NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:
Lori Murray, Director of Communications
201-345-1888 lmurray@ywcannj.org

Bergen County resident selected as the winner of the YWomen Start It Up Pitch Competition

Receives $10K capital funding to support her business Parent Matterz

July 22, 2021—YWCA Northern New Jersey (YWCANNJ) is excited to announce that Teaneck, NJ Community Educator Rhona Vega was awarded the top prize of the YWomen Start It Up Pitch Competition hosted by YWCA USA, through Women’s Empowerment 360 (WE360). This program was designed to put women and women of color entrepreneurs on the path to starting a successful business.

Ms. Vega, who made it to the final round of the competition was selected out of 5 other finalists and received $10,000 for her business, Parent Matterz, whose mission is to empower parents with educational tools and resources.

“We know that economic equality is key in eliminating racism, and coaching, mentorship and specialized training increases positive outcomes for small businesses” says YWCA CEO Helen Archontou. “The work we do at YWCANNJ is focused on providing access, tools and resources to BIPOC women to position their business ventures for success. Partnering with WE360 and YW Start It Up Pitch Program helps us increase the opportunities for our local entrepreneurs. We are grateful for their support.”

“On behalf of The Coca-Cola Foundation and The Coca Cola Company I just want to congratulate and commend YWCA as well as all the participants of the WE360 program” says Melissa Palacios, Senior Manager, Stakeholder Partnerships - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at The Coca-Cola Company. “I know that we’re in a very transformational time as the COVID pandemic has impacted us all, yet seeing this group of amazing women gives us hope and today’s an opportunity just to celebrate the achievements of women and their contributions towards social, economic, cultural, and political advancement.”

“My goal has always been to provide all parents with an easy to follow, holistic system for educational success” says Rhona Vega, Founder and CEO of Parent Matterz. “Helping parents inspire their children is our primary mission.”

Click here to learn more about Parent Matterz

YWCANNJ was happy to have two local finalists in the national competition. Sheilisa McNeal-Burgess, Founder and CEO of Fria LLC from Middlesex County, NJ was awarded $2,000 to further advance her innovative business that helps women navigate menopause.
YWCANNJ’s core mission is to empower women and eliminate racism, with a long history of providing all women with job skills training and small business support. Funding through YWomen Start It Up will help expand the reach for Parent Matterz and help more children find their passion, excel in school, build their network and boost their self-confidence.

For more information about YWCANNJ programs and events contact Women’s Program Coordinator Alicia Maxey Greene, at agreene@ywcannej.org or at 201 881-1708.

Learn more about YWCA USA program funders: The Coca Cola Foundation is committed to providing funding and grants to support the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

1863 Ventures whose mission is to accelerate black and brown entrepreneurs from high potential to high growth, through rigorous leadership training and strategic market access.

About YWCA Northern New Jersey
YWCA Northern New Jersey is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting equality for all. We operate healingSPACE, Bergen County’s only Sexual Violence Resource Center (hotline: 201-487-2227), and are a provider of year-round child care, women’s and girls’ empowerment programs and senior wellness classes. Our 100th year kicked off the expansion of our service area to include Essex, Hudson, Morris, and Passaic counties and our continued commitment to Bergen. We improve the lives of thousands of women, girls, and families with the generous support of our donors. Learn more by visiting ywcannj.org, following @ywcannj on social media, and downloading the healingSPACE app from your app store.

About YWCA USA
YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. They are one of the oldest and largest women’s organizations in the nation, serving over 2 million women, girls, and their families. YWCA has been at the forefront of the most pressing social movements for more than 160 years — from voting rights to civil rights, from affordable housing to pay equity, from violence prevention to health care reform. Today, we combine programming and advocacy in order to generate institutional change in three key areas: racial justice and civil rights, empowerment and economic advancement of women and girls, and health and safety of women and girls.

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