

### *Toronto, Ontario – Oct. 2012*

To the delight of the engaged crowd, and especially the youth entrepreneurs who took home a combined total of \$8,000 in prize money, the finals of the first All 4 Each Create-A-Co-op Challenge took place October 27th at the Director's Forum in downtown Toronto.

This "Dragon's Den"-type challenge was launched last January to complement On Co-op's All 4 Each High School Program, one of the co-operative sector's International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) legacy projects that is designed to raise awareness of co-ops in a generation ingrained with a sensitivity towards social justice, democracy, fair trade, sustainability and communities – all of which are embedded in the co-operative principles.

The \$5,000 first prize went to Vanessa & Jacob Demelo of London, Ontario for their Seasonal Outdoors Co-operative (SoCo), a consumer co-op which would provide members access to renting affordable outdoor sporting/hiking equipment. Having already secured interest from other community organizations prior to this event, the SoCo team thoroughly impressed the panel of judges with their creativity, detailed financial plan, and their knowledge and use of the co-operative model to fill a need of those in their community (in particular students and new Canadians).

Giving SoCo a strong run for their money, the United DJ co-op, the Student Spa co-op, and the TeaTree House Cafe co-op each received \$1,000 for their proposals. Illustrating the success and potential of the All 4 Each high school program, the seven members of the United DJ co-op – previously unaware of the co-operative business model - first heard about the Challenge after their teacher booked a Co-ops 101 presentation for their High School Business class.

### *About the Contest*

The Create-A-Co-op Challenge called for youth 25 years or younger to submit a 2-minute video-pitch for a new co-operative enterprise idea. The four groups which gathered the most votes (Facebook "Likes") were invited to pitch to a panel of credit union and co-op sector judges during the credit union Directors' Forum conference.

**The second Create-A-Co-op Challenge will be launched in January 2013, and will also be available to any young person in Ontario aged 25 years or younger. Stay tuned for more information.**