FedEx Awards $250,500 to Winners of the Seventh Annual FedEx Small Business Grant Contest

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FedEx announced today that LUX Blox â€“ an Illinois- based company that manufactures construction blocks to teach kids (and adults) about natureâ€™s design principles through play â€“ is the grand prize winner of its seventh annual FedEx Small Business Grant Contest. LUX Blox will receive a $50,000 grant, plus $7,500 in FedEx Office® print and business services to help with its mission to develop programs and videos to support STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) learning, and therapeutic exercises for individuals with autism and sensory disorders.

"Of the more than 13,000 entries in the FedEx Small Business Grant Contest – our largest ever – LUX Blox really exemplifies all the characteristics we want in a grand prize winner," said Scott Harkins, senior vice president, Customer Channel Marketing at FedEx. "FedEx is a global company that connects people and possibilities around the world, and we look forward to working with LUX Blox to help them grow their business – from product packaging to shipping to e-commerce."

The LUX Blox story began when Michael and Heather Acerra set out to make a construction system that would build things the same way nature builds itself. They created blocks that could curve, bend, and move, without the limits imposed by stacking or sticking. This unique creation led teachers and students to use LUX Blox blocks as a "hands-on" STEAM learning tool. In fact, due to the toy's popularity among individuals with autism and sensory disorders, it was named "2018 Top Toy" by Autism Live.

LUX Blox blocks are manufactured near the inventors' home in Galesburg, Ill., and are packaged and fulfilled by the skilled hands of people with disabilities through an alliance with Bridgeway Inc., a not-for-profit agency whose mission is to empower people with disabilities through training opportunities and the creation of meaningful employment.

"We are honored to be named the 2019 FedEx Small Business Grant Contest Grand Prize Winner," said Michael and Heather Acerra, owners of LUX Blox. "We set out to create a better building block so that both kids and adults spend less time in front of a screen and more time using their hands to create. We are planning to use the grant money to develop

even more programs and videos to support math and science learning for educators and students, as well as therapeutic exercises for individuals with autism and sensory disorders."

FedEx also awarded a silver prize of $30,000, plus a $5,000 credit in FedEx Office Services, to Qore Performance of McLean, Va. The brainchild of a former law enforcement officer, the IcePlate by Qore Performance is a personal cooling/hydrating system for first responders and outdoor workers that helps protect them from heat stroke and hypothermia. In summer 2018, Qore Performance industrial and military customers worked 200,000 hours with zero heat incidents.

Additionally, FedEx awarded each of the following ten businesses a bronze prize of $15,000 grants and $1,000 in FedEx Office services: (listed in alphabetical order)

Caputo Brothers Creamery (Spring Grove, Pa.)
DetraPel (Framingham, Mass.)
Enbois Originals (Gulfport, Fla.)
Moka Origins (Honesdale, Pa.)
Neu, Inc. (Seattle)
Purpose The Therapeutic Box (Hermitage, Pa.)
Sand Cloud (San Diego)
Something Borrowed Blooms (Lafayette, La.)
Tall Order (Jericho, N.Y.)
Wear Your Music (Providence, R.I.)
This year, due to the high volume of outstanding entries, FedEx added two additional bronze level winners for the first time in the history of the contest.

"It's an honor to award our print and business services to this year's FedEx Small Business Grant Contest winners," said Tracy Brightman, senior vice president of Human Resources and Communications for FedEx Office. "While these entrepreneurs are a driving force in the success of our economy, they're also giving back to their local communities and we're proud to fuel their contributions."

The 2019 contest garnered more than 13,000 entries from candidates across the United States and more than 1.3 million votes. Since its launch in 2013, more than 38,000 small businesses have entered the contest in the United States alone. The contest has now grown from one country to 12 countries and the grant pool for the U.S. contest has grown from $50,000 to more than $220,500 in total prizes.

Source: FedEx

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