions our founders to engage clients and customers, generate revenue and prepare to scale.

Pure Pitch Rally is an effort supported by local businesses to enhance the startup ecosystem. Presenting sponsors include BKD, Circle Sideways, Fenaroli & Associates, Park University and Polsinelli. Affiliate sponsors are Artisan Technology Group, C3 Capital and Morningstar Communications. Additional sponsors, as well as committed land sharks, will be announced in the months leading up to the event.

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ABOUT PURE PITCH RALLY

Celebrating its sixth year in 2021, Pure Pitch Rally is an annual event ideated and sponsored by a unique group of established businesses in the Kansas City community looking to connect tech startups to the capital and resources needed to position, validate and scale their businesses.

This invitation-only event brings leading executives and investors together to provide mentorship, networking and funding support to emerging tech companies, and to collaborate on how best we as a community can encourage additional entrepreneurship in our city and our region. Learn more about the event at PurePitchRally.com.

ABOUT THE WORLD CHANGING IDEAS AWARDS

World Changing Ideas is one of Fast Company's major annual awards programs and is focused on social good, seeking to elevate finished products and brave concepts that make the world better. A panel of judges from across sectors choose winners, finalists and honorable mentions based on feasibility and the potential for impact. With the goals of awarding ingenuity and fostering innovation, *Fast Company* draws attention to ideas with great potential and helps them expand their reach to inspire more people to start working on solving the problems that affect us all.