

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**High School Entrepreneurs Exhibit at CEONext National Trade Show**  
*Midland Institute's CEO Program Offers Rural Economic Growth Opportunities*

Champaign, Ill. – On Sunday, June 9, 2019, over 20 high school entrepreneurs will exhibit their businesses at the [CEONext National Trade Show](#) from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil Street, in Champaign, Ill. The event will showcase innovative products and services developed by CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) students selected from 171 schools in 41 small towns and rural communities across the Midwest. The CEO Program's CEONext National Trade Show is the culmination of a business, economic development, and academic collaboration administered by the [Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship](#) to teach and to experience 21st century skills of problem-solving, teamwork, self-motivation, responsibility, higher-order thinking, communication, and imagination.

Many small towns and agricultural communities throughout the United States are struggling to find ways to survive economically. One innovative way to grow and to keep residents and businesses from relocating to metropolitan areas is to create entrepreneurial energy from within the community. The Midland Institute's CEO Program is an educational program that helps high school seniors learn problem solving and business skills through interactions with local business and community leaders. The program is a community-supported, investor-funded, year-long accredited class that has spread statewide in Illinois and is rapidly expanding into other Midwestern states.

The CEO Program equips students with the necessary soft skills, such as communication and problem resolution, to work within a group setting to develop a class business the first semester. Ultimately, each student "learns-by-doing" by actually starting and running his or her own enterprise the second semester while cultivating essential sales, marketing, financial, and administrative skills with the support of a CEO facilitator and local community business mentors.

Established in 2008 by a forward-thinking group of Effingham business leaders and originally led by a respected nationally recognized local educator, [Craig Lindvahl](#), the CEO Program fosters a seedbed of creativity, collaboration, confidence, and communication by nurturing students from all socio-economic backgrounds to lay the groundwork for personal as well as for community growth and success.

At this year's CEONext event, CEO students from across the spectrum of communities were selected to present their businesses at the national trade show with an awards ceremony to follow. Each student is competing for the opportunity to win a \$2,500 Award of Excellence to be invested back in to their individual business.

The CEONext National Trade Show is open to the public, and attendees will have the opportunity to buy products, sign up for services, and book appointment times with the owners at each booth.

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## About the Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship and the CEO Program

### The moment that CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES (CEO) became an idea.

The first CEO Program began in Effingham, Illinois in 2008. The genesis of CEO came from a high school student who wanted to connect with a local entrepreneur but wasn't sure how to go about it. The conversation between the entrepreneur and the student provided the impetus to form an entrepreneurship class based on real world, real life opportunities, and experiences. The Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship was founded to establish and support the CEO Program.

The Midland Institute guides CEO communities through the process of selecting their local CEO board, hiring their facilitator, implementing the student application process, working with the local school district, as well as providing on-going training and support. The Institute serves as a resource for all CEO programs throughout the United States. The Midland Institute is a non-profit with a 501(c) 3 status that is governed by a [board of directors](#).

The CEO Program is currently in 168 schools in 39 communities with over 1,716 alumni – and growing. There are 2,368 community investors connecting kids to their communities through entrepreneurial education and mentorship to help the future business leaders of tomorrow discover their talents and skills today for the advancement of personal and rural economic development.

To learn more, visit <http://www.midlandinstitute.com/NCTS/Media-Page>.