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Harlan County students Janice Dean, Ally Alred, and Autumn Brock graduate from The Center for Rural Development's Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (ELI)

Harlan County students Janice Dean, Ally Alred, and Autumn Brock learned what it takes to start and manage a successful business venture this summer at The Center for Rural Development's Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (ELI).

Dean, a member of the ELI CMJK business team, developed a business plan for an afterschool program for kindergarten through eighth-grade. The program, called KIDS (Kids Influencing a Developing Society), promotes a safe, friendly environment for children with fun activities, volunteer tutoring, and healthy snacks.

"My team collaborated on a business plan for an after-school, child-care program," said Dean, a junior at Harlan County High School. "ELI has helped me to realize that I may want to be an entrepreneur. It has opened my eyes to a new, possible career option and showed me some great skills to pursue that career."

Alred, a sophomore at Harlan County High School, was a member of the ELI "The Underdogs" business team. This team came up with a business plan for an online, customizable clothing store. The "Snazzy Snaps" features do-it-yourself kits of interchangeable snaps used to customize blue jeans and other clothing items.

“Snazzy Snaps was designed to create a customizable look for any clothing item,” Alred said. “ELI has been a wonderful experience that has made me better understand the importance of an entrepreneur.”

Brock, a member of the ELI Phone KARE business team, developed a business plan for a new cell phone product. The team collaborated to design the “Phone Cyclone,” a highly, durable cell phone case with a high-tech cooling fan to prevent overheating.

“ELI has been an eye-opening experience,” said Brock, a sophomore at Harlan Independent School. “I’m truly blessed to have been a part of this amazing program that has taught me a lot more than just entrepreneurship.”

Twenty high school students from 13 Southern and Eastern Kentucky counties worked in teams to create business concepts for a cell phone case with a high-tech cooling device, an online customizable clothing store, a tourism-related designation package, an afterschool child-care program, and a non-profit organization for small business owners and entrepreneurs.

“This year’s Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute was an exceptional testament to the talent of young people that reside in Southern and Eastern Kentucky,” said Laura Glover, Managing Director of Operations at The Center. “This region needs bold, innovative ideas and it was encouraging to see just that from these high school participants.”

Dean is the daughter of Jeff and Samantha Dean of Evarts. Alred is the daughter of Russell and Whitney Alred of Harlan. Brock is the daughter of Brian and Patty Brock of Harlan.

ELI is presented by The Center for Rural Development in partnership with Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, Eastern Kentucky University, University of the Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment (Community and Leadership Development Department), and the Kentucky Innovation Network.

Ann DeSpain and Melony Denham, co-developers and co-teachers of *E-Discovery Challenges You!* program, provided the curriculum for ELI students.

For more information on ELI and The Center’s youth leadership programs, contact youth programs coordinator Delaney Stephens at 606-677-6000, email youth@centertech.com, or visit www.centeryouthprograms.com.

Established in 1996 through the vision of U.S. Congressman Harold "Hal" Rogers, (KY-05), and other leaders, The Center for Rural Development is a nonprofit organization fueled by a mission to provide leadership that stimulates innovative and sustainable

economic development solutions and a better way of life in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. In its 45-county primary service region, The Center provides innovative programs in leadership, public safety, technology, and arts and culture. The Center is committed to constantly expanding its capabilities in order to deliver a range of key services throughout Kentucky and the nation.

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Delaney Stephens, former youth programs coordinator and community liaison for The Center for Rural Development, presents 2017 Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (ELI) graduate Janice Dean, a student at Harlan County High School, with a certificate of achievement for completing the program.



Delaney Stephens, former youth programs coordinator and community liaison for The Center for Rural Development, presents 2017 Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (ELI) graduate Ally Alred, a student at Harlan County High School, with a certificate of achievement for completing the program.



Delaney Stephens, former youth programs coordinator and community liaison for The Center for Rural Development, presents 2017 Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (ELI) graduate Autumn Brock, a student at Harlan Independent School, with a certificate of achievement for completing the program.