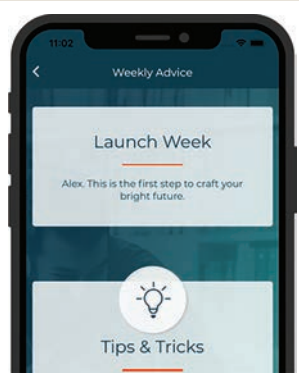




STARTUPS & INNOVATIONS

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LAUNCH



Artis: advice and personalized college admissions assistance

Artis is the author of "Earning Admissions: Real Strategies for Getting Into Highly Selective Colleges."

Artis, which launched in 2019, raised a \$250,000 seed round of funding in June.

Backers include **JD Montgomery** of Newport Beach-based **Canterbury Consulting**; **Maja and Erol Karabeg** of Irvine-based **Authority Partners**; **Raj Shukla**, general counsel of **Commercial Bank of California**; **Marc and Debbie Fleischman** of Phoenix-based **BeachFleischman**.

The capital will help Artis introduce additional higher education topics to its platform, such as advice on career development, life skills and graduate programs, Kaplan said.

Artis Inc. is coming to the aid of students navigating the remote college admissions process.

The Irvine-based firm last week launched an updated version of its app, available on Apple and Android devices.

It includes general advice and reminders, as well as an assessment to help identify the specific needs of each student, such as how to finalize a realistic college list and craft a compelling personal statement.

"There is so much unmet demand for personalized attention," Chief Executive **Greg Kaplan** said. "We strike a balance between providing access to resources for everyone and personalization for the individual."

Kaplan, 33, is a former college admissions counselor and **UCI School of Law** alumnus. He is also the



Greg Kaplan
CEO, Artis



Trubify: livestreaming platform, concierge service for artists

Newport Beach-based **Trubify** recently launched the beta version of its music streaming platform.

Trubify is a streaming platform that doubles as a concierge service for artists, managing their digital brand and business while giving fans a voice. It was founded by Chief Executive **Stephen Tyszka**.

The platform lets artists upload and stream live music sessions, and set the price for access to content and interactions such as direct messaging with fans.

Trubify has already on boarded 150 mid-tier music artists with some 170 million fans.

"Our platform guarantees a network effect," added Tyszka. "We're going to have high user retention rates because there is stickiness between artists and their fans."

Trubify is in the middle of negotiations that, once signed, would allow artists to perform covers of songs without demonetization—a problem that platforms like YouTube continue to face, Tyszka said.

Tyszka is a lifelong musician and longtime business partner of **Walter Cruttenden**. He is the co-founder of gaming fintech platforms **Blast** and **Nfluence**, as well as a founding member of **ATM.com** and **Music.com**.

The company, which presented at Aliso Viejo-based **Octane's** Tech Innovation Forum last week, has raised about \$800,000 for its seed round of funding. The round is still open.

PARTNERSHIPS

Title3Funds, a Laguna Beach-based crowdfunding portal, has partnered with a number of incubators, accelerators and venture studios to connect early-stage companies with both accredited and non-accredited investors.

Partners include **Captjur Startup Garage**, a subsidiary of Newport Beach-based **B2 Group Global**; Irvine-based **Pismo Ventures**; **Green2Gold** in Simi Valley; and Austin-based **TEN Capital Network**.

The partnerships are mutually beneficial, said Title3Funds co-founder and Chief Strategy Advisor **Ron Hirsch**.

"Many companies that come to us are too early-stage. We can refer them to accelerator programs. On the other hand, when they birth companies, they can pass them to us and we can help them raise funds."

Title3Funds will introduce its first set of 50 to 60 companies to its members-only portal over the next year, said Hirsch, a former senior vice president with **Lehman Brothers**.

Unlike other crowdfunding platforms, Hirsch said Title3Funds carefully screens and selects its companies.

"We focus on equity investments and convertible notes. We vet companies carefully and we tell them they need to have fair valuations," said Hirsch, noting the firm uses a variety of methods to determine valuations such as the Berkus Method and Scorecard Method.



Ron Hirsch
Co-Founder, Title3Funds



The **CEO Leadership Alliance of Orange County (CLA-OC)** announced its first class of fellows on Sept. 3.

The Orange Fellowship aims to identify and invest in young professionals, who will become future business leaders, the organization said.

"Together we'll continue to build a future Orange County that enables

everyone to thrive here," said **Mark Percy**, president of CLA-OC.

The first cohort includes 24 recent college graduates with positions in OC companies such as **Irvine Co.**, **Ingram Micro** and **Pacific Life**. Sixteen of the fellows graduated from OC universities.

Fellows, with support from their companies, will have leadership development and relationship building opportunities through seminars and social events.

"The Orange Fellowship is designed to create deeper connections and bridges across industries and generations, so we can work more closely together in solving the biggest community challenges," said **Carey Ransom**, a senior advisor with CLA-OC and the president of **OC4 Venture Studio** in Costa Mesa.

To learn more about the Orange Fellowship and its inaugural class, visit claoc.org.

FINANCING



MediPines: starts pediatric trials for its respiratory device at Seattle Children's Hospital

MediPines Corp., a Yorba Linda-based medical device maker, recently won a \$250,000 grant from the **National Capital Consortium for Pediatric Device Innovation**.

The award, one of several provided to companies with potential solutions to COVID-related challenges, will support pediatric trials for MediPines' **AGM 100** respiratory monitoring system at **Seattle Children's Hospital**.

MediPines' breathalyzer-like device, which determines respiratory health based on a two-minute sample of a patient's normal breathing pattern, was approved for use in adults by the **Food and Drug Administration** last year.

The portable, noninvasive device delivers information in a fast, precise and painless manner, which makes it a good choice for pediatric patients, the company said.

"In children, respiratory decline can be sudden. The ability to rapidly determine respiratory impairment has the potential to make a dramatic impact in pediatric screening and treatment support," said **Richard Hines**, medical director of MediPines.

MediPines has raised about \$2.5 million since its start in 2019, according to regulatory filings.



Addresses need for rapid diagnostics in pediatrics space

ACQUISITION

YouMail Inc., an Irvine cloud-based communication services provider, said it acquired voicemail-to-text transcription service **PhoneTag** on Sept. 1.

Terms of the transaction were undisclosed.

"YouMail immediately improves the user experience of PhoneTag customers through more advanced call-handling as well as increased protection from scammers and spammers," said YouMail Chief Executive **Alex Quilici**, who noted the company is exploring additional acquisitions.

Quilici, who founded YouMail in 2007, said the company started as a voicemail service provider, before realizing its customers were using its screening feature to block robocalls.

Robocalls can come in a number of forms, such as pretending to offer free COVID tests in exchange for credit card information.

"You'll see us continue to do more in the security space," Quilici said. "We might have started off as a better voicemail service, but we've really gone all in on protecting our users."

YouMail, with about 30 employees, has raised about \$8 million to date with participation from the **Tech Coast Angels**.



Alex Quilici
CEO, YouMail