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Northshore Bath Co. Wins STartUP Northshore's Fall 2026 THE LAUNCHPAD Pitch Competition
Sarah Cooper Smith receives $3,000 grant as THE LAUNCHPAD and inaugural Boothstrapped showcase kick off Global Entrepreneurship Week on the Northshore

Key Details:

- Northshore Bath Co. wins Fall 2026 THE LAUNCHPAD pitch competition
- Winning founder receives a $3,000 grant to support the company's next stage
- Fellow finalists Face Yoga Institute and Cain Global Innovations each receive $1,000 grants
- Grant prize package powered by OnPath Foundation

COVINGTON, La. – STartUP Northshore has named Northshore Bath Co., founded by Sarah Cooper Smith, the winner of its Fall 2026 THE LAUNCHPAD pitch competition, held Monday, November 16, at the Slidell Municipal Auditorium. Smith earned the top award and a $3,000 grant after competing alongside two other Northshore entrepreneurs before a live audience and panel of judges.

The competition served as the centerpiece of STartUP Northshore's Global Entrepreneurship Week kickoff celebration, which also introduced Boothstrapped, a new business showcase highlighting companies emerging from the organization's entrepreneurship programs. Together, the two experiences brought entrepreneurs, investors, business leaders, and community members together to celebrate innovation and business growth across the Northshore.

Northshore Bath Co. develops innovative, patent-pending bathing products designed to make infant bath time safer and more comfortable. Its flagship product, Primi Bath Gloves, offers parents and caregivers a practical solution for bathing babies, with potential future applications in other personal care markets. Sarah plans to use the $3,000 grant to invest in locally manufactured inventory and scaling marketing.

"Having the opportunity to share the future of Northshore Bath Co. on the Launchpad stage and receive funding to accelerate its growth is truly transformative for my business, my family, and my community," said Sarah Cooper Smith, Founder of Northshore Bath Co. "This win is more than financial support; it validates the work accomplished in just nine months and brings Northshore Bath Co. one step closer to becoming a nationally recognized brand."

Fellow finalists Cain Global Innovations, founded by Tom Cain, and Face Yoga Institute, founded by Leah Smith, each received $1,000 grants to support their continued business development. Cain Global Innovations, is developing LZ Guardian AI, a technology to improve helicopter landing zone safety for emergency responders, while Face Yoga Institute provides facial wellness education and professional certification programs.

The finalists were evaluated by a panel of highly respected judges from across Louisiana's innovation ecosystem. Each judge brought unique perspectives spanning entrepreneurship, investment, capital access, and community building. The panel included Jay Huffstatler, Executive Director of OnPath

Foundation; Lauren Kaufmann Navarre, Co-Founder and COO/CFO of Arena Collective and Shawn Torres, CEO and Co-Founder of In-Telecom.

Presented by OnPath Foundation, THE LAUNCHPAD provides early-stage entrepreneurs with individualized pitch coaching, community visibility, connections and startup funding designed to help advance their businesses. The competition is part of STartUP Northshore's broader entrepreneurial support ecosystem, which includes educational programming, mentorship, investor-readiness resources, and individualized founder support.

"OnPath Foundation is dedicated to helping entrepreneurs start and grow their business" said Jay Huffstatler, Executive Director of the OnPath Foundation. "In events like this [THE LAUNCHPAD], you're able to really showcase the qualities you have, the products you're able to offer, and it's super exciting to be a part of it."

Randy Fandal, Mayor of Slidell discussed how integral the entrepreneurial system is along the Northshore.

"Entrepreneurship is an essential part of a thriving local economy, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem across the Northshore plays a vital role in creating opportunities, driving innovation and supporting the next generation of business leaders," said Randy Fandal, Mayor of Slidell. "By investing in our entrepreneurs and fostering an environment where new ideas can grow, we are helping build a stronger, more resilient economic future for Slidell and all of St. Tammany."

Held during Global Entrepreneurship Week, November 16–22, the event reinforced STartUP Northshore's commitment to expanding entrepreneurial opportunities across St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington parishes. Through programs including IDEAinstitute *Northshore*, THE LAUNCHPAD, Boothstrapped, NSpire Startup Slam, and individualized business assistance, STartUP Northshore connects founders with the education, mentorship, capital, and relationships needed to launch and grow successful businesses.

To learn more about STartUP Northshore, visit startupnorthshore.com.

About STartUP Northshore
STartUP Northshore is cultivating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem through strategic partnerships with leading organizations in the startup community, including the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at Southeastern Louisiana University and The Idea Village, to deliver first-class programming for entrepreneurs and second-stage companies. STartUP Northshore is supported by a regional collaboration among St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation, Tangipahoa Economic Development, and Washington Economic Development Foundation. Through this initiative, the next wave of local entrepreneurs from all three parishes gain access to immersive education, dynamic networking opportunities, and mentorship from industry leaders, experienced founders, and capital investors - all delivered on the Northshore. STartUP Northshore is managed by St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation. For more information about STartUP Northshore, please visit startupnorthshore.com.

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