



2026

ANNUAL

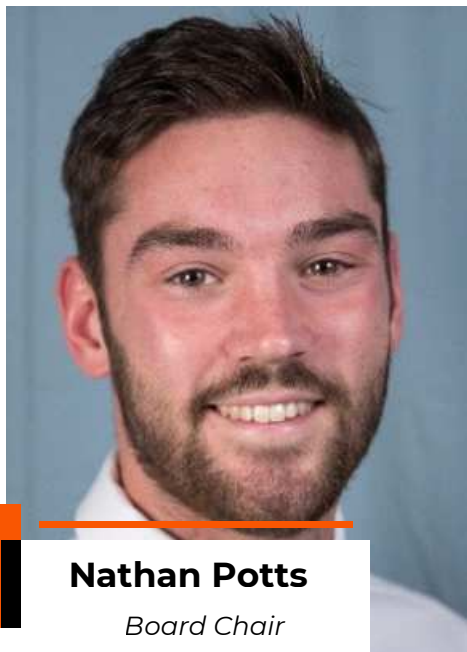
REPORT

creating entrepreneurial opportunities

montgomeryceo.com



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Nathan Potts

Board Chair

Another year in the books! As we look back on year 11 and ahead to year 12, I am continually filled with excitement for Montgomery CEO.

The year was packed with guest speakers, business tours, and collaborative assignments. Our most public event of the year continues to be our CEOs class business. This year's business saw comedy come to life at The Event Center of Montgomery County via "Smirks and Snacks", featuring local openers and headlined by Jeremy Nunes.

Our CEOs culminating act was our annual CEO Marketplace held at the Hillsboro Lions Club. The CEOs were able to showcase their individual businesses which ranged from woodworking to AI marketing.

We awarded several of our CEOs with scholarships made possible by our investors while introducing the incoming class of 11 CEOs. Of which, 5 are from Hillsboro HS, 3 from Litchfield HS, 2 from Nokomis HS and 1 homeschool.

Two words that come to mind when I think about year 12 are consistency and reach.

Consistency. We are blessed to have Logan Altenberger as our program facilitator. He is entering his 4th year at the helm. His expertise, insight and relatability are invaluable for our CEOs as they interact with him daily.

Reach. Our reach continues to grow in Montgomery County. Over the years, we have been blessed with CEOs from each of the four public high schools residing within our county. In the 2026-2027 year, we have accepted our first homeschool student to the program. I am thrilled that our program continues to be desired by many throughout our county as an enhancement to their education.

This amazing program could not happen without the investment of time and financial resources from our community. The difference you are making in our county will ripple through in ways we can't imagine. From our investors to mentors to business tour hosts and beyond, THANK YOU.

Gotta run!

Nathan Potts, Chairman, Montgomery CEO

LETTER FROM THE FACILITATOR

Eleven years of Montgomery CEO, and I am still amazed by what a group of high schoolers can accomplish when you hand them real responsibility and get out of their way. This year's team proved that once again.

The Montgomery CEO Class of 2026 brought together 7 students from 3 of our Montgomery County schools: 2 from Hillsboro, 3 from Nokomis, and 2 from Raymond. Over the course of the year, this group visited 40+ local businesses, sitting down with owners and leaders to learn how real companies actually operate. They built a team venture from scratch, managed a budget, made mistakes, fixed them, and each launched a personal business of their own.

What stands out most every year is not just what these students build, but who they become in the process. Students who start the year hesitant to speak in front of a room end up pitching a business plan with confidence. Students who have never managed money or a deadline come out the other side knowing how to handle both. These are lessons you cannot teach from a textbook. They come from doing the work, taking the risk, and living with the outcome, good or bad.

This year's class business was Smirks & Snacks, a comedy show built entirely by the students from the ground up. They booked local talent Jason Burke and Brayden Helgen, along with headliner Jeremy Nunes, and turned a simple idea into a packed house and a serious payday: nearly \$13,000 in revenue and over \$9,000 in profit. That profit became seed money for their own businesses, allowed them to become investors in CEO, and pulling off a live event under a real deadline taught them more about teamwork and follow-through than any classroom ever could.

I have now gone through this program as a student myself and facilitated it for three years, and I still hear the same reaction every time I describe it to someone new: "I wish we would've had something like that in high school." That reaction is exactly why this program matters. None of it happens without the investors and community members who believe in these students year after year. Thank you for being part of that, for eleven years running. Here's to the next eleven!

Sincerely,

Logan Altenberger
Facilitator, Montgomery CEO



Our Program Investors provide support to our community driven program. An annual investment of \$1,000 or more provides the necessary resources for current-year facilitator salary and operating expenses, and ensures the sustainability of the Montgomery CEO class for future students. Investors also contribute their time to the program. Hosting business visits, provide guest speakers and serving as mentors. All crucial to the success of Montgomery CEO.

INVESTOR LIST

Bank & Trust
Constitution Bank
Country Financial – Jessica Chappelle
Farmers Grain
Financial Services of America
First Community Bank
FNB of Litchfield
FNB of Nokomis
FNB of Raymond
Hayes Abrasives
Hillsboro Health
Hurst-Rosche
Knodle, LTD
Litchfield National Bank
M & M Service

INVESTOR LIST

Midwest Bus Sales
MJM Electric
MLH Futures
Montgomery County Farm Bureau
Niemann Grain Farms Inc
Patton & Co
Ronk Electrical
St Francis Hospital
Steve Janssen
Sullivan Drugs
The Journal News
The Sweet Spot
Victory Lane Ford
White & Associates
Montgomery CEO Class of 2026
Worksaver

MENTOR LIST

Jill Ulrici

Dylan Richter

MENTOR LIST

Ryan Follis

Tommy Justison

Tim Ulrici

MENTOR LIST

Heather Greenwood

Jessica Chappelle



Move with Miss Grace - Grace King

"Hi! I'm Grace King, and welcome to Move with Miss Grace - my very own kids' fitness business! I am so excited to teach kids fun ways to exercise and build self-confidence. Play Hard, Move Smart!"

C1 Detailing - Carter Webb

Carter Webb, founder of C1 Clean Detailing, has been transforming vehicles for nearly three years - but he'll be the first to tell you it's about far more than appearances. Carter approaches every detail with one goal in mind: protecting the customer's investment. In his eyes, a properly detailed car isn't just cleaner, it's more valuable, and that value pays off for years to come.



Crucible Lifting - Riley Reynolds



Crucible Lifting is a locally owned fitness business dedicated to helping individuals of all ages build strength, confidence, and healthy habits. Led by ISSA-certified trainer Riley Reynolds, Crucible Lifting offers personalized training programs and youth strength classes designed to meet each client's unique goals. Using the Everfit app, clients receive customized workouts and ongoing accountability to support their progress. The mission of Crucible Lifting is to create a supportive environment that empowers the community to grow stronger, both physically and mentally.



Andrew's Woodworking - Andrew Sustee

My name is Andrew and I am the founder of Andrew's Woodworking, a business specializing in handcrafted wooden products including cutting boards, cheese slicers, tables, and much more. What began as curiosity sparked by a YouTube video quickly turned into a passion - after crafting my first board, I fell in love with the craft and have been dedicated to refining my skills ever since.



Vici Global - Tony White and Izac Zerrusen

Izac and Tony are the young entrepreneurs behind Vici Global, a digital marketing company helping businesses generate leads, build their online presence, and streamline their sales process through cutting-edge technology. From custom websites and social media campaigns to AI-driven automation, Vici Global is equipping businesses with the tools they need to grow in today's competitive market.



Snapshot Lane Photography - Madilyn Barnes

My business is Snapshot Lane Photography. I specialize in small-event photography in Montgomery County and the surrounding areas. I started this business because I have a passion for all things creative, and I enjoy helping others!

An important piece of the CEO experience is visiting local businesses and hearing from guest speakers in Montgomery County. People drive by these locations daily without recognizing their contribution to economic development of the area. The group walks away with a changed mindset, never viewing the business the same way again.

Alpha Candles

Tommy Justison

Salvation Army Litchfield

Hillsboro Creamery

Kim Lipe

Raise the Bar

Orpheum & Grand Theaters

Domenic Macera

Ryan Follis

Valerie Belusko

Kismet Coffee

Atlas 46

Heather Hampton Knodle

Poogan's Creamery

McKay Auto Parts

The Sweet Spot

Midwest Bus Sales

Litchfield National Bank

The Event Center

DeMoulin Museum

Grant Shelton

CTI Fiber

JR Levora

Audra Elam

The Journal News

IGA

M&M Services

Country Financial - Jessica Chappelear





Dillon Carter
Doug Villhard
Ronk Electrical
Constitution Bank
David Mueller
Hiller Sheet Metal
Law Offices of West & Ginos

Short Furniture
Marcoot Creamery

Zach Wygal

Gianni's Pizza

Aumann Auctions

Coffeen Fire Department

Borgic Farms

Jodi Reynolds

Hillsboro Area Ambulance Service

Creekstone Kettleworks

EG Construction

Your Design or Mine

Arcadia

Dixie Truckstop

Funk's Grove Maple Sirup

Route 66 Museum

Brian Jerz

Just a Dad Studios

Montgomery County Farm Bureau

Tarter Family Farm

The Zone

Dunns n Roses

Pizza Man

Melissa Smith

MJM Electric

SMIRKS & SNACKS

Each year, CEO team members develop their own class business as a team. This year, the team put on an exciting night of comedy at The Event Center - Smirks & Snacks!

The team worked with each other and with various groups to put together a night of laughs and entertainment, featuring local talent Jason Burke and Brayden Helgen, along with headliner Jeremy Nunes.

This event was well-attended and profitable. The team generated nearly \$13,000 in revenue and \$9,000 in profit, which turned into seed money for their personal businesses.

Beyond the numbers, the event pushed the team to grow their skills in marketing, logistics, and problem-solving under a real deadline. From coordinating with performers to managing ticket sales and promotion, team members took on responsibilities well outside a typical classroom setting, and the results showed it.

The team learned many lessons through this process, including the importance of teamwork, promotion, and putting together a high-quality event under pressure.





Nathan Potts
Patton & Co



Patrick Ward
Bank of Hillsboro



Jessica Chapplear
Country Financial



Dillon Clark
Litchfield
National Bank



Patty Clarke
First National Bank of
Raymond



Juletta Ellis
Litchfield High
School



Dana Schott
Lincolnwood High School



Angela Boide
Hillsboro Health



Jodi Reynolds
MarkNet



Lisa DeWerff
Nokomis High School



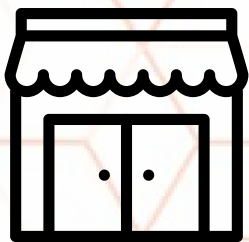
Kelly Kenny
Hillsboro High School

DISCOVER HOW TO TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY AND GET INVOLVED WITH CEO:



GUEST SPEAKER

Come join class as a guest speaker, this is such a critical part of CEO. We love for speakers to tell us stories about how their business started, personal philosophies about work and success, life topics or specific business topics. Guest speakers are really the true teachers in CEO.



BUSINESS VISIT

Students look forward to visiting the many different businesses that create our community. Consider inviting the class to tour and learn more about your business. Contact facilitator@montgomeryceo.com to learn more.

MENTOR

Become a mentor if you are ready to experience CEO right along with the students. Being a mentor is a rewarding way to get involved.



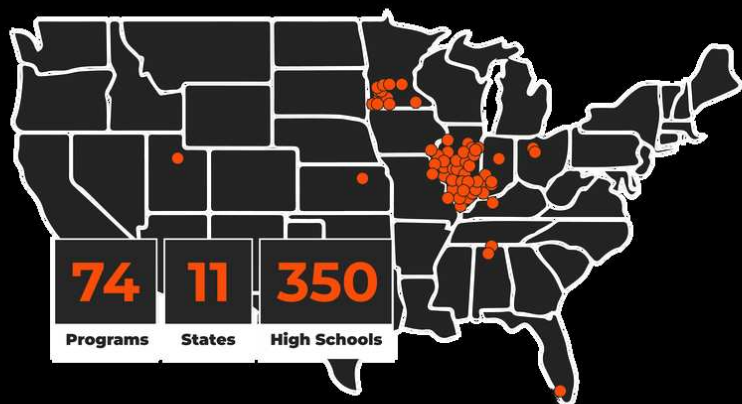
INVESTOR

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience. By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you can make a direct impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.



WE NEED COMMUNITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU.

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience.



INVEST IN TOMORROW, TODAY.

By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you are making a positive impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.

AS AN INVESTOR, YOU RECEIVE:

- Name/Logo Recognition on CEO Website
- Social Media Acknowledgement
- First Rights to host/visit the class



"The CEO experience has been life changing for me. I learned a lot of skills I wouldn't have been able to gather otherwise and I feel more prepared for my future. CEO opened up more doors for me than any other opportunity ever has."



"CEO is so much more than how to run a business. It is teaching students the life skills and all of the things that go into being successful in any career path you choose. It exposes all of our students to what endless opportunities are right here in our backyard."



"In 20+ years in economic development, the chamber of commerce and the economic development corporation, CEO has been the most beneficial most gratifying program I have been involved with."