

DISCOVERY FOUNDATION'S

DISCOVER YOUR PITCH

PROGRAM REPORT

2024-25



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION'S

**DISCOVER
YOUR PITCH**



JA
British
Columbia

Member of
JA Canada

OVERVIEW



HIGHLIGHTING YOUTH INNOVATION

In the spring of 2025, JA British Columbia proudly hosted the 7th annual Discovery Foundation's Discover Your Pitch competition.

After participating in a series of workshops and practice sessions, top student teams from JA programs pitched their business ideas to a panel of business leaders in downtown Vancouver. More than 85 guests, including mentors, parents, volunteers, and JA partners, were there to support the students and connect with each another.

The student presentations demonstrated creativity, preparation, and confidence, with finalists representing communities across the province, including Victoria on Vancouver Island and South Slocan in southeastern British Columbia. Throughout the experience, students gained practical skills in public speaking, critical thinking, and business communication that will benefit them in both school and future careers.

A total of \$6,000 in cash prizes was awarded in recognition of their innovation and entrepreneurial spirit.

For more details, visit jabc.org/dyp.

"So grateful to have earned third place with my team after pitching alongside many impressive groups and individuals! It was an amazing opportunity for connecting and learning, and I'm looking forward to future JABC events."

– Student



PROGRAM COMPONENTS



1. MASTERING PITCH: FOUNDATIONS, PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS AND COACHING SESSIONS

Through virtual workshops and coaching sessions, students explored business ideation and learned how to pitch their ideas to a business audience.

The program featured two main workshops, followed by 1:1 team coaching. Before the preliminary competition, students received tailored feedback from University Canada West volunteers to refine their presentations. Finalist teams then took part in a second round of coaching to further strengthen their communication skills and confidence.

"I enjoyed both the pitch workshops, as well as the mentor session. I found the mentor sessions deeply insightful. My mentor was extremely supportive and thought-provoking, which not only helped me improve my pitch, but also granted me greater confidence to speak openly at the preliminary competition."

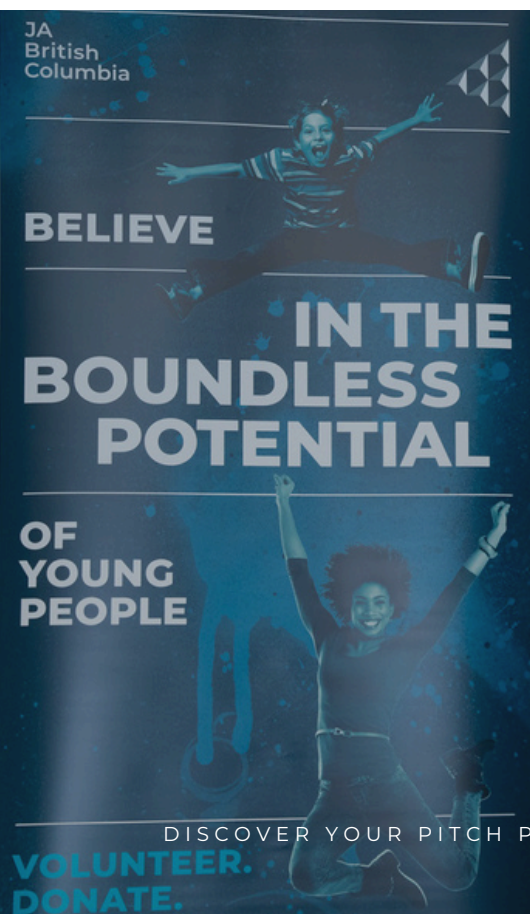
– Student, Grade 10

2. PRELIMINARY COMPETITION

The virtual preliminaries kicked off the Discover Your Pitch competition, with 28 student teams presenting their business ideas to a panel of judges. Each team received direct feedback to help refine their pitch, and seven standout teams were selected to advance to the finals.

"The highlight of the program was being able to pitch my idea to mentors that are in business and gain valuable information"

– Student, Grade 9



PROGRAM COMPONENTS



3. PROVINCIAL FINALS

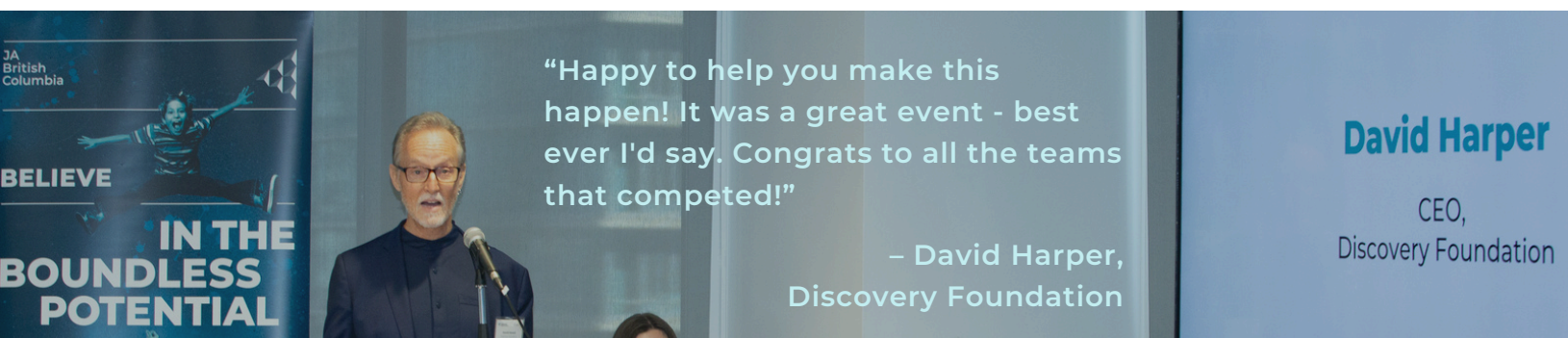
On May 29, 2025, seven finalist teams delivered their business pitches at KPMG's downtown Vancouver office. Each team showcased the growth they had achieved through the Discover Your Pitch journey, demonstrating innovation, confidence, and polished presentation skills.

The event was co-hosted by JA alumni Ryan Wood and Riya Kainth, who also shared their own entrepreneurial journeys through the JA Company Program. Opening remarks were provided by Wendi Campbell, President and CEO of JABC, with Presenting Partner remarks from David Harper, CEO of the Discovery Foundation.

[View images](#)



[View Highlight Video](#)



THE PRIZE WINNERS



Muchiiko

First Place and Fan Favourite | \$3,000 + \$500
Presenter: Mali McGinnis, Victoria

A handmade art business creating original artwork and fidgets



Seedlet

Second Place | \$1,500
Presenter: Bennett Chiu and Saliha Shajani, North Vancouver

Transforming agriculture with microbiome engineering to sustainably boost crop yields.



Paws and Pulse

Third Place | \$500
Presenter: Bella Zhao, Sienna Geissler, and Ava Chester, Vancouver

A handmade jewelry brand crafting meaningful, customizable bracelets with style and story.

"I liked getting to share my business in a fun meaningful way and get to build public speaking skills."

**– Mali McGinnis,
Muchiiko
Student winner**

2025 JUDGES



PROVINCIAL FINAL ROUND JUDGES



Stuart Louie
Chairman & CEO,
London Drugs



Andrea Hill
Founder & Chair,
Cause We Care



Greg Malpass
Founder & Director,
Malberry Foundation



Cindy Beedie
Executive Director,
Beedie Foundation



Lara Dauphinee
Managing Director,
Fiore Group of
Companies



Walter Pela
Regional Managing
Partner,
KPMG

"It's truly shocking how impressive the pitches from high school students are. Their understanding of real-world problems and ability to create value is remarkable. Playing even a small role in helping these students believe in themselves and their ideas is a privilege and an honour."

– Chris Wilson,
Mentee Community

PRELIMINARY ROUND JUDGES

Erin Archer

Junior Analyst, Private Equity
Finance Operations, BCI

Sandra Basheer

Client Success Specialist III,
BCI

Kalina Berova

Managing Director, BCI

Russell W. Crawford

National Service Line Leader,
US Corporate Tax, KPMG

Sarah Dorrington

Principal, Partnership
Portfolio, BCI

Bhupinder Dulkhu

Associate, ESG, BCI

David Harper

CEO, Discovery Foundation

Shahid A. Hassan

Associate Professor,
University Canada West

Terry Holland

Managing Partner, Krystal
Growth Partners

Ujal Ibrahim

Assistant Professor, MBA
Program, University Canada
West

Niki Jelstad

Director, Marketing and
Community Engagement,
Prospera Credit Union

Denise Mosawi

Mozhgan PourmoradNasseri
Assistant Professor,
University Canada West

Alexander Sakharov

Chair of University Curriculum
Committee, University
Canada West

Raquel Santos

Community Engagement
Specialist, Prospera Credit
Union

Alisa Stephenson

Senior Business
Development Manager,
Futurpreneur

Alan Tynan

Investment Counsellor, RBC

Teresa Virani

Executive Director,
Philanthropy, Nicola Wealth

Boris Wertz

Founder and General
Partner, Version One
Ventures

Steve Whiteside

Director Business
Development and Industry
Relationships,
University Canada West

Chris Wilson

Founder/Community
Builder, Mentee Community

Selena Woo

Vice President, Private
Wealth - Associates, Nicola
Wealth

STUDENT OUTCOMES



As part of JABC's ongoing efforts to deliver relevant and meaningful learning experiences for youth, we surveyed students after they attended this year's program to help us continue to adjust and improve the overall learning experience.

As a result of participating in Discover Your Pitch

82%

of students reported they feel more confident in public speaking.



“MY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT WAS...

- the 1:1 coaching session, it gave us a good opportunity to receive tailored advice.”
- being able to pitch my idea to mentors that are in business and gain valuable information.”
- being able to connect with the mentors during the 1:1 sessions. Being able to connect and learn from them was very educational and I learned a lot.”
- the one on one pitch coaching, our mentor was very insightful and gave us many good tips to improve.”
- an opportunity to connect with my team members through a shared project that required both effective communication and concentration. I also enjoyed the mentor sessions that bettered my understanding on how to be a satisfactory entrepreneur.”

“ Such a wonderful experience meeting new mentors and friends and winning 3rd overall at this year’s Discover Your Pitch conference! Looking forward to participating in many more JABC events in the coming year.

- Sienna Geissler, Paws and Pulse



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Presenting Partner



DISCOVERY FOUNDATION

Platinum Partners



**Malberry
Foundation**

University Partner



Location Host



Silver Partners

Greg Sullivan

McVicar Family Fund

Varshney Capital Corp.

APPENDIX A

FINALISTS AND THEIR COMPANIES



SEEDLET

Presenters: Bennett Chiu and Saliha Shajani, North Vancouver

At Seedlet, we use microbiome engineering to boost crop yield, growth, and resilience sustainably. Custom bacterial strains enhance nitrogen, phosphate, drought, and pest resistance, creating tailored living soils. This reduces synthetic inputs, cuts costs, and supports healthier ecosystems. See it? Seedlet.

INK AGAIN

Presenter: Richard Xie, Vancouver

Ink Again is a B2B upcycling company that refurbishes empty single-use markers and redistributes them to schools and businesses at a lower cost than traditional alternatives. Through its closed-loop model, Ink Again continuously restores and reuses markers, helping customers save money while reducing waste for a more sustainable future.

TRADEPAY

Presenters: Maiya Burke, Isla Stewart, Gwyneth Wozencroft, Port Coquitlam

The TradePay app rewards attendance and achievements, reducing dropout rates and enhancing real-world skills. Users scan barcodes at the end of classes or sessions to earn points, redeemable for food, necessities, and services. The app supports well-being, education, cultural identity, and recovery.

QUICK STEP BINDINGS

Presenter: Kail Keyes, South Slokan

At Quick Step Bindings, we're revolutionizing snowboarding with advanced automatic bindings that eliminate distractions, letting riders focus on what they love—riding. Rooted in local communities, we're enhancing both the sport and the lives around us.

FIL SOCCER ACADEMY

Presenter: Kaya Sather, Port Coquitlam

FIL Soccer Academy – A grassroots soccer academy dedicated to empowering and developing girls through the game of soccer.

MUCHIIKO

Presenter: Mali McGinnis, Victoria

My name is Mali, and I'm from Victoria, BC. My passion for art led me to start my business, Muchiiko, where I channel my creative energy into making and selling my original artwork and handmade fidgets.

PAWS AND PULSE

Presenters: Bella Zhao, Sienna Geissler, Ava Chester, Vancouver

Paws and Pulse is a handmade, authentic jewelry company that creates customizable bracelets that are not only stylish but also carry meaning and a story behind each one.

"It has been an absolute privilege to serve as a judge for JABC's Discover Your Pitch event over the past few years. I'm continually inspired by the students—their professionalism, eloquence, and the passion they bring to their business pitches is truly remarkable. The creativity and thoughtfulness behind their ideas never cease to impress me. Choosing a winner is always the hardest part—they all shine in their own unique way."

- Niki Jelstad, Prospera Credit Union

ABOUT JABC



JA British Columbia (JABC) is a not-for-profit impact organization that delivers hands-on, immersive education in work readiness, financial health, and entrepreneurship. Through JA, young people are equipped with the skillset and mindset to build thriving communities. Learn more at jabc.org.



JA British Columbia
#570 475 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, British Columbia,
Canada V6B 4M9 jabc.org



Charitable Registration Number 11897 6166 RR0001