

High School Student Wins \$5,000 Grand Prize at HackHunterdon Hackathon

FLEMINGTON, N.J. – A 15-year-old high school student, Lorenzo Sanelli of Three Bridges, won first place and \$5,000 in the second annual HackHunterdon Hackathon competition for creating a messaging app that allows users to anonymously post messages that fade away in sixty seconds and are not stored. Also, no registration or passwords are required to use the app.

The event, held at Lorenzo's home school, Hunterdon Central Regional High School June 9-10, **is a 24-hour tech product creation competition** that attracted dozens of competitors from the tri-state area and was open to people of all ages.

Judges included John Goodwin, an engineering manager at Facebook, Eric Herbel of Integrated Clinical Systems, a Hunterdon IT company, and Sam Napolitano, chief technology officer at Pond5 and a former vice president of engineering at Huffington Post.

According to organizers, the event was more than twice the size of the inaugural hackathon in 2017, attracting 72 technologists to the competition and additional sponsors. This year's event also had added features such as technology education for the general public, presentations from Flemington-based tech companies and the addition of high schoolers as competitors.

"The new features helped us provide a more comprehensive experience for participants this year and the addition of the students really amped the energy level up throughout the event," said Marc Saluk, economic development director for Hunterdon County. "The hackathon continues to be a key piece of the county's innovation initiative but is also really just a lot of fun as well."

Second place winners, Paul John, Rohan Harish and Brian Christian, all of Basking Ridge, won \$3,000 for their 3D scanning app, and Sheil Naik of Lebanon, Stephanie Trimboli of Neptune, Thomas Shweh of Morris Plains and Alex Barbour of Belle Mead won \$2,000 for their audio app, "Walking Stories," which allows users to listen to stories as they stroll past historic landmarks.

The event is sponsored by Hunterdon County's Office of Economic Development, Flemington Community Partnership, and the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce.

"The dividends that will come out of this very successful HackHunterdon event are impactful and long lasting," said Chris Phelan, president of the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce. "As we continue to grow our workforce and welcome new businesses, the experience of participants, sponsors and those attending the closing session confirm that we are moving our local economy in the right direction."

Ann Meredith, executive director of Flemington Community Partnership, added, "With the doubling of our attendance from our first year, and the remarkable talent we attracted, we are confident that Flemington is well on its way to becoming a technology hub for the region."

For more information, visit exploreflemington.com, HackHunterdon.com or hunterdon-chamber.org.

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CAPTION: HackHunterdon Hackathon winner Lorenzo Sanelli, center, with parents and (left to right), Freeholder John W. King, Freeholder Deputy Director Suzanne Lagay, Freeholder John E. Lanza and Freeholder Shaun C. Van Doren.