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MYPN: The New Business Launching Pad

While the economic recovery may be slow, the **Manchester Young Professionals Network (MYPN)** is giving startups a boost. MYPN announced in December it is accepting applications for its third annual business plan competition—the **NH Start-Up Challenge**. Selected applicants will receive a scholarship to attend the **Stonyfield Farm Entrepreneurial Institute** and receive guidance and support in developing their business plans. The top business plan will receive a \$25,000 cash award to launch their new business as well as in-kind professional services and products donated by NH businesses.

The competition helped to launch **Float Left Labs**, a Manchester nonprofit that assists other nonprofits with marketing and Web design and the winner of the inaugural competition, and it provided seed money for last year's winner **Play@Work**, which plans to open a facility where parents can have work space and childcare.

The Manchester Young Professionals Network will be accepting applications through January. On March 1, it will select up to six participants for the Entrepreneurial Institute. Participants' final business plans will be due May 15, and two to three business plans will be selected for presentation to the challenge judges, who will choose one winner in June.

"The Start-Up Challenge offers possibilities for anyone with entrepreneurial spirit," said E.J. Powers, MYPN chair and member of the Start-Up Challenge committee. "For those out of work and others who are employed but interested in shaping their own future, the Start-Up Challenge offers an opportunity to take the first step in realizing their dream." For more information about the competition, visit www.mypn.org/nh-start-up-challenge.