



For Immediate Release

September 25, 2019

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GLENDALE TECH WEEK SPOTLIGHTS RISING TECH INDUSTRY STARS AT AWARDS PARTY

Glendale, CA - On Thursday, September 19, 2019, eight finalists competed in Glendale Tech Week's annual "Shark-Tank style" [Pitchfest](#). The eight finalists were selected from a pool of over 60 applicants this year. Each finalist had the opportunity to pitch in front of an audience of over 100 people including investors and a panel of judges. They competed for a [\\$43,000 prize package](#). The finalists included:

- Hovanes Margarian, [AppearMe](#)
- Khalil Jammal, [CareWell](#)
- Benjamin Benichou, [Creative Bot, Inc.](#)
- Alexis Schomer, [Expy Health](#)
- Ara Keshishian, [PinpointEyes](#)
- Albert Stepanyan, [Scylla](#)
- Luis Oda, [TAGALONG](#)
- Benjamin Trammell, Tooth Fairy Stem Cell

After several hours of pitch presentations, the seven member panel of judges deliberated to choose the grand prize winner. Members of the public were also invited to vote online for their favorite startup which would be named the "Fan Favorite." Both Pitchfest winners are Glendale-based startups and were announced during the Tech Awards Party that evening along with the winners of six awards recognizing a variety of standout companies and individuals. The evening's winners were:

- **Pitchfest 2019 \$43,000 Grand Prize Winner** - Albert Stepanyan for Scylla
Albert Stepanyan is an artificial intelligence engineer and entrepreneur with a passion for coding. Coming from a military background and having experience building tech businesses, he decided to combine his skills to build Scylla – a real-time threat detection system designed to predict violent behavior through the use of AI. The technology aims to revolutionize the security and surveillance industry by addressing active shooting events, violent crimes and terrorist acts.
- **Pitchfest "Fan Favorite"** - AppearMe
AppearMe, founded by brothers Hovanes and Armen Margarian, is a real-time and on demand web and mobile app that connects users with legal professionals. App users can connect with a deposition attorney, an interpreter, freelance attorneys or a court reporter within minutes before their assignment time.

With this year's "Next in Tech" theme in mind, dozens of individuals and companies were nominated for Glendale Tech Week's Tech Awards. The Awards are a chance to recognize start-ups, student innovators, established tech firms and up and coming entrepreneurs for their accomplishments in the local tech industry. "The extraordinary amount of innovation and talent present in the City of Glendale and in the region is evident in this year's diverse group of awardees. Glendale is proud to offer an environment in which entrepreneurs, startups and tech companies

can reach their fullest potential,” said Mayor Ara Najarian, who served as one of the judges for this year’s Pitchfest. The winners of the 2019 Tech Awards were:

- **Best Culture** - [ServiceTitan](#)
Founded by Ara Mahdessian and Vahe Kuzoyan, ServiceTitan is a software company built to accelerate the \$400B home service industry. Their all-in-one software helps the industry streamline operations, improve customer service and increase sales.
- **Community Impact** - [DishDivvy](#)
Founded by Ani Torosyan and Nahid LaCiura, DishDivvy is a food-tech platform connecting approved home cooks with hungry neighbors. Its mission is to provide economic opportunities to underrepresented labor groups who are traditionally left out of the commercial food sector.
- **Cutting Edge Technology** - [DeepRoot Green Infrastructure](#)
Deeproot Green Infrastructure is a global water technology leader which integrates green infrastructure such as trees, soils, and LIDs into streets, plazas, parking lots, and other paved surfaces. Their flagship technology Silva Cell allows for an efficient integration of water, soils, and tree roots to promote on-site storm water management through bio retention.
- **Glendale Young Entrepreneur** - [Picktrace, Inc.](#)
PickTrace, founded by brothers Austin and Harrison Steed, builds powerful software products that help agriculture companies thrive. Their workforce and harvest management software helps growers gain insight into their operations and improve their operational efficiency. Their vision and goal is to revolutionize the industry with a complete farm management solution. Picktrace [recently moved to Glendale](#) from Northern California.
- **Glendale Young Entrepreneur:** William Lee, [Abrupt Collective](#)
A Glendale based digital marketing consulting agency, Abrupt Collective was founded during William’s junior year in high school. His company consists of a collective of individuals who specialize in delivering quality content to their clients.
- **Rising Star:** Isabella Bruyere
Currently a senior at Hoover High School, Isabella has been teaching a free afterschool coding class to elementary and middle school students for the last five years. She has created a space for children who do not have access to or have never seen programming to learn in a fun, pressure-free way. She teaches using MIT's Scratch platform.

Glendale Tech Week is an effort initiated by the Glendale City Council as a way to support the ecosystem of technology and innovation in Glendale. A special thank you to Glendale Tech Week’s Title Sponsor Phonexa, Platinum sponsors Dot818, Greater Downtown Glendale Association, Arts and Culture Commission and Glendale Arts, as well as Gold Sponsors Beyond Limits, Glendale Water and Power, Service Titan, Age of Learning, Applied Earth Sciences, Professional Development Center and mobileforming.

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Glendale, known as the “Jewel City,” is one of the largest cities in Los Angeles County. With a population of over 200,000, Glendale is a thriving cosmopolitan city that is rich in history, culturally diverse, and offers limitless opportunities. It is the home to a vibrant business community, with major companies in healthcare, technology, entertainment, manufacturing, retail, and banking.