Starting Gate participants Stephen John and Joseph Barnett recently earned the $10,000 Brian Patrick Thomas Entrepreneurial Spirit Award for their invention, NeoVent, a respiratory support device designed to treat critically ill infants in developing nations. The award is one of numerous the duo has earned for the device.
BRINK VISITS D.C.

As a recognized expert in hiring practices with experience working with public safety organizations to increase diversity in hiring, Dr. Kyle Brink attended a meeting at the White House this summer to kick off a national initiative to examine ways to achieve more diversity in first responder organizations.

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HOMECOMING

Join us for the Haworth College of Business Homecoming Pancake Breakfast! Complimentary all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage, coffee and orange juice will be served by World Record Pancake Flippers, Chris Cakes, for all Haworth College of Business alumni, friends, students and families! Advance reservations required.

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Rainie Quang, a senior accountancy major and management minor, recently received a
$10,000 Public Company Accounting Oversight Board Scholarship.

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Professor Kuanchin Chen's paper has been recognized as outstanding paper of the year by the academic journal, Internet Research.

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In a course taught by Dr. Tim Palmer, students rid the classroom of plastic water bottles as a part of a semester-long sustainability effort.

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WMU inventors win $10,000 Brian Patrick Thomas Award

By Stacey Markin
July 3, 2015 | WMU News

Kalamazoo, Mich.—The Western Michigan University duo that recently made headlines for winning the Lemelson-MIT National Collegiate Student Prize Competition has won another impressive award—the Brian Patrick Thomas Entrepreneurial Spirit Award.

WMU alumnus Stephen John of Portage and senior Joseph Barnett of Kalamazoo received the $10,000 award for their invention, NeoVent, a respiratory support device designed to treat critically ill infants in developing nations.

The Brian Patrick Thomas Entrepreneurial Spirit Award is to be awarded annually to the company in Starting Gate, WMU's student business accelerator, which seeks to move teams of people to a common cause with a higher social purpose. This is the inaugural award.

This past year has been one of significant activity for John and Barnett, as they have developed their company AIM Tech. Participants in Starting Gate during the 2014-15 academic year, their initial goals were to focus on customer discovery to see if their device would be utilized in Third World countries that have little funding for respiratory equipment. As they worked on their business model, they also developed a working model of NeoVent after extensive lab work. They currently have a patent pending for the device and are working to start clinical studies in Nepal with working prototypes.
"Stephen and Joseph used Starting Gate as their think tank and achieved every milestone that they set out to accomplish," says Lara Hobson, director of operations for Starting Gate. "This dedication, paired with the mission of their company, is what set AIM Tech apart as the company most deserving of the award."

"We are honored to have received this funding and are using it to produce and test devices for clinical trials," says John. "We've received so much help along our way from individuals in southwest Michigan—both from WMU and from the community. As a business, we hope to give back, hopefully by creating jobs here while saving neonatal lives around the world."

ABOUT NEOVENT

John and Barnett teamed up to create NeoVent after John learned from a Respiratory Therapists Without Borders official about the need for a low-cost medical device that could deliver biphasic positive airway pressure ventilation to prevent lung collapse in premature babies experiencing respiratory distress in hospitals lacking the costly medical equipment that typically provides this life-saving therapy.

They began working on the device more than a year and a half ago in John's home and spent months refining it in Dr. Peter Gustafson's lab in WMU's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. What they ultimately developed is simple, energy efficient, safe and inexpensive. They estimate that NeoVent will be priced at around $25 versus the thousands of dollars a ventilator costs.

"Stephen and Joseph have demonstrated perfectly the essence of this award—the ability to use creativity, compassion and professional skills to serve a higher purpose through their business," says Dr. Kay Palan, dean of the Haworth College of Business. "We are very proud of their efforts and are excited to see NeoVent come to the marketplace and address a critical need."

ABOUT BRIAN THOMAS

Thomas is an alumnus of WMU who earned his degree in industrial marketing in 1996. He began his professional career at Forkardt Inc. in Portage and later became an account executive manager for Honda Manufacturing at global automotive giant Magna International. He joined OtterBox in 2003 and was eventually named CEO where he was responsible for leading global expansion efforts and was the chief visionary in positioning OtterBox as an innovation technology company primed to extend product offerings outside the premium protective case industry.

During his tenure, OtterBox achieved several milestones and was consistently named one of the fastest growing and most innovative companies in the U.S. by several business organizations. Thomas’s passion for entrepreneurial thinking and social entrepreneurship sparked his desire to establish this award to support student entrepreneurs in their efforts to create enterprises that operate harmoniously with employees, communities and non-profit organizations, creating a strong synergistic benefit for all stakeholders.
ABOUT STARTING GATE

Starting Gate is a student business accelerator that gives students rich and valuable resources to develop their startup companies. It is located in the Haymarket Building in downtown Kalamazoo and operated by the Haworth College of Business Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in partnership with the WMU Office of Community Outreach. The accelerator is open to all WMU students through a competitive application process in which students must demonstrate a promising idea for a product or service, which can be launched within a short period of time. Starting Gate provides a fast-track to business launch.

Professor participates in U.S. look at diversity in first responder workforce

When an invitation to a convening at the White House arrived from the U.S. Department of Labor, Dr. Kyle Brink, assistant professor of management, accepted the opportunity to participate in a national initiative to improve diversity in the first responder workforce.

“Due to the nature of the work, public safety departments promote almost entirely from within. If there is no diversity at entry-level, it is impossible to have diversity up through the ranks and in positions of influence,” says Brink. “As a Department of Justice representative indicated during this meeting, the past several decades have shown that we can’t litigate ourselves out of this problem. More innovative and proactive solutions are needed.”

The initiative is a collaborative effort between the Department of Labor, Department of Justice, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, White House, and International Association of Fire Fighters.

Brink, who has developed employment selection procedures for public safety units since 2003, has also served as an expert witness in several discrimination cases related to employment selection in public safety, including overseeing the development of fair and valid selection procedures for public safety departments that are under court supervision as a result of past discrimination.

As one of a handful of industry experts invited, Brink says the initial meeting, which was held at the White House in July, was designed to kick off the effort and determine some next steps.

“Agency heads expressed the importance of the issue and their commitment to it. Attendees had the opportunity to share challenges and strategies during break-out sessions,” says Brink. “We
soon realized that this convening was too short and that additional meetings or other methods of soliciting input are necessary.”

According to Brink, the group discussed the challenges to diversity in the first-responder workforce. “This is a multifaceted issue that spans across recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and retention.” The group identified additional barriers, including—

- Lack of knowledge in organizations for implementing the best practices related to increasing diversity.
- Lack of resources, including time, money and staff.
- State and local laws and collective bargaining agreements may present barriers in some instances.
- Because politicians are elected and chiefs are often appointed, rank and file employees sometimes lack influence.
- Some departments have cultures that maintain status quo.
- Success often depends on having a champion in a position of influence.
- Convincing others of the value of diversity.

**Accountancy student receives $10,000 scholarship**

**BY STACEY MARKIN**

**JUNE 30, 2015 | WMU NEWS**

Quang

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A Western Michigan University accountancy student has won a $10,000 Public Company Accounting Oversight Board Scholarship.

**Rainie Quang**, a senior accountancy major and management minor, hails from Nha Trang, Vietnam, and is a first generation college student. She intends to use her degree to open her own tax preparation business where she plans to focus on an important niche—Vietnamese clients who have limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English.

"I am honored to be the recipient of the 2015 PCAOB Scholarship," says Quang. "Being the first generation of my family to go to college and growing up in a less-privileged community has posed financial and academic challenges,
but it has also made me realize the value of a college education. I thank the PCAOB Scholarship Program and the Department of Accountancy at WMU for supporting me in my higher education.”

The PCAOB Scholarship Program is a selective process in which a few dozen students from across the country are recognized. "I am delighted that Rainie was selected to receive a PCAOB scholarship,” says Dr. Don Gribbin, chair of the Department of Accountancy. "She is most deserving of this scholarship, and we are extremely proud of her. This scholarship will help Rainie complete her accounting education and reach her future goals."

**THE PCAOB SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 requires that monetary penalties imposed by the PCAOB in its disciplinary proceedings be used to fund a merit scholarship program for students in accredited accounting degree programs. The PCAOB Scholarship Program was created to identify eligible students for scholarships and award funds through the students' educational institutions. Outstanding accounting students must demonstrate evidence of their aptitude in accounting and auditing as well as high ethical standards.

New Student Orientation wrapped up its June sessions yesterday. Thanks to all the orientation student leaders, staff and faculty, who work so hard to make orientation a success.

**WMU professor’s paper recognized as outstanding paper of the year**

KALAMAZOO, Mich.--A paper by a Western Michigan University professor has been selected as the best paper of the year for 2014.

Dr. Kuanchin Chen, professor of business information systems at the WMU Haworth College of Business, was recently recognized for his latest academic paper. Published in the academic journal Internet Research, "The Effects of Hedonic/Utilitarian Expectations and Social Influence on Continuance Intention to Play Online Games" was selected by the journal's editorial team as the Outstanding Paper of 2014.

The paper was co-written by I-Cheng Chang from the National Dong Hwa University in Hualien, Taiwan, and Chuang-Chun Liu from the Institute of Information Management, National Chiao Tung University in Hsinchu, Taiwan.
This is the latest accolade for Chen's research efforts. He recently received the Haworth College of Business Faculty Research Award for the 2014-15 academic year. His research interests include electronic commerce, online behavioral issues, applied artificial intelligence, data mining techniques, Internet security and digital watermarking. Chen is the computer information systems program advisor, is coordinator of the business information systems internship and scholarship programs, and was recently the faculty advisor for the third place WMU team at the West Michigan Collegiate Project Management Competition.

Sustainable Behavior

When students enter WMU’s Business and Society course, they don’t always know they will be participating in a semester-long sustainability effort.

Taught by Dr. Tim Palmer, professor of management and director of the WMU Center for Sustainable Business Practices, the management course focuses on global issues such as climate change, which prompted Palmer to develop a challenge for his class.

“During our discussions within the course it becomes clear that many students feel that these problems are too big for us to have any personal impact,” says Palmer. “This perception prevents all of us from looking at how we live our lives and how our personal decisions connect to global challenges.”

In 2009, WMU began offering stainless steel EcoMugs and EcoJugs to incoming WMU students with the goal of counteracting disposable cup use on campus. Students can use the mug in all campus cafes and dining halls and at several off-campus businesses.
Palmer decided to help the class understand individual impact using EcoMugs. He noticed that during any particular class many students brought disposable plastic bottles of water. In exchange for a commitment to rid the classroom of disposable bottles, each student is encouraged to use their WMU EcoMug. If students don’t have an EcoMug, Palmer personally purchases them one.

“The EcoMug is not only a waste reduction tool, it is an attempt at changing behavior toward more sustainable actions,” says Carolyn Noack, manager of waste reduction services at WMU. “People using EcoMugs or any other reusable container are making a conscious effort to be sustainable.”

Palmer agrees. “It’s a unique way to learn. I could lecture them on the importance of personal decisions and climate change, but the EcoMug program makes the discussion feel closer to home,” says Palmer. “I try to make it easy for them to reduce their carbon footprint and to see how there are ways they can have a positive impact on huge social challenges."