

Good Evening Everyone!

It is such an honor to have the opportunity to represent my awesome class of Sandbox Finalists.

Right at the beginning David and Lianna made it very clear that they wanted us to focus less on the competitive aspects of the accelerator, and more on the collaborative. They informed us that the Sandbox wants finalists who are kind, eager to help each other, and who are supportive of each other's endeavors.

So the expectation was set very early on. But even if this were not the case, I believe that to this group of finalists these attributes are instinctive.

In the Sandbox this summer, one would frequently hear people sharing suggestions and opinions, and offering their time, talents, and resources to help further another's goals.

I can honestly say that we are now a family, and anyone who attended our final presentations had the chance to witness the love and support we have for one another.

Entrepreneurship is hard. It's very hard. As I reflected on this summer I thought about how much we entrepreneurs have in common with boxers. We first have to have the courage to believe we can step into the ring of entrepreneurship, then we have to train by talking to potential customers and testing our assumptions, and finally we have to step into the ring, and be tenacious, by getting back up when we inevitably get knocked down.

But we know that despite the self-doubt, tears, unexpected pivots, sleepless nights, and any other challenges we face, we have to get back up. Because if we don't, students may go hungry, or certain communities may feel isolated; or I may never be able to find a tennis partner!

No, we cannot give up, because entrepreneurship is essential to life; and to many people entrepreneurship means freedom; To one historical figure, quite literally so. There was a woman named Aletha

Turner who was a slave in the United States in the early 19th century. Like our own Michael Bertrand of Edible Land Design, Aletha knew that there is power in growing your own food. She maintained a small garden and sold her produce in our nation's capital, boasting clients like President Thomas Jefferson.

With her profits she purchased her own freedom for \$1,400, and purchased the freedom of 22 other slaves over a 25 year period. As I consider Aletha's story, I can't help but wonder how many more people Aletha could have freed if she had had the support and guidance of The Sandbox where entrepreneurship really is for all.

What if she had the mentors who guided us all summer, the probing, constructive, and enlightening feedback from David, the constant encouragement and support from Lianna, Emil's marketing and promotion, the guest presenters, office hours, free office space, fellow finalists to bounce ideas off of, and more. Not to mention the great vegetarian food we enjoyed all summer. Just think about that.

We may never know what could have been, but my fellow finalists and I know how fortunate we are to have been chosen to participate in this awesome accelerator with the Sandbox Team in our corner the entire summer and I am sure for years to come.

The Sandbox, now called "EforAll," is love in action, and for that, my fellow finalists and I will be forever grateful.

Thank you.

~ Veronica N. Chapman, My Crowning Jewel, LLC.