Promoting Sustainability through Entrepreneurship

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Project Motivation & Goals

People everywhere are **exposed to dozens of chemicals every day through their use of cosmetics and personal care products**. Although many of the chemicals and contaminants in these products likely pose little risk, exposure to some, such as formaldehyde, has been linked to serious health problems, including cancer.*

❖ GaiaBrielle's primary focus is to **strengthen and sustain the environmental and conservation awareness of others.** Doing this through the use of organic cosmetics implements bits and pieces of this through a person's daily routine.

❖ Another founding principle of GaiaBrielle is **giving back**; not just **financially**, but also **educationally**. This is done mainly by **donating 35%** of sales to different community programs/charities, and hosting **educational workshops** for all ages.

The **goal** of this project was to develop, launch, and run an entrepreneurial sustainable beauty and health care line, GaiaBrielle. GaiaBrielle initiatives align with three founding pillars:

Sustainability   **Community Involvement**   **Philanthropy**

By engaging others in ways that attract more interest to them, they are more likely to walk away with **increased knowledge** and **new perspectives** on how their actions can affect the environment around them.

*Environmental Working Group: The Toxic Twelve Chemicals and Contaminants in Cosmetics

GaiaBrielle Wellness

Developing The Products

❖ Beauty care products include Whipped Body Butters, Salt Scrubs, and Lip Care essentials
❖ Products do not contain any excess ingredients or harmful compounds (e.g., formaldehydes, sulfates, parabens, etc.)
❖ All products are either made in a lab at my school or in my kitchen at home. This includes using tools to melt different compounds, freezers, and for mixing ingredients
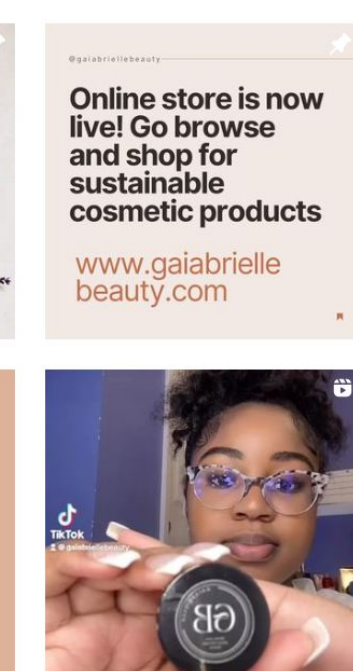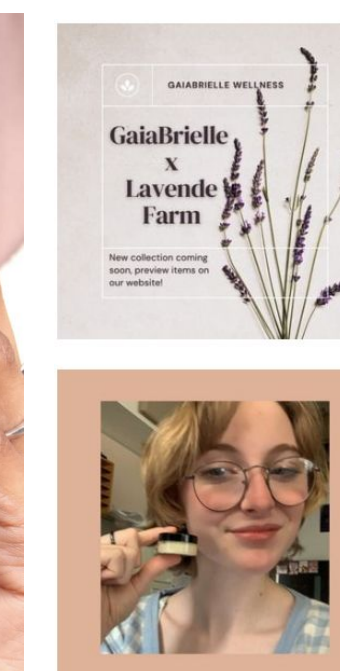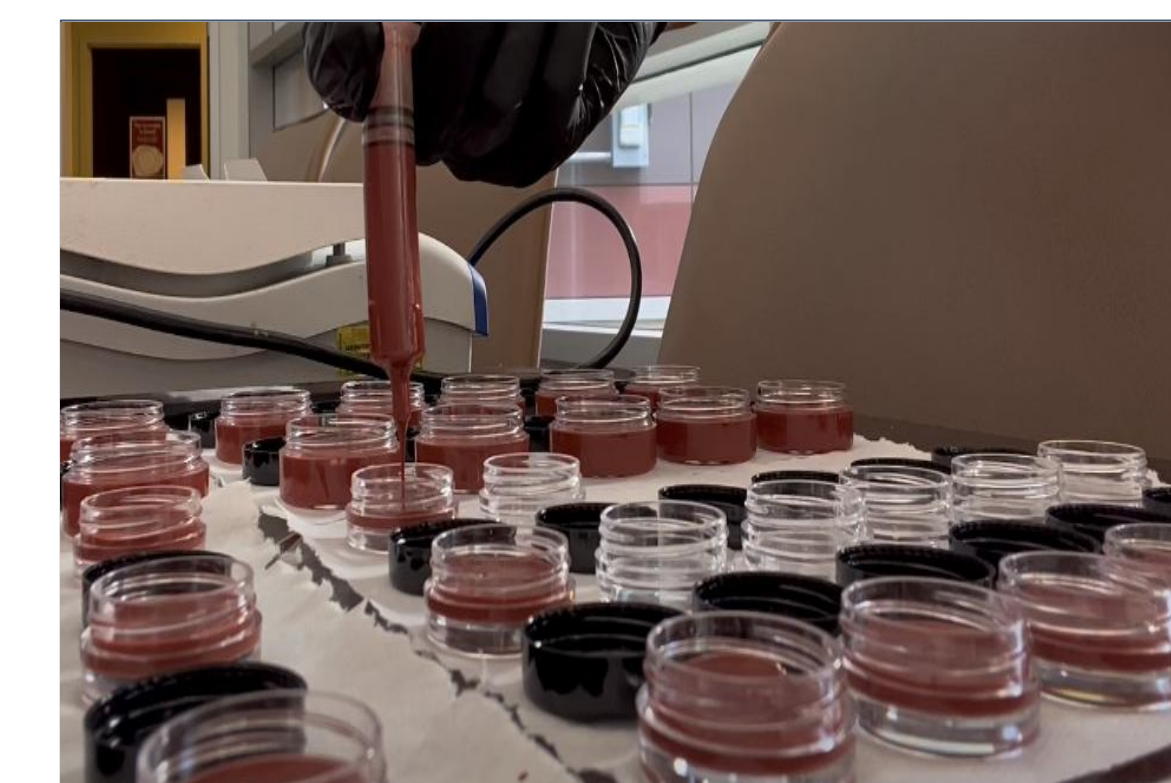
Building the Brand and Web Presence

❖ Gaia in GaiaBrielle is inspired by the Gaia Principle - the idea that Earth's inhabitants and their surroundings together form a single, self-sustaining complex system
❖ I developed and maintain a website and online shop as well as an active Instagram account (@gaiabriellewellness)

Impact

❖ An average of **1,800** people each month view the GaiaBrielle Wellness Instagram page and website, which provides insights on **sustainability** and **environmental awareness**.
❖ GaiaBrielle can change your personal perspective of how you can make a positive impact on your environment just by changing small things in your daily routine.
❖ Makes sustainable cosmetic products more accessible to those in the school community and those who may struggle financially due to our lower prices in comparison to other brands.
❖ All of the cosmetics contain seven organic, environmentally-friendly ingredients or less.

GB GAIABRIELLE WELLNESS

Scan QR code for website (left) and Instagram (right)

UCONN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SIERRA CLUB FOUNDATION

Community Involvement & Education

#1 Intro to Medicinal Herbs
❖ November 22, 2022 at Willimantic Public Library, Willimantic, CT
❖ About 20 people attended this free event
  ➢ Participants were from a wide age range
❖ First, I developed and delivered an introductory presentation focused on nine medicinal herb species, their endangerment rates, and benefits
  ➢ Examples of herbs mentioned include calendula, catnip, and borage
  ➢ Participants also received a pamphlet with the same information
    ○ Visit s.uconn.edu/medicinal-herbs to view the pamphlet
❖ Then, I provided audience members with small clay pots, potting soil, and seeds in order to plant and bring home their own medicinal herb of choice
  ➢ Seeds included the herbs mentioned above plus lavender, sage, echinacea, and more!

Photos from the Intro to Medicinal Herbs outreach event

INTRO TO MEDICINAL HERBS

Photos from the UConn Forestry Paint Day event

#2 UConn Forestry Paint Day
● January 28, 2023 at Willimantic Public Library, Willimantic, CT
● About 15 people attended this free event, including families with children
● Attendees were encouraged to paint environmentally-themed artwork on beautiful wood canvases sourced locally from the UConn Forest
● Species of wood that were used in this activity included White Oak, Red Maple, Black Oak, Sugar Maple, and Eastern White Pine

Thank you to…

Philanthropy

A primary piece of the development of GaiaBrielle Wellness includes philanthropy through charitable donations. To achieve this, **35% of sales are donated to a variety of organizations, funds, and projects that work to help strengthen, improve, or protect the environment**.

A total of **$125** from GaiaBrielle sales profits was donated to the following organizations between November 2022 and March 2023:

❖ $100: UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (via UConn Foundation)
❖ $25: Sierra Club Foundation

Conclusion and Next Steps

GaiaBrielle has taught me that anything is possible. You have the power to create change as long as you dedicate yourself and put your all into it.

By **December 2023**, GaiaBrielle Wellness will fully expand!
This expansion will consist of:
❖ More community events and additional services being offered
❖ Additional wellness items being sold (teas, yoga mats, etc.)

Future community events and services may target younger audiences and include activities such as:
❖ Mindfulness workshops
❖ Local hikes for trash cleanup
❖ Yoga on the beach
❖ Activity lists on how anyone can improve the environment