



English Islands Clinches Top Prize at Sold-Out LevelUP Pitch Competition at the Toronto Stock Exchange

Innovation Cluster's Signature Accelerator Showcases the Next Wave of Ontario's Tech Founders

PETERBOROUGH, ON – October 31, 2025 – [The Innovation Cluster – Peterborough and the Kawarthas](#) ("Innovation Cluster") proudly announced **English Islands** as the grand prize winner of the **LevelUP Pitch Competition**, taking home the **\$10,000 award** after an electrifying, **sold-out event held at the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX)**.

The evening marked a milestone for Peterborough's innovation community, as founders from across the eastern and southern province pitched their ventures before investors on one of the country's most iconic business stages.

The showcase capped off the **Innovation Cluster's intensive 12-week LevelUP Accelerator**, a program designed to help post-MVP (Minimum Viable Product) tech startups accelerate commercialization and understand how to achieve repeatable revenue.

English Islands, founded by Erica Derrickson,, impressed the judges with its personalized curriculum-aligned literacy tutoring platform.

"Pitching on the TSX stage was a surreal experience. LevelUP pushed us to refine our strategy, strengthen our business model, and get investor-ready in ways we couldn't have imagined."

Now in its **second year**, the LevelUP Accelerator continues to attract high-calibre founders from across Ontario, reflecting the growing momentum of tech

entrepreneurship in both rural and urban areas and significantly shaping the future of the tech community.

*"This sold-out event at the Toronto Stock Exchange exemplifies the Innovation Cluster's goal, to provide opportunities for our founders to thrive. beyond the Region," said **Nicole Stephenson, Chair of the Board, Innovation Cluster.** "Every founder in this cohort and program showed the grit, creativity, and commercial focus needed to lead Canada's next generation of tech scale-ups. The bar keeps getting higher."*

Of the 21 companies selected for the 2025 cohort, the **six standout finalists** who pitched on the TSX stage included:

- Abroadin
- Beyond Role Plays
- Enabled Talent
- English Islands
- Cura Connect Inc.
- One-Tech Innovation

Each finalist received **three months of tailored client services** from the Innovation Cluster—a **\$6,000 value per company**—to continue receiving guidance and support.

The 2025 LevelUP Pitch Competition was made possible through the support of **Platinum Sponsor, Matrix Venture Studio; Gold Sponsor, Launch Path; and Silver Sponsors, Innovation Venture Farm and ANC.** The Innovation Cluster extends its sincere gratitude to these partners for their commitment to strengthening Ontario's tech ecosystem.

About the Innovation Cluster

The Innovation Cluster is a nonprofit organization that supports small and medium-sized businesses in both hard and soft technology sectors. We're a nonprofit economic development organization that helps SMEs successfully overcome the challenges they face as they grow from \$0 to \$10M. Visit www.innovationcluster.ca.

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