

CLASSE

The Coles County Entrepreneurship Class

Capital Campaign 2025-2026

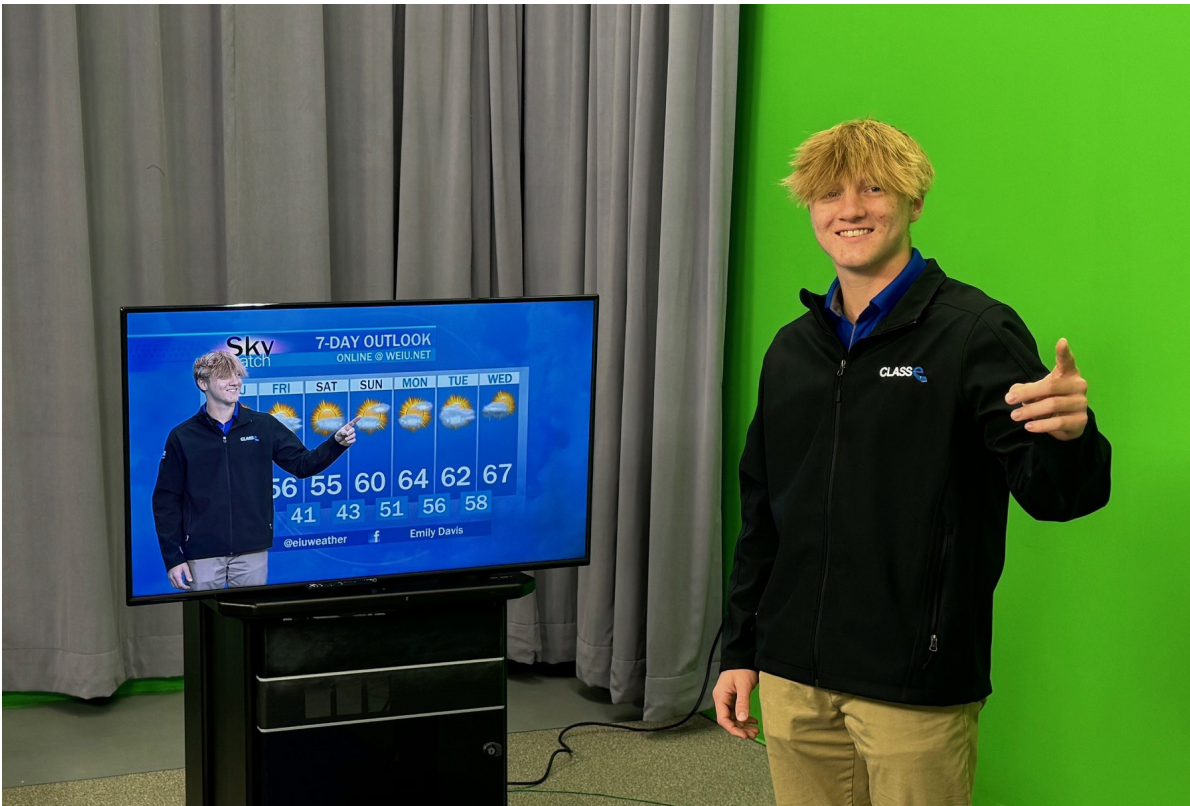
ALREADY COMMITTED:



Bob &
Judy Jones



BIG IDEAS NEED BIG SUPPORT



Visit the Rural King Foundation website to learn more about the capital campaign.



Check out a video made by Piper Sanders - a 2021-2022 CLASSE student!



A LETTER FROM THE RK FOUNDATION FOR RURAL AMERICA

The RK Foundation of Rural America is excited to share a great opportunity to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of ClassE in Coles County.

ClassE is a remarkable program that empowers our high school juniors and seniors with the mindset, skills, and hands-on experience needed to launch their own businesses. It cultivates leadership, professionalism, and entrepreneurial thinking while fostering deep ties to the local business community. Over the years, ClassE has produced students who not only imagine success, they achieve it. Many graduates return to Coles County to invest in its future, creating jobs, launching businesses, and becoming active community leaders.

At the RK Foundation, our mission has always centered around strengthening rural communities by supporting initiatives that create lasting impact. We believe that investing in our young people is the most direct path to building a vibrant and resilient future for our region. Taking on this campaign is not just about raising funds, it is about supporting a future where opportunity and innovation remain rooted in the heart of Coles County.

With big ideas comes big support needs! Our goal is to provide ClassE with the resources it needs to continue delivering an exceptional educational experience for generations to come. This includes investing in infrastructure, student resources, and business partnerships that will allow the program to grow and evolve with the changing landscape of entrepreneurship.

We invite you to join us in this effort to ensure that ClassE continues to inspire the next generation of leaders—right here in the community we call home.

With appreciation and optimism,



Amy Shafer



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VINNIE WALK

ClassE Instructor

JEREMY MILLER

Co-Founder
American Way Storage

SCOTT EGGLESTON

Owner
Slumberland Furniture

ED DOWD

Director
Mattoon Chamber of Commerce

SANDY GRAVEN

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Kemper CPA Group

GUNNER DAVIS

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Education for Employment System 340

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Washington Savings Bank

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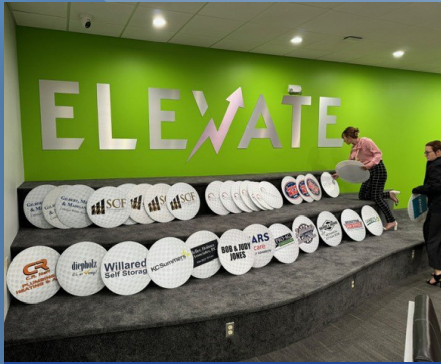
Assistant Principal
Charleston High School

ClassE is an entrepreneurial development class that aims to educate Coles County high school juniors and seniors about the opportunities and challenges of starting and running a new business venture. We expect that students who complete the class will go on to successfully run their own businesses.

In this experiential learning dual-credit class, students are selected through an application process, learn about what it is like to be an entrepreneur, and start their own business with fellow classmates. Students develop leadership and professional skills important for success. Through this program, an intergenerational business success network is created.



NOTABLE ACTIVITIES



GOLF OUTING

For the past several years, the golf outing has been the main way that ClassE students have funded the initial start-up costs for their businesses and program expenses. This event is organized as a business in which students are making most of the planning and financial decisions. Organizers of two of the area's largest golf outings speak to the students in the first few days of class about their experiences in running successful outings. The students also visit local golf courses, the LLC Print Shop and Cromwell Media to better learn about marketing. In preparation for this event students also learn about sales and are coached on how to email, call, and "cold call" when asking for sponsorships from our local business community.



EIU BUSINESS PITCH COMPETITION

ClassE students participated in the EIU Holley Business Competition with a goal of pitching products Rural King could begin offering at their stores nationwide. Leading up to the competition, students learned about regional demographics and how to acquire potential customer data. They visited the Rural King Distribution Center to better understand behind the scenes processes. Local entrepreneurs, inventors, and retail buyers help students prepare their presentations. Students compile everything they learned, such as customer demographics, product distribution, and promotion, to give their final pitch.



COMMUNITY LEADERS BREAKFAST

The original Community Leaders Breakfast and the "20 Under 40" program for the Coles County area began back in 2004. The ClassE class of 2023, decided to give the event another opportunity to showcase area leadership. Students tie aspects of their trade show into the Community Leaders Breakfast and find speakers with entrepreneurship ties to the Coles County area. Students continue to evolve this event yearly. The students also use this program to promote and support One Stop Community Christmas through a raffle. It is great to celebrate with so many area leaders who are a part of the students' ClassE journey throughout the year.



TRADE SHOW

The ClassE Trade Show serves as the final and cumulative project for students. Most of the class lessons to the business visits are in place to help the students develop a business of their own. The students begin the year learning about themselves and design a business plan with local business partners, including the Small Business Development Center at Eastern Illinois University. Although many students offer their goods or services before the Trade Show, this event allows the public to see what the students as a group have to offer for sale to our local community.

2024-2025 BUSINESS TOURS



Adams Memorials
Aikman's Wildlife
Alton Warehouse
American Select Tubing
Century 21
City of Charleston
City of Charleston Water Plant
Cromwell Radio
EIU Library
Emerald Acres
First Mid Corporate
Howell Paving
Jersey Mike's
KC Summers
Lake Land College
Lake Land College Print Shop

Lester Buildings
Mattoon City Hall
Mattoon Public Library
Morgan's Meat Market
Overton Tree Farm
Pagliai's Pizza
Pensees Books
Pilson's Auto Center
Relentless Fitness
Rural King Corporate Office
Rural King Distribution Center
Sound Source
Stitches & Stuff
Toyota Plant
Trueblood Collective
WEIU

2024-2025 SPEAKERS & CONTRIBUTORS

Alex Gowin
Amy Patrick
Angela Hampton
Ashley Berkheimer
Beth Stapleton
Bob Schultz
Brandon Wolfe
Brian Daniell
Cara Janes
Cayla Duckett
Chris Considine
Coleman Engelkes
Courtney Conlin
Ed Dowd
Gloria Spear
Greg Hagerman
Jami Roderick

Jamie Willis
Janet Grove
Jason Heurman
Jason Hortenstine
Jason Moody
Jason Tucker
Jason Wyatt
Jeanne Dau
Jeff Owens
Jim Wolf
Joyce Madigan
Justin Roley
Kallie Pullen
Karen Pope
Katie Hoene
Kelly Helms
Kim Lockart

Kim Lockhart
Kristen Hutchinson
Linda Simpson
Matt Titus
Matt Webb
Max Pozsgai
Mike Rudibaugh
Renee England
Ross Hutchinson
Seth Higgins
Shonn Hild
Sue Shumway
Tim Paap
TJ Dosch
Tyler Walk

208

STUDENTS

43

**BOARD
MEMBERS**

1,656

**DUAL CREDIT
HOURS EARNED**

169

**IN-CLASS
SPEAKERS**

159

**BUSINESSES
VISITED**

127

MENTORS



““”

"By engaging with business owners and asking questions, I developed the ability to speak confidently with adults, which is something that helped me greatly at just 17 years old. That confidence carried over into college, where it helped me network, form lasting friendships, and ultimately landing my current position at TransUnion."

EUGENE OHBA
CLASS OF 2021

"ClassE taught me to be more proactive and ask for what I want. I was able to generate income last summer and I sold at my local farmers markets and various pop ups. I am still planning to continue with my company this summer and it wouldn't have been possible without the foundation of ClassE"

JAMILA AMARTEY
CLASS OF 2024

"ClassE didn't just teach me about starting a business—it taught me about initiative, networking, and how to turn ideas into action. That experience has stuck with me through college, internships, and now as I build my career in finance and entrepreneurship. It's the kind of class that pays dividends long after graduation."

NICHOLAS BRADEN
CLASS OF 2015

"With the knowledge gained through Class E, I have been able to grow my business to support the next stage of my life, which entails taking aviation courses through a local college to become a commercial pilot. Without the help of class E, I would not have been able to take the leap into my dream career debt free."

BLAINE POWERS
CLASS OF 2022

“”

"Growing up I was confident that one day I would be my own boss. Class-E taught me how to make that possible. Not only did we get to speak with business owners in the community, we were encouraged to start our own business. ClassE took effort, but it was more rewarding than any other class available to you in high school."

DYLAN WOLF
CLASS OF 2014

"ClassE was a fun and exciting class, yet gave me valuable knowledge of the business world and how to use it. As a salesman for a trim company, I use lessons I learned from ClassE, daily. ClassE gave me hands-on learning and a lifetime of business knowledge to use wherever I desire."

LONDYN FULTZ
CLASS OF 2019

"One of the things I learned in ClassE that stuck with me was networking with others. We got out into the community and met with different businesses. We heard from different business owners and got the chance to gain some of their expertise. ClassE helped me to build a relationship that I might not have had if I hadn't taken the class."

MEGAN SMITH
CLASS OF 2018

"Before ClassE, I was really shy and never imagined myself speaking in front of a group. Through the program, I was pushed to step out of my comfort zone and discovered strengths I didn't know I had—gaining confidence, leadership skills, and the courage to take on challenges."

MAKAYLA BRAWNER
CLASS OF 2022



Big Ideas Need Big Support



LEADER

Leaders step forward to set the pace. Every commitment helps sparks entrepreneurial spirit in the ClassE students.

\$5,000 - \$24,999



INNOVATOR

Innovators fuel creativity and new ideas. Your support gives students the confidence to think big and launch real businesses.

\$25,000 - \$49,000



VISIONARY

Visionaries see what is possible and help pave the path forward. This gift sustains ClassE's long-term success.

\$50,000 - \$99,000



LEGACY

Legacy donors create lasting impact. Your investment secures program longevity for generations to come.

\$100,000+

The RK Foundation will match donations over \$50,000 up to \$250,000

CUSTOMIZE YOUR SUPPORT

- \$50 ■ \$500 ■ Other _____
- \$100 ■ \$1,000

Pledges can be spread over a five (5) year period or customized to the donors preference.

	SUPPORTER	LEADER	INNOVATOR	VISIONARY	LEGACY
Listing in Annual Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Media & Website Recognition		✓	✓	✓	✓
Half Page Ad in Community Breakfast Booklet			✓	✓	✓
Golf Outing & Community Breakfast Sponsor				✓	✓
Premium Company Exposure at Key Events					✓
Full Page Ad in Community Breakfast Booklet					✓
Student Award Naming Rights					✓

All sponsorship levels come with the opportunity to be a ClassE Mentor or host tours at your business.



I'M IN FOR BIG IDEA SUPPORT!

Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Supporter (\$0-\$4,999) Leader (\$5,000 - \$24,999) Innovator (\$25,000 - \$49,999)

Visionary (\$50,000 - \$99,999) Legacy (\$100,000+)

\$ _____ over 5 years.

\$ _____ will be paid in one lump sum

Please send me an invoice for my above chosen payment schedule

My payment is included

Check here if ClassE alumni

Signature: _____

Your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. **Please make checks payable to: SICF - ClassE.**



