



SHARK MAKERS



NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2026

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

SEASON 11 2025-26 SHARKMAKERS

Student Kickoff Recap

Our Student Kickoff ignited the new season, welcoming students into a bold, high-energy space where creativity comes alive, collaboration fuels big ideas, and purpose-driven innovation takes center stage.



The energy surged as the program shifted into a powerful panel discussion featuring leaders at the intersection of technology, innovation, and disability advocacy. **Clayton Clemens (Project Focus), Anitra Pavka (Atypical Consulting), Jeremy Rivera (Deque), and Luke King (Aerotek)** brought the conversation to life, sharing personal stories from their work and offering real-world insight into what inclusive innovation truly looks like in action.



During this time, teams worked through their **Idea Blueprint**, beginning to shape and refine their product concepts with focus, creativity, and purpose, setting the foundation for a meaningful and innovative season ahead. The SharkMakers journey is officially underway!

Welcoming Back Lauren Churchill!

We're excited to welcome back **Lauren Churchill**, an NGT360 alumni and Hall of Famer as our new Media and Operations Specialist. As a past participant and intern, Lauren brings a unique perspective, making her an invaluable addition to the team.

In her new role, Lauren will support program operations while leading media initiatives that help share the powerful stories of our students and their innovations.



DONATE ❤️



Student Registration Extended!!!

Register

You asked, we listened. Thanks to an overwhelming response, SharkMakers registration is extended for a limited time. Only a few spots remain, so act fast!

Deadline Jan 12th

Workshop 1: All About the Customer

Jan 13th

📍 **Accenture**

With **Jacque Madison (Accenture)** as a speaker, students dive into customer personas and human centered design.

Workshop 2: Product Strategy

Jan 27th

📍 **Vaco**

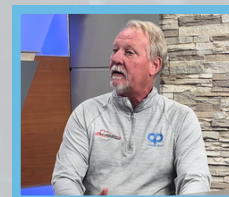
With **Nisha Patel (Tampa Bay Product Group)** as the speaker, teams bring ideas to life through use cases and customer journey mapping.

Get Our SharkMakers Merch Now!

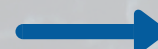


TEEN INNOVATORS

SharkMakers recently released a new episode of the Teen Innovators Podcast featuring **Kurt Heitmann**, CEO of RHS-TV and CP Communications. In this engaging conversation, Kurt shared his perspective from the other side of the panel as a SharkMakers "shark," offering insight into what it's like to evaluate student innovations and mentor young entrepreneurs.



He also discussed his thoughts on the SharkMakers rebrand and how it reflects the program's growing vision and impact.



Watch Now!

JANUARY HOLIDAY SPOTLIGHTS

HAPPY
NEW YEAR
2026

