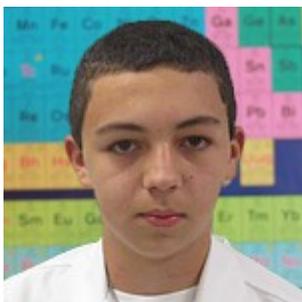


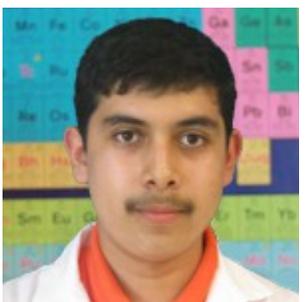
## High Tech Startup Company Formed by Student Scientists Advances to Semi-Finalist Round of Regional Business Innovation Competition



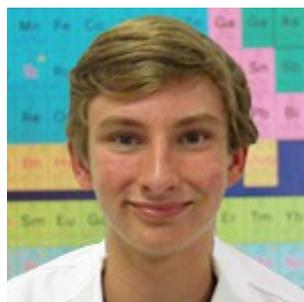
John Scharff



Sophia Matthews



Ivan Torres



Trey Carden



Sam Morrison



Innovation is the process of taking an idea and pursuing it with a sense of urgency with the goal of solving a problem or improving an existing process. A company like Paypal is an example of how a creative idea, coupled with technology, can improve how funds are transferred between individuals and organizations.

With the support and direction of Mr. Keith Young, CEO of Ecotek Lab, student scientists John Scharff, Sophia Matthews, Ivan Torres (9<sup>th</sup> graders at Lake Wales High ) along with Trey Carden and Sam Morrison (8<sup>th</sup> graders at Bok Academy), collaborated to form Citrus Greening Technologies (CGT). The cohort came up with the concept while conducting independent research on ways to help growers combat citrus greening.

CGT Inc integrates geographic information systems (GIS), virtual reality systems (VRS), biomathematics, drone technology and biochemistry to provide growers, processors, scientists and insurers involved in the citrus industry with the tools to effectively identify and mitigate citrus greening disease (Huanglongbing).

SlingShot Polk, a business innovation accelerator program created by the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce, is STEM-focused in 2017. STEM is imperative for the growth and economic stability of local cities, counties, states, and the nation as a whole. Students enrolled in a Polk County middle school or high school (or homeschool equivalent) or a bachelor's or master's degree program at a college/university located in Polk County and entrepreneurs under the age of 30 were invited to submit business plans outlining a new idea or venture that provides measurable benefit to the Polk County region.

CGT Inc was selected as one of the 12 semi-finalists from entries submitted. Semifinalists will receive mentoring and training to develop their detailed business plans and enhance their communication skills. The final event will be held from 7:00-9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at Florida Polytechnic University, 4700 Research Way, Lakeland, FL 33805. First, second, and third place winners in two categories will receive cash prizes

### About the Ecotek Science Program

Ecotek is a science research lab program for young inventors and researchers in grades 5 thru 12. Student scientists work on projects aligned with the issues being addressed by world leaders at the United Nations. To learn more about Ecotek Lab go to <http://www.ecotek-us.com>