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# Ready, Set, Vote! Intuit Calls on Public to Select Small Business Winner

## Winner to Receive \$50,000 Grand Prize to 'Just Start' New Business

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--

For those who can't wait until November to cast a vote, here's a more immediate alternative. Intuit Inc. (Nasdaq:INTU) is asking Americans to select a budding entrepreneur to win a \$50,000 business startup package as part of its Just Start(TM) contest.

The voting is free of debates, caucuses and primaries, with polling places open online at [www.IWillJustStart.com](http://www.IWillJustStart.com). The winner will be the entrepreneur who voters believe offers the clearest, most feasible business idea. The victor receives \$40,000 in cash and \$10,000 in products and services. Two semifinalists will each receive \$5,000 in cash.

The election culminates Intuit's "Just Start" campaign that began last fall, an effort to stoke the American entrepreneurial spirit which, according to a recent Intuit survey, is stronger than ever. The QuickBooks(R) Just Start Survey found that nearly three-quarters of Americans dream of starting their own business and 81 percent believe that running their own company would be more empowering than holding a "regular" job. Conversely, 38 percent of Americans already regret not starting their own business.

To inspire and guide these many would-be entrepreneurs, the Just Start campaign visited four cities across the nation, attracting more than 1,500 budding business owners to enter the Just Start contest. The contest encouraged them to submit letters or videos describing their business dream, what they need to make it happen and how they would use Intuit's Just Start business grant to get started.

"We were thrilled with the response to the Just Start contest," said Rick Jensen, vice president of Intuit's small business division. "It definitely confirms that the American Dream of owning a business is alive and well. We congratulate everyone who entered and hope that the inspiration, tools and support we've provided will help them pursue their business aspirations."

### The Five Semifinalists

An independent panel of small business experts, including Anita Campbell of Small Business Trends, John Jantsch of Duct Tape Marketing, and Ramon Ray of Smallbiztechnology.com, narrowed the contestants to five semi-finalists. The winner, who will be announced in early February, will be the entrepreneur who receives the most votes on [www.IWillJustStart.com](http://www.IWillJustStart.com) by Jan. 31. The Just Start semifinalists and their business ideas are:

-- Carmin David, of Bolingbrook, Ill. - Daycare for kids with

special needs.

- Alissa and Noah DeRouchie, of Columbus, Ohio - Cafe-style restaurant with kid-friendly environment.
- Daniel and Tina Garrido, of Seattle - Asian-inspired dog treats.
- Joy LaFrance, of Natick, Mass. - Doggie daycare.
- Suzanne Sprague, of Bremerton, Wash. - Personalized children's music.

Judges said selecting just five semifinalists was difficult.

"We believe that these semifinalists are the creme de la creme based on the clarity and feasibility of their business idea," said Ray, technology evangelist and editor of [Smallbiztechnology.com](http://Smallbiztechnology.com). "This \$50,000 business grant will give one of these lucky entrepreneurs a real chance to launch their dream business. And for those who don't win, the contest is still a beacon for them to take the next step in doing what they really want to do."

### Free Small Business Accounting Software

As part of the Just Start campaign, Intuit is offering its easy-to-use QuickBooks Simple Start accounting software for free. Previous versions of the award-winning software were valued at \$99.95.

Trusted by more than 300,000 businesses, Simple Start enables new entrepreneurs to focus on running their business and not hassle with managing their finances. It tracks the essentials of "money in" and "money out" and keeps key business data organized for tax time. The software can be downloaded at [www.IWillJustStart.com](http://www.IWillJustStart.com). In addition, visitors can find valuable resources, advice and tools for starting a business and join others in making a New Year's resolution to start a business in 2008.

Multimedia and additional information: Intuit Press Room

Suggested links: [JumpUp.com](http://JumpUp.com)

About Intuit Inc.

Intuit Inc. is a leading provider of business and financial management solutions for small and mid-sized businesses; financial institutions, including banks and credit unions; consumers and accounting professionals. Its flagship products and services, including QuickBooks(R), Quicken(R) and TurboTax(R) software, simplify small business management and payroll processing, personal finance, and tax preparation and filing. ProSeries(R) and Lacerte(R) are Intuit's leading tax preparation software suites for professional accountants. The company's financial institutions division, anchored by Digital Insight, provides on-demand banking services to help banks and credit unions serve businesses and consumers with innovative solutions.

Founded in 1983, Intuit had annual revenue of \$2.67 billion in its fiscal year 2007. The company has approximately 8,000 employees with major offices in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and other locations. More information can be found at

[www.intuit.com](http://www.intuit.com).

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