

# Lehigh Valley Entrepreneurs Compete in StartUp Lehigh Valley Pitch Competition

By Paul Muschick

EASTON - A Lehigh University student won the \$20,000 top prize at the 6th Annual StartUp Lehigh Valley pitch competition, presented by Lehigh University, for his company Aroi Mango, which produces Thai-style sticky rice.

George Awad, who is from Allentown, sells the rice at local festivals, farmer's markets, and other events. The \$20,000 prize comes from the university. Awad also won two other awards, the \$3,000 Penn State Lehigh Valley LaunchBox Founders Award and the \$1,000 Audience Choice Award, sponsored by Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Seven finalists competed for a total of \$33,000 in awards at 2024 StartUp Lehigh Valley, held Oct. 15 at Lehigh University's Zoellner Arts Center in Bethlehem. They represented industries including biomedicine, fashion, education, food and beverage, and technology.

"At Lehigh, we care about innovation and supporting entrepreneurs. We want to enhance the economic development and activity in the Lehigh Valley," said Nathan Urban, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Entrepreneurism is a key component of the Lehigh Valley economy. Startup businesses drive innovation and can grow into larger companies with large workforces that develop critically needed products and services. Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC) encourages entrepreneurship such as Startup Lehigh Valley. LVEDC's Entrepreneurship Council identifies services that entrepreneurs need and connects them with resources to help grow their businesses.



Veil Street was named first runner up of StartUp Lehigh Valley, winning \$3,000 from PSECU for their product the hoodjab, a hoodie that contains a hijab. Lectra Technologies, INC. earned the \$2,000 second runner up prize, sponsored by Factory Innovation and PennPak Solutions, for their electric simulation tape, designed to relieve pain in athletes.

Spanish Immersion TV by Language Project LLC, designed to teach youngsters, won the \$5,000 Ben Franklin Award, provided by Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Winning a \$500 Lehigh Valley LaunchBox Boost Award were Veil Street; Showcase for their music discovery app; and BunnyCo LLC for their Symptom Detective app.

Veil Street won the Lehigh Ventures Lab Award, six months of direct support provided by Lehigh Ventures Lab.

Also participating in StartUp Lehigh Valley was, GoCharlie.ai, with an AI marketing tool.

"This year's finalists all hail from Pennsylvania and some are already engaged in the Lehigh Valley entrepreneurship ecosystem, utilizing the resources here at home to develop their ideas," Urban said. "Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley have created some highly successful startups - companies that make a difference to the economies of the state and region."

The finalists had two minutes to pitch their products to a panel of three judges: John Bloys, a tech industry advisor with expertise in data and artificial intelligence; Jen Gilburg, Deputy Secretary of Technology and Entrepreneurship at the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development; and Susan Yee, President of SCY Investments.

(Top photo by LVEDC. Bottom photo of judges by Christa Neu/Lehigh University).

## 50th Anniversary Program Series: Upper Places—Early Moravian Settlements in Nazareth

By Brittney Waylen

EASTON - Northampton County Parks & Recreation will conclude its 50th Anniversary program series with a special presentation in partnership with the Moravian Historical Society at the Whitefield House at 214 E. Center Street, Nazareth, PA on November 6 at 7:00 PM. Tom McCullough, assistant archivist of the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, will present an illustrated talk and chronicle the "Upper Places" situated on the historic Nazareth Tract. Drawing on archival materials and collection highlights, the presentation will shed light on early Moravian settlements, including Gracedale.

The Northampton County-owned Gracedale Complex in Upper Nazareth Township was originally established in 1745 as a Moravian settlement called Gnadenthal. Together with Nazareth, Christian's Spring (Christiansbrunn) and Friedensthal, Gracedale was part of the Moravian "Upper Places," which encompassed thousands of acres in the heart of today's Northampton County.

Today, the 350-acre Gracedale Campus is home to the Parks & Recreation maintenance facility, open space lands, a long-term care facility, Emergency Management Services, the Forensic Center, Conservation District, Agricultural Extension and Farmland Preservation offices.

The public is invited to come to this free program on November 6th and learn what Gracedale and the other "Upper Places" were like 280 years ago. This program is sponsored in partnership with Northampton County Parks and the Moravian Historical Society. Seating is limited and reservations are required. To join the guest list register at <https://www.moravianhistory.org/music-and-lectures>

Visitors can also view the special exhibition, Grounds for Meditation: Moravian Pleasure Gardens. The exhibition explores early American parks through images and recollections of historic Moravian gardens.

Founded in 1872, the Moravian Historical Society (MHS) preserves, interprets and celebrates the rich culture of the Moravians. Located in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, MHS maintains the 1740-1743 Whitefield House and the 1740 Gray Cottage, the oldest surviving Moravian structure in North America. Recognized widely for its significant collections, the museum offers permanent and changing exhibitions, educational programs, guided tours and public activities. The Moravian Historical Society's Museum is open daily from 1:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

For more information, visit [www.moravianhistory.org](http://www.moravianhistory.org), or call 610-759-5070, or send an email to [events@moravianhistory.org](mailto:events@moravianhistory.org)

