

CT REPORTS

“Nabors” wins CTA Foundation Contest Pitch

The CTA Foundation announces the creation of the John and Jane Shalam Award

S elected from dozens of entries, seven companies competed to win the CTA Foundation’s 2021 Pitch Competition sponsored by AARP Innovation Labs. Naborforce based in Richmond, VA, emerged as the competition winner and Dance4Healing based in Sunnyvale, CA, was selected as the People’s Choice winner.

This year’s competition focused on technologies that create connections. The finalists ranged from virtual reality (VR) to digital gaming to blockchain-based memory enhancements. The companies each had three minutes to pitch followed by two minutes of questions from the expert judges including Eric Hsia, managing director, Translink Capital; Faye Sahai, managing director, Vinaj Ventures; and Monique Woodard, founder and managing partner, Cake Ventures.

Naborforce emerged victorious from the tight competition. Its program connects older adults to a network of “Nabors,” who provide social engagement and support for errands, transportation and household help. Currently available in Richmond and Charlottesville, VA and Raleigh, NC, more markets are coming soon.

The audience also voted for the People’s Choice winner, and selected **Dance4Healing**. This program uses the benefits of movement and dance to promote healthy living and activity through its remote access portal.

- The other five competitors include:
- **Chekmate, Washington, DC:** A new dating app focused on using voice and video interaction only to reduce the risks associated with online dating and to create a transparent experience.
 - **Gameboard, Boulder, CO:** A tabletop console and platform, Gameboard’s enhanced board game experience melds the physical and digital worlds.

Digital setup and scorekeeping and an unlimited play game library allow players to move easily among games and try new ones.

- **Human AI Labs, Diego, CA:** Personal AI from Human AI Labs aims to empower humans with the benefits of equitable and unbiased artificial intelligence (AI). The program enables users to retain memories with the help of personal AI secured by blockchain. Human AI transforms what users say and write into digital memories for easy recall at any time.
- **Immersive Cure, Medina, OH:** Immersive Cure leverages the power of VR to offer users a space where they can relax their mind, body and spirit. A mobile VR kit holds experiences tailored to the specific needs and wants of palliative care patients and honors veterans.
- **QBuddy, Ithaca, NY:** Short for Quarantine Buddy, QBuddy matches users with an optimal buddy and offers virtual events and community networks for safely distanced virtual friendships. The machine learning algorithm ranks and outputs best possible buddy pairings based on backgrounds and what users are seeking.
Naborforce will compete in the AARP Innovation Labs Grand Pitch Finale later this year, and both winners will have mentorship and recognition opportunities through the CTA Foundation. You can listen to the [competition online](#). ■

▶ CTA JUDGES



ERIC HSIA
Managing Director,
Translink Capital



FAYE SAHAI
Managing Director,
Vinaj Ventures



MONIQUE WOODARD
Founder and Managing Partner,
Cake Ventures

THE JOHN AND JANE SHALAM AWARD

The CTA Foundation also announced the creation of a new annual award, the John and Jane Shalam Award to recognize a person, organization or company that does amazing work addressing social isolation. Chair of Voxx International and Founding Chair of the CTA Foundation John Shalam and his wife Jane have been instrumental in the CTA Foundation’s work addressing social isolation and this award will forever recognize their incredible contributions to this important issue.

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