

SOUTH WEST

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# High school Shark Tank winner socks it to 'em

**SOULFUL socks with a hidden message have won this year's high school Shark Tank prize for a Springfield Central State High student**

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Springfield Central State High School business award winner Tanieka McNeill-Booth and school principal Mr Leon Proud

SPRINGFIELD Central State School Year 9 student Tanieka Booth-McNeill, 14, is going to save the world one sock at a time.

So far, she has beaten eight finalists across Brisbane to win a valuable business development prize for her soulful socks business idea in a competition inspired by television's *Shark Tank* show.

She won the right to pitch her idea at the Brisbane finals this week by winning her school's *Shark Tank* competition in August after studying in this year's Future Anything program at the school.

Ms Booth-McNeill's social enterprise business plan is to design and market Shielded Socks, soulful socks with hidden messages for high school students (white on top and colourful underneath), with the aim of helping students overcome mental health issues.

"There are 41,000 known attempted suicides among high school students in Australia every year," Ms Booth-McNeill said.

"My business idea is to give students socks that inspire confidence and help them through the day.

"The socks will be white on top, to meet school uniform guidelines, but they will be wildly colourful lower down and have a positive message sewn into the soles of the socks."

Founder of the Future Anything program Nicole Dyson said the ideas students developed in the subject had to be innovative, scalable and sustainable.



📷 Springfield Central State High School business award winner  
Tanieka McNeill-Booth

The five State High Schools in the Brisbane competition this year were Marsden, Kelvin Grove, Whites Hill and McGregor.

Business program teacher Mr Chris Gauthier said the aim now was to have students running their own businesses through their school business studies, while they were still at school.

The prizes from the competition should help Ms Booth-McNeill get that sorted.

She has won valuable mentorship and a \$10,000 prize to get her business started.

But even before the big win this week, Ms Booth-McNeill had won some valuable Springfield sponsorship after a “practice pitch” at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

She now has a backer putting up \$3000 to get her socks developed and marketed.

“We’re hoping to have the first ones by the end of the year,” she said.

After she has put Shielded Socks for high school students on the road to success, Ms Booth-McNeill hopes to develop a range of business socks

But first, she has to convince the school’s P & C shop to stock her Shielded Socks as acceptable uniform items.

School principal Mr Leon Proud doesn’t think this will be a problem.

“Tanieka will have no trouble convincing them,” he said.

“And I am looking forward to the business socks.”

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