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Yellow News...

Young black entrepreneurs launching new business bids

A group of young black entrepreneurs from inner-city Birmingham are set to launch new business ventures after being inspired by some of the city's leading business figures.

Seven 16 to 25-year-olds have graduated from Street Smart 2 Business Start, the city's first virtual programme for aspiring business owners from black communities.

Delivered by local charity, First Class Foundation, the seven-week voluntary programme offered practical hands-on support in how to run a successful new business, including business strategy and planning, financial management and customer engagement.

Backed by Barclays and the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, Street Smart 2 Business Start featured free evening masterclasses by established local entrepreneurs including bestselling author, Errol Lawson, Hoodrich Clothing founder, Jay Williams and Chris Cummins, joint managing director of global training business OTD.

Now in its third year, the initiative has supported 25 young people in becoming

their own boss, including those who have previously been involved in crime. This is the first year the programme has been delivered online.

Kay McDermott, aged 20, from Birmingham, works in IT and is planning to apply learning from the programme to develop his own business.

He said: "It's so refreshing to be part of a group of young black people sharing the same goal and learning about business together. I have often felt as though I've had to do things on my own and it can be alienating but Street Smart 2 Business Start has given me a peer-to-peer support network to call upon and the confidence to continue to work hard. It's good to see amazing local professionals taking time out of their day to do something like this and it's important to know we have the opportunity to go to them for help throughout our journey."

Street Smart 2 Business Start was founded by entrepreneur and business consultant Nathan Dennis, who has specialised in BAME stakeholder engagement strategies for more than 15 years."