



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**SXSW EDU® Announces Winners of the 2024 Launch Startup Competition
and Student Impact Challenge**

Launch Startup Competition Winners all hail from women-led businesses

[March 6, 2024] // Austin, Texas – South by Southwest EDU® Conference & Festival is excited to announce the winners for its 2024 Launch Startup Competition and Student Impact Challenge. The winners were announced at the Launch Spotlight and the Student Impact Ice Cream Social. **Maro**, **NaTakallam**, and **Struggly** were presented with the Launch Startup Competition awards, and **ReAlign** was named the Student Impact Challenge winner.

For over a decade, the **Launch Startup Competition** has given early-stage startups the chance to pitch emerging ideas, services, and products to a cohort of industry experts, early adopters, investors, and educators. During this year's event, *presented by the Walton Family Foundation*, participants were given the opportunity to showcase their ideas in front of a panel of judges including **Kristen DiCerbo**, Chief Learning Officer of Khan Academy, **Joanna Cannon**, Fellow at the Walton Family Foundation, and **Carlos Moreno**, Co-Executive Director of Big Picture Learning. After hearing from the seven finalists, the judges awarded **Maro** (Bozeman, Montana) with the grand-prize Launch Award for its focus on providing early interventions and screening for student mental health. This is the first time all winners are from women-led businesses, the following awards were also announced as part of the Launch Startup Competition:

- **Impact Award:** This honor, recognizing the potential to impact student learning based on the science of learning, was given to NaTakallam (New York, New York) for its work creating a lifeline for refugees to earn meaningful income while in turn creating opportunities for cultural exchange and deep language learning.

- **Community Choice Award:** The award, which acknowledges the finalist that received the most votes from the audience during SXSW EDU, was presented to Struggly (Austin, Texas) , which uses neuroscience to help students learn math.

“I’m really grateful for the opportunity to have pitched alongside so many incredible founders at SXSW EDU’s Launch Startup Competition, and Maro won!” said Founder & CEO **Kenzie Butera Davis**, Maro. “For us, this means that we just gained an incredible amount of exposure to new school districts who are really looking for ways to support their student’s mental health, so we’re really grateful for that velocity to accelerate our growth as an organization, but also to scale our impact and screen more students.”

In addition, SXSW EDU also proudly awarded the **Student Impact Challenge**, *presented by The Allstate Foundation*, to **ReAlign** from Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, as this year’s winner. ReAlign developed a web application to both diagnose and manage amblyopia, a type of neurodevelopmental disorder that is caused by abnormal vision development in childhood.

The inaugural challenge serves as a new iteration of the original Student Startup Competition to expand its amplification of high school student achievement and agency in solving the most pressing social, economic, and environmental problems facing the world today. Chosen by judges **Sabari Raja**, Managing Partner at JFFVentures, **Greg Weatherford**, Program Officer of Youth Empowerment at The Allstate Foundation, **Ehsan Zaffar**, Executive Director at The Difference Engine, and **Zoë Jenkins**, Senior Advisor of the Kentucky Student Voice Team.

“It’s been such a great honor for ReAlign to win the SXSW EDU Student Impact Challenge Award,” said **Founder, Ashish Chettimada**. “It means a lot to us as a startup made up of young entrepreneurs. The confidence that the judges have placed in us, in impacting our community is so special. This has been a great opportunity and I thank SXSW EDU for this opportunity.”

To learn more about the competition programming at SXSW EDU, visit sxswedu.com/competitions.

About SXSW EDU:

The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival is a reflection of the world's most critical social issues as seen through the lens of education. This year's event will bring together the learner, the practitioner, the entrepreneur, and the visionary to share their groundbreaking stories, tackle complex issues, and build reimagined paths forward. As a community of diverse people who are united around a like-minded vision for the future, SXSW EDU serves as a place for attendees to renew their purpose in practice from both a personal and professional perspective. It is a place to reinforce the core principles of teaching and learning as well as an opportunity to express your creativity and passion for education. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 4-7, 2024.

For more information, please visit sxswedu.com.

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