



## Million dollar babies 17 startups take home cash prizes

By Donna Goodison | Tuesday, October 25, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Technology](#)

Alkeus Pharmaceuticals, Sanergy and Tinfoil Security each took home \$100,000 cash awards last night as the top winners in the \$1 million MassChallenge startup competition.

Fourteen other companies won \$50,000 apiece at the ceremony at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center.

"This is the starting line, not the finish line," MassChallenge CEO John Harthorne reminded the promising entrepreneurs in the room.

The winners were selected based on their impact, feasibility and execution by final-round judges including Vertex Pharmaceuticals founder Joshua Boger and Desh Deshpande, founder of Sycamore Networks and chairman of A123 Systems.

Alkeus, a Cambridge biotech company targeting treatments for blindness, has received a green light from the FDA to start clinical trials for macular degeneration patients.

Sanergy, also based in Cambridge, franchises low-cost sanitation facilities for urban slums — currently in Nairobi, Kenya — and converts the waste to organic fertilizer or biofuels.

"(The award) puts us on a national and international platform. It helps us get the word out about our work, which is crucial," said Sanergy co-founder Gaurav Tiwari.

Tinfoil Security, based in Mountain View, Calif., has raised nearly \$1 million in private funding and lined up 400 small businesses for beta testing of its automated website security.

The awards ceremony capped a judging process that began in April with 733 applications from 24 countries and 34 states. MassChallenge picked 125 startups and judges this month narrowed the field to 26 finalists that vied for the cash prizes.

Keynote speaker Bert Jacobs, founder of the Life is Good clothing brand, said the key to entrepreneurs' success is the ability to be optimistic and see opportunities where others see challenges.

"We're not about what you have, we're about how you view the world," Jacobs said.

**Seventeen start-ups took home a total of \$1 million in prize money at the second annual MassChallenge awards ceremony last night at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center.**

\$100,000 prize

- **Alkeus Pharmaceuticals**, Cambridge Treatments for blindness
- **Sanergy**, Cambridge Sanitation centers for slums
- **Tinfoil Security**, Mountain View, Calif. Automated website security

\$50,000 prize

- **Artaic**, Boston Mosaic art design technology
- **ArtVenue**, Cambridge Artist space network
- **Casa Couture**, Oakland Park, Fla. Maternity footwear
- **Cocomama Foods**, Acton Gluten-free cereal
- **Drync**, Cambridge Mobile wine app
- **EverTrue**, Cambridge Alumni social media
- **Her Campus Media**, Boston Online magazine for college women
- **Invup**, Boston Online volunteering and donating
- **Lynx Sportswear**, Lincroft, N.J. Sports bras
- **Resolute Marine Energy**, Boston Seawater desalination
- **SmarterShade**, South Bend, Ind. Light-control technology
- **SocMetrics**, Cambridge Social media analytics
- **Therapeutic Systems**, Amherst Autism pressure vest
- **UberSense**, Boston Mobile video analysis tools for sports

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