

BabySafe Health, a Rutgers-based startup focused on decreasing infant mortality, pitched and won the \$25,000 prize at this year's TechUnited Propelify BetterWellness Challenge. The product, BabySafe Health, aims to reduce the infant mortality rate and racial health disparities by providing mothers with an all-in-one platform to support them through the pregnancy process. The free mobile app connects mothers with a symptom tracker, doctor's office finder, and a proprietary machine-learning algorithm that uses information from the mother and provides data-driven insights on the potential health consequences throughout the pregnancy. The app will give economically and socially disadvantaged mothers the knowledge that they need to feel empowered during their pregnancy.

The team's journey from initial idea to its most recent win winds through the heart of the innovation ecosystem at Rutgers University.

BabySafe Health founders Scott Rubin, Sanjana Sure, Fauzan Amjad, and Max Handler first met through the **Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurship Academy (i.d.e.a.)**. i.d.e.a. embeds innovation, design, and entrepreneurial thinking into the undergraduate student experience by giving students access to experiential learning opportunities organized around real-world community-based challenges from the beginning of their educational experience. Our goal is to expose students to the most important problems that need solving in our society through co-curricular Design Labs and Sprints, 1-credit Research Seminars, and Industry-mentored summer projects. Rather than focusing on majors and requirements, i.d.e.a. has designed intentional pathways for students to mobilize the vast resources at Rutgers, including faculty mentored research, internships, and business skill-building to give clarity and coherence to the student's educational experience.

As freshmen, Scott, Sanjana, Fauzan, and Max signed up as members of the i.d.e.a. team for the first annual Black Tech Health Hackathon (BTTH) organized by Black Technology Professionals (BTP) at Johnson & Johnson. The event brings together diverse talent to solve real-world problems facing J&J and the larger communities served. During Fall 2020, BTTH leveraged machine learning and artificial intelligence capabilities of Amazon Web Services to explore problems in health disparity, workplace of the future, and digital transformation. With a minimum criteria of sophomore status to be eligible for the hackathon, BTTH welcomed a special team of i.d.e.a students to participate. The i.d.e.a. team, under the guidance of Health Tech Researcher Hajar Shirley was the highest scoring in the Health Disparity problem area and the highest scoring team overall.

The i.d.e.a. student team followed up on their initial success by participating in the **Rutgers I-Corps** program's Spring 2020 cohort to further research and understand key stakeholders such as doctors, OB/GYNs, nurses, and expecting mothers. After participating in the I-Corps program, the team used the customer insights and newly developed business model to continue developing the app, creating a larger social media presence, and applying for grants and pitch competitions.

The members of the team are currently innovation fellows within the **Rutgers Innovation Lab**, run by Mukesh Patel and Kristy Fall. The Innovation Lab is a 3-credit experiential and practicum course that uses a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to assist students as they transform ideas into real world ventures. Students learn innovative and entrepreneurial mindsets, as well as the practical aspects of launching and leading a viable startup business venture.

i.d.e.a. is always looking for external partners to engage with our program. We are seeking mentors, projects, and general participation. If your organization is interested in getting involved, please contact us at idea.hatchery@rutgers.edu.