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LendingTree Names STEM Center USA as Winner of \$50,000 Small Business Grant Contest

LendingTree grants \$50,000 to robotics education company, helping to fund future growth

CHARLOTTE, N.C., March 2, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- LendingTree, the nation's leading online loan marketplace, has named [STEM Center USA](#) the winner of its inaugural small business contest with a grant of \$50,000.



"We are incredibly honored to receive LendingTree's small business grant," said Lavanya Jawaharlal, president and co-founder of STEM Center USA and recent engineering graduate of the University of California, Berkeley. "With this money, we will be expanding our operations to a second Robotics Creativity Center to excite more students about STEM through hands-on learning."

STEM Center USA, one of over 1,100 businesses that applied for LendingTree's grant, is a California-based robotics education company that aims to inspire the next generation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) leaders through hands-on activities. Melissa and Lavanya Jawaharlal, the two sisters who founded STEM Center USA in 2011, believe that true learning takes place when a student is allowed to discover the underlying principles through an experiential learning model. STEM Center USA currently employs roughly 15 full and part-time employees at their Claremont, CA location.

"These two young women are passionate entrepreneurs who envisioned a way for more children to learn about STEM, hoping to close the gender gap in the field and enrich the lives of children through innovation," said Doug Lebda, founder and CEO of LendingTree. "The LendingTree family supports this mission and is proud to contribute to STEM Center USA's growth."

Marc Prosser, the co-founder of the small business information site, [Fit Small Business](#), added, "Early life educational companies have two clients, the parents and the kids. STEM Center's courses on Robotics and 3D printing should make both clients happy." Mr. Prosser served as an expert contributor for LendingTree's small business grant contest.

LendingTree launched its small business loan marketplace in 2014 to simplify the loan process and help small businesses gain access to credit and financing opportunities. To further its commitment of helping American business owners achieve growth, LendingTree launched the small business grant contest in November 2016 with the goal of awarding one deserving small business \$50,000 to help fund future growth. After reading through over 1,100 entries, and with input from Marc Prosser of [Fit Small Businesses](#), LendingTree employees voted on who they believed was most-deserving of the \$50,000 grant. Businesses were judged on a variety of factors including historical performance, future growth plans, distinctiveness, community impact and the company's overall vision.

To read more about STEM Center USA, please visit <http://www.stemcenterusa.com/> or LendingTree's contest page, which can be found here: <https://www.lendingtree.com/about/business-grant>

About LendingTree

LendingTree (NASDAQ: TREE) is the nation's leading online loan marketplace, empowering consumers as they comparison-shop across a full suite of loan and credit-based offerings. LendingTree provides an online marketplace which connects consumers with multiple lenders that compete for their business, as well as an array of online tools and information to help consumers find the best loan. Since inception, LendingTree has facilitated more than 65 million loan requests. LendingTree provides free monthly credit scores through My LendingTree and access to its network of over 400 lenders

offering home loans, personal loans, credit cards, student loans, personal loans, business loans, home equity loans/lines of credit, auto loans and more. LendingTree, LLC is a subsidiary of LendingTree, Inc.

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