



News release

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**Racine entrepreneur wins
women's entrepreneur contest**

Yolonda Blair of Racine took first place in the InnovateHER Business Challenge hosted at Gateway Technical College today, March 12, the Wisconsin version of the national competition sponsored by the US Small Business Administration.

Blair's entry for her business, Pennies Producing Palaces, beat out 12 other women entrepreneurs from the counties of Racine, Kenosha, Milwaukee and Richland.

Second place went to Nicole Urquhart, Racine, owner of Baby Express, and third went to Lia Sader, Stepping Stone Farm, Franksville.

The event was held at Gateway's SC Johnson integrated Manufacturing and Engineering Technology Center in Sturtevant.

Blair's business recycles and reinvigorates used furniture to provide a more inexpensive option than paying retail prices for customers seeking to renovate their living spaces. Many of her customers are women, including those leaving abusive relationships or other crisis situations who need to furnish new living spaces. She says her prices are still well below what others may charge, providing those in need with an option to furnish their living spaces reasonably.

Gateway partnered with the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation to host the event as a way to celebrate Women's History Month. The event was a competition for female entrepreneurs who create innovative products or services that impact the lives of women and families.

The top local winner could be one of top 10 national winners to travel to Washington DC the week of May 4 to pitch their idea to a panel of judges and have the opportunity to win up to \$15,000.

Contestants produced a video which was used by a panel of judges will review and select award winners.

Gateway Technical College collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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