

Stevens students help Rising Tide

by Carly
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Carly/Hoboken NowMembers of the Stevens Rising Tide team (from left to right): Johanna Zuleta, Nicole Moldovan, Swati Agrawal, Timothy Williams, Catherine Kim, JoAnne Pojuner and Jennifer Ramirez.

Over 80 students presented their work as part of the Senior Project Expo yesterday in the Schaefer Athletic Center on campus. And for their senior project, one group of students chose to help economically disadvantaged Hudson County residents get back on their feet.

Students in the Howe School of Technology Management teamed up to work with Jersey City-based [Rising Tide Capital](#), a business training program for the poor.

Nicole Moldovan, a senior at Stevens, said she was inspired by an article she read in *The Jersey Journal* in June 2007 about Rising Tide. Started five years ago, and mirrored after Noble Peace prize-winning Muhammad Yunus' microloan work, Rising Tide trains budding entrepreneurs from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to start their own businesses.

"Their ideal business candidate to help would be an African-American single mom with two kids who makes under \$27,000 a year," said Nicole. So far, Rising Tide has had 150 participants, from a woman launching an organic soap-making company to a guy starting his own DJ business.

After reading about the organization, Nicole knew she wanted to get involved.



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The Stevens students outlined a marketing plan for Jersey City-based Rising Tide.

"I loved this concept of micro-financing and social entrepreneurship," said Nicole. "They focused on capitalism being a solution to poverty. Think of it like 'The Apprentice,' except a little less Donald Trump, a little more social entrepreneurship."

And so she recruited several other Stevens students to work with Rising Tide. The Stevens team developed a targeted marketing plan, and by speaking with graduates of the program, they developed a list of where in Jersey City Rising Tide should advertise - churches, the Puerto Rican Community Association (P.A.C.O.), [Women Rising](#) and Jersey City public libraries.

The students also outlined business goals for Rising Tide, which would like to expand into other Jersey City neighborhoods and into Newark. The Stevens team helped Rising Tide re-evaluate various aspects of their operation, such as offering classes in Spanish.

Rising Tide offers the Community Business Academy, a 10-week training program that teaches basic management skills, bookkeeping and business simulations. One recent group of participants graduated from the program last night, in a ceremony at the Goldman Sachs building in Jersey City.

"It was a project that we enjoyed doing, since it did have that level of community service, as well as a professional aspect," said Stevens student Johanna Zuleta. "Rising Tide gives these people a second chance to re-start their lives."