

Sykes Winner Goes Global

May 28, 2009 11:45 AM

Alicia Duplessis Jasmin aduples@tulane.edu

Matthew Holland has explored all the angles of entrepreneurship through a small dot-com business he started after graduating from Tulane University in 2003. But he is not a typical businessman. As the recipient of this year's Timothy Sykes Daytrading Award for the Talented, Holland is ready to lend a hand and use what he knows to help entrepreneurs in developing countries grow their businesses.



Matthew Holland, a 2003 Tulane graduate, received this year's Sykes Award in recognition of his work to help entrepreneurs in developing countries. (Photo by Alex Smith)

"This past year I decided that I'd like my job a lot better if I could merge my for-profit ideas with my nonprofit aspirations," says Holland, who resides in North Andover, Mass. "I picked up a magazine one day and read about this guy who was a social entrepreneur. I thought, this is what I want to do. This is who I am."

Holland has chased that dream ever since. But he was unsure of how to best pursue his dream.

He came across an organization that solicits online investments, offering loans for entrepreneurs in developing countries. Instead of loaning money, however, Holland decided that he would provide a visible medium through which products can be sold.

Not long after his epiphany, and while continuing to run his Red Sox paraphernalia business at FenwayGifts.com, Holland secured the domain name NonProfitProducts.org. He hopes to have the new site up and running sometime this summer.

The idea, he explains, is to provide a larger market for micro-entrepreneurs around the world.



Holland shares a passion for the business world with Tulane alumnus Timothy Sykes, the sponsor of an award for creative ideas and talent. (Photo by Vince Tejada)

The key point of his organization is to have consumers in the developed world buy products made by people in developing countries. Holland says that all of the money he receives for the products sold will be returned to the micro-entrepreneurs.

Holland's goal is to educate consumers about the lives and needs of the producers of the products.

He also hopes to empower the producers so that they will acquire a “new vision of hope for themselves and their communities.”

“This system will help micro-entrepreneurs rise out of poverty with their own two hands by giving them the proceeds from the sale of their own products,” says Holland. “More money in the hands of developing-world entrepreneurs will allow the creation of new jobs, and new jobs mean more money for food, clothing, shelter, medicine and education.”

The [Timothy Sykes Award](#) is a cash prize presented yearly to a Tulane staff member, faculty member or alumnus with a creative or "out-of-the-box" idea. Like Holland, Sykes graduated from Tulane in 2003. Sykes is the author of *An American Hedge Fund: How I Made \$2 Million as a Stock Operator & Created a Hedge Fund*.

Recent winners of the Sykes award include [Maureen King](#) (2008), whose family grows vegetables untouched by pesticides, and alumna Susan Zaluski (2007), who turned her love for boat building into a vocational training tool for youth.