Alumni Highlights
January-March 2021

Partnerships bring products to new audiences:
Accelerator and Summer Fellowship alum team Grants Cosmetics (founded by Lillian Childress YC ’17, YSE ’20) launched its sustainable lip and cheek stick in Urban Outfitters in January. Meanwhile, junzi kitchen (led by Lucas Sin YC ’15, Wanting Zhang YSE ’11, and Yong Zhao YSE ’08, PhD ’15 and supported by Tsai CITY predecessor Yale Entrepreneurial Institute, or YEI) marked the Lunar New Year in February by partnering with the Met Museum to launch a special-edition chili oil inspired by the Met’s current exhibition, “Celebrating the Year of the Ox.”

Yale innovators connect with national cohorts:
Several alumni teams are building on their work at Yale in national accelerators and incubators. Summer Fellowship alum teams Bild (founded by Pradyut Paul SOM ’21) and Raise Green (founded by Franz Hochstrasser YSE ’18 and Matt Moroney YSE ’18) recently joined Techstars cohorts. ThermaBand (a 2020 Rothberg Catalyzer Prize finalist co-founded by Markea Dickinson SOM ’20) was selected to join the Google for Startups Founders Academy. Coming off of raising a seed round for her current venture, EdLyft, from investors like Kleiner Perkins, Backstage Capital, and Kapor Capital, Summer Fellowship alum Erika Hairston YC ’18 recently reflected on her experience in Y Combinator in a piece on their website.

A focus on local impact:
Some teams marked milestones closer to home. Accelerator and Summer Fellowship alum team Merry Go Rounds (Melissa Mazzeo SOM/YSE ’20), which was featured in a fall 2020 Fast Company article on small businesses by Tsai CITY/CBEY innovation fellow Ben Solttoff, officially became a B Corporation in March. Also in March, Summer Fellowship alum team Havenly Treats (led by co-founder Caterina Passoni YC ’18) opened their community cafe in downtown New Haven.

Investment in environmental innovation:
Yale environmental innovators garnered major support early this year. Coral Vita (co-founded by Gator Halpern YSE ’15 and Sam Teicher YC ’12, YSE ’15 and supported by YEI) raised a $2M seed round to boost their coral reef restoration projects, as covered in TechCrunch. Summer Fellowship alum team Symbrosia (co-founded by Alexia Akbay YSPH ’19 and Jonathan Simonds YC ’18) received a $256K grant from the National Science Foundation; catch up on their work in this video from The Verge.

These teams have connected not just with Tsai CITY, but with Yale’s broader ecosystem for entrepreneurship and innovation. Learn more about this ecosystem: entrepreneur.yale.edu

To learn more about Tsai CITY: city.yale.edu
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