



Middlebury College

Center for Social Entrepreneurship

- ▶ **Summer 2015 Fellow Reports:**
- ▶ **Rabeya Jawaid**
- ▶ **Hanover, NH**



This past summer I attended the Tuck Bridge Business Program at Dartmouth. When 2 years ago, I started my own business, to provide financial independence to deaf women, I knew that I had lacked essential business knowledge to be as successful as I had the potential to be. Being an economics major, I have always been interested in business, finance and how companies work, but lacked the technical skills to completely understand the complexities of running a business. Being at the Bridge Program was a unique experience because I not only took classes on finance, accounting, spreadsheet modeling and marketing but also worked with 5 group members to do a valuation of a company. At the end of the Program my group presented a DCF analysis and a valuation of Panera Bread Co. to corporate executives and professionals.

The program left me more knowledgeable than before and more inspired than ever. At the Program I was able to understand the different career paths I can take after college and the skills needed to pursue different careers. My biggest success was standing in front of a room filled with professionals who were highly accomplished, arguing that they should buy a Panera stock because of its value drivers: Panera's strong position in the fast-competing industry, its focus on Panera 2.0 and its move towards healthier food. Over the four weeks, I had thoroughly researched Panera, its values, culture and where the company was headed. What struck out to me during my research was the push towards healthier food in the restaurant industry in general. This was particularly interesting as I had heard about this trend before but with my thorough and focused research I was able to find data and numbers to prove that and explain it in a more convincing manner. This made me realize that the restaurant industry will go through some tremendous changes in the next 10 years. It also made me realize how businesses have to respond swiftly to changing consumer preferences and the power of consumers in enabling social change. A couple of my friends at Tuck and I talked about the power of consumers to change businesses by changing their preferences. Companies reflect the desires and demands of consumers and thus the real change must come from the consumers themselves.

My favorite non-academic part of the program was attending a leadership seminar by Professor Curt Welling (who is an extremely inspiring speak-

er). Professor Welling talked about how our points of views affect our performance. He talked about how we create filters to create our perspective and hence affect our decision-making. Filters also produce bubbles, which produce assumptions, which produce beliefs, which affect our actions. We discussed the implications of this on the information we see on the Internet. Social media sites like Facebook create filters for us based on the information we have seen in the past, and continues to feed our bubble, not allowing us to look at things from different perspectives.

Lastly, we talked about the importance of inquiry: asking questions and specifically “Why do I think that?” “What informs my opinion?” This allows us to avoid narrowing our perspectives and keep ourselves aware and intentional about how we see ourselves. The most important conclusion I took away from the lecture: authenticity of personality. Professor Welling described this as “the degree to which one is true to one’s own personality, spirit or character despite external pressures.” Leadership is based on authenticity and authenticity requires self-knowledge.

I think a lot of Liberal Arts students, including me, sometimes get tired of questioning themselves and everything around them thinking they are doubting themselves. However, self-awareness and questioning does not equal self-doubt. Being at Middlebury and especially being a fellow at the Social Entrepreneurship Center, I have been able to question myself and everything around me and be authentic and intentional about my actions and beliefs, giving them much thought and consideration. I am excited to use my experience at Tuck to live a more thoughtful and meaningful life based on hard work in my senior year and in my final year as a fellow. Thanks you MCSE for all your help!

And remember:

THE WISE MAN

