

For Immediate Release



AUB students develop two new prize-winning apps

Beirut, Lebanon- 16/06/2015 - AUB graduates have developed a new startup app that will revolutionize the interior design industry by allowing anyone to affordably decorate their own living space with the direct help of top interior designers, bypassing design specialists, furniture professionals and their fees.

Another social networking application, based on live video streaming, aims to place reality TV within everyone's reach, allowing people to share their lives with their friends and the world at large, virtually living their friends' lives and experiences from the comfort of their homes.

'MoodFit', the interior design app, developed by Ghassan Abi Fadel (MBA Fall '15) and Tarek El Jaroudi (MBA Spring '15), won the Darwazah Award's \$15,000 first prize, with the second prize of \$5,000 going to "Stalkie," the reality sharing app, developed by Joseph Kalash (third-year computer engineering) and Robert Salloum (second-year mechanical engineering).

"We believe in life-long learning as professed by Samih Darwazah, as you will always be students of life, even after you graduate from university," said Mazen Darwazah, president of MENA Hikma Pharma, during his welcoming speech at the Darwazah Student Innovation Contest Awards Ceremony recently, at the Olayan School of Business Maamari Auditorium. "Stay eager to learn, and if you win, remember that this is just the first step in your entrepreneurial journey, with ample room for improvement."

"Don't let overconfidence discourage you, and if your ideas do not move the judges, then the wrong lesson would be to pack up and go home," he added. "You should go back and fine tune your idea so that next time it has a greater chance of success."

The Darwazah family owns and operates Hikma Pharmaceuticals plc, the Middle East's own pharmaceutical giant with manufacturing plants in USA, Europe, Gulf and MENA, a \$2.6 billion capitalized company listed on the London Stock Exchange and part of FTSE 250.

The purpose of the contest is to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among AUB undergraduate and graduate students, as well as collaboration among students from different disciplines, while sharing knowledge and coming up with a well-rounded and complete proposal for an innovative product or service. This is the second edition of the Darwazah Student Innovation Contest.

With 60+ applicants participating in the contest, 16 semi-finalists were selected, and narrowed down to eight finalists. Aside from the 2 winners, the other finalists included: "Ribbonnaz" gaming system for raising cancer awareness; "Blood Donor/Distribution Registry System" for organizing and facilitating blood donation and distribution; "Cookyn" for cooking

together through social media; “Spoke” voice-based social media platform; “Yoggy” healthy food on the run; and “Ucollect” loyalty and customer relationship management for SMEs.

MoodFit is an online crowd-sourced platform which will allow individuals to post their room decoration request according to their own “mood,” choose their favorite designer, interacting with him/her for a period of two weeks to develop furniture options and layout, with a shopping list adapted to their own custom budget.

“The basic price comes to about \$300 per room, and we are currently setting up the startup and looking to join local and international accelerator programs to fully move on to commercialization,” said Abi Fadel. “This is a serious effort for us as Tarek is looking to quit his last job and work on the startup full time immediately.”

Stalkie offers a unique access to real-time feed about ongoing events around the world, be it a concert, a growing manifestation or a private event. Best of all, the viewer gets to choose the angle from which to observe the ongoing events by opting for the perspective of the recording camera of their choice and living the moments as if present.

The duo behind Stalkie explained that they are close to a soft launch, and that their participation in the Darwazah competition would help them set up their startup.

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About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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