Quarterly Newsletter Recap

The second quarter of 2025 marked a season of growth, collaboration, and impact for TiE Houston. From expanding our investment portfolio to strengthening regional partnerships, our chapter has continued to foster innovation and entrepreneurial excellence.

Regional Collaboration & Visibility
We kicked off the quarter with the inaugural **TiECon Texas**, a historic joint venture between TiE Houston, TiE Dallas, and TiE Austin. This new annual event marks a milestone in statewide collaboration and collective impact.

Community Engagement & Leadership
At the **Rice Business Plan Competition**, 22 members served as judges and 8 mentored international teams—cementing TiE Houston's influence in the innovation ecosystem. Our **Founders and Funders** monthly gatherings, led by Amir Eskafiyan, continue to bring together a vibrant mix of entrepreneurs and investors across the city.

Angel Investing Momentum
The **TiE Houston Angels** program screened over 50 companies, hosted six pitch sessions, and invested in two new ventures this quarter. With a disciplined investment strategy and over $2.8M deployed across 10 companies globally, our portfolio is up 80%—with several standout performers including dSilo (7x valuation growth), Xtend, and Protein Pints.

Empowering the Next Generation
Our **Young Entrepreneurs** program had a successful season, with student teams excelling at local and global competitions thanks to dedicated mentorship from our members.

Women's Leadership & Inclusion
TiE Women Houston continues to thrive in its second year. With 55 applications submitted for the 2025 cohort and ongoing mentoring, pitch coaching, and global prep, we're proud to foster inclusive entrepreneurship. The chapter also spotlighted success stories through a live LinkedIn event featuring Dr. Kalen Hall and Charter Member Yasmine Malik.

Welcome New Members
We're pleased to welcome **Joe Gatto** and **Tanu Grewal** to our Charter Member community—two accomplished leaders bringing decades of industry and innovation experience.

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Newsletter

Issue 02 July 22nd, 2025

President's Message:

Dear friends,

As your president these past five months, I'm energized by the momentum we've built together. Since February, our chapter has hosted or participated in sixteen events that have inspired, connected, and strengthened our entrepreneurial community.

TiECon Texas: A New Chapter in Collaboration
In March, we proudly joined TiE Dallas and TiE Austin to launch the inaugural TiECon Texas in Frisco. This milestone event marked the beginning of what we hope will become an annual tradition—uniting our Texas chapters to amplify our collective impact.

Rice Business Plan Competition: A Powerful Showing
Our members showed up in force at this year's Rice Business Plan Competition: 22 volunteered as judges and 8 mentored our international nominations. Your dedication elevated the event and reinforced TiE Houston's role as a pillar of the region's innovation ecosystem.

Angel Investing: Active and Impactful
Our Angel group has been hard at work—screening over 50 companies, hosting 6 pitch sessions, and investing in 2 promising ventures. These efforts reflect our mission to empower entrepreneurs through capital and mentorship.

Young Entrepreneurs: Rising to the Challenge
Our Young Entrepreneur program had a standout season. Teams mentored by our members excelled in both local and global competitions, showcasing the next generation of entrepreneurial talent.

Founders and Funders: A Growing Community
Thanks to Amir Eskafiyan's leadership, our monthly Founders and Funders gatherings have become a vibrant space for connection and collaboration. These events continue to expand our reach through partnerships across Houston's startup ecosystem.

HOUSTON
FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

President's Message Cont'd:

Women's Program: Building Inclusion and Leadership
Our women's initiative is off to a strong start, creating new opportunities for engagement and growth. I encourage everyone to support and participate in this important effort.

With Gratitude
A heartfelt thank you to all our committee members and program leads—you are the driving force behind everything we do. Your leadership and dedication are what make this chapter thrive. We also extend our deep appreciation to Hannah Lightner for her service to the chapter. As she transitions away from her role, we wish her continued success and fulfillment in all that lies ahead.

Get Involved—Your Passion Fuels Our Progress
Whether you're new to TiE Houston or a longtime member, your engagement—as a mentor, volunteer, investor, or supporter—makes all the difference. I also encourage you to invite friends and colleagues to join us. Our strength lies in our diversity and shared entrepreneurial spirit.

You'll read more about many of these events and initiatives in this issue of the newsletter. I hope you'll take a moment to celebrate the incredible work happening across our community. We're just getting started. I look forward to building on this momentum with you.

With appreciation and anticipation,

Somesh Singh

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New Member Introductions:

Joe Gatto has held multiple leadership roles within the energy and financial industries, driving significant strategic initiatives and navigating changing landscapes over the last 30 years. Most recently, Joe has served as CEO of a public oil and gas company with my tenure culminating in a sale after a re-invention of the business model and subsequent rapid growth.

Tanu Grewal is an award-winning marketing leader with 15+ years of experience. She works with mature and hyper-growth emerging companies to execute big visions and brand purpose transformations. Tanu currently serves as the Vice President of Marketing, Innovation, and E-Commerce at AlEn USA, a subsidiary of one of the most recognized companies in the household cleaning products category in Mexico.

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Upcoming Events

July 17th: Founders & Founders

Come hang out with the people at Mercury, TiE Houston, Rocket Network, and SWAN! Let's talk tech, startups, VC, or the crazy state of the world!

Register →

Sept 25: Decoding Venture Capital

Join us as we explore what professional investors seek at various inflection points—from early-stage funding for promising startups to growth capital for established businesses with market traction

Register →

DECODING
VENTURE
CAPITAL
FROM SEED TO SUCCESS

Oct 23: Energy event

Save the date for our upcoming renewable energy focused event. This long awaited topic is finally being brought to our Charter Members!

Register→

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TiE ANGELS
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Program Update:

Over the past four years, TiE Houston Angels has been quietly but purposefully laying a strong foundation for long-term success. While some of our earliest investments presented challenges, the portfolio we've built since adopting a more disciplined investment approach is showing promising results—with several companies delivering significant increases in valuation

Building a Smarter Investment Engine

Our transformation began with structure and discipline. We've formalized our investment criteria to better align with our strengths and priorities. While we remain industry-agnostic, we now focus on companies that are revenue-generating—or well on their way there. We prioritize strong, coachable management teams and prefer opportunities where we can add meaningful value—whether through strategic guidance, market development, or mentorship.

We also:

- **Formed an Angel Investment Committee** to screen deals before presenting them to the broader Charter Member group.
- **Streamlined operations**, with standardized processes for deal setup, entity management, and timely K-1 generation
- **Forged a national network of angel groups**, giving us vetted deal flow and shared diligence while maintaining our own evaluation standards.
- **Set clear investment goals**, aiming to back at least six new companies and three follow-on rounds each year.

We've even broadened our scope to include select later-stage investments—most notably, our participation in Xtend's Series B round, which has since seen impressive growth.

A Portfolio on the Rise

To date, TiE Houston Angels has invested over **$2.8 million** across **10 portfolio companies** in industries ranging from high-tech (dSilo, Lidrotec, Xtend) to consumer goods (Protein Pints), healthcare (HOTH, CompressionWorks, Procyrion), and industrial solutions (PureBlue Tech, Fibercoat). Our investments span the U.S., Germany, and Israel—truly reflecting our global reach.

We've also seen encouraging follow-on participation: we've reinvested in six of those companies across multiple rounds, signaling continued confidence in their trajectory.

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Program Update:

The results speak for themselves:

- Overall, our portfolio has grown **by 80%**.
- If you remove investments made less than six months ago, that multiple jumps to **2.09x**.
- Some standout performers include:
    - **dSilo**, with a 7x increase in valuation fueled by strong recurring revenue growth.
    - **Xtend**, a leader in drone-based AI systems, with tens of millions in revenue.
    - **Protein Pints**, now found in over 7,000 major grocery stores, including Kroger, H-E-B, Randalls, and Target.

Lessons Learned, and Forward Momentum

We've had one notable disappointment: GGLeagues, an e-gaming startup with great potential but a management team unwilling to evolve. The experience sharpened our focus on coachability and reinforced our belief that the right leadership can make or break a venture.

That said, **every other investment continues to make forward progress**—and many are scaling rapidly. Our growing experience, clarity of vision, and collaborative spirit are yielding strong outcomes.

Join Us in Building What's Next

Looking ahead, we have two exciting opportunities under active due diligence. If you've been on the sidelines, now is a great time to get involved. As a Charter Member, you're already eligible to invest—**and it takes as little as $5,000** to participate in a deal.

We invite you to connect with our Angel Investment Committee, learn more about our portfolio, and discover how you can be part of something impactful.

The TiE Houston Angels community isn't just investing in startups—we're helping build the future

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Program Update:

As we enter our second year of TiE Women Houston, we're thrilled by the momentum building across our chapter and beyond. Here's a quick snapshot of what we've been up to—and what's coming next:

Program Activities

- **LinkedIn Live Spotlight (May 28):** TiE Women Houston 2024 winner, Kalen Hall, PhD (Informuta) and TiE Houston Charter Member Yasmine Malik shared their journey from introduction through TiE Women to real investment and growth, moderated by Tanu Grewal. Watch the video and join the conversation here.
- **Global Pitch Prep:** Our second-year cohort is in full swing with chapter mentoring, pitch coaching, and investor workshops running through September.
- **Mentor Matchmaking:** We've expanded our roster of experienced mentors to ensure every founder gets tailored guidance on fundraising, go-to-market strategy, and scaling globally.

Key Dates & How to Apply

- **Application Deadline:** June 30th, 2025
- **Chapter Mentoring & Finalist Selection:** July 1 – Sept 15, 2025
- **Global Finals at TGS Jaipur:** December 3–5, 2025

Eligibility Criteria

- Women-founded or co-founded startups (female founder/co-founder must pitch and hold ≥ 33% equity)
- Company founded on or after Jan 1, 2018
- Preference for startups actively fundraising

Chapter Achievements

We received **55 applications** this year—thank you to all our charter members for sharing our content and encouraging applications!

Why TiE Women?

TiE Women offers up to $50K in equity-free prizes, global visibility, and connections to mentors and investors in every region. Our collective mission is to raise the overall visibility of TiE Women across all chapters, ensuring more female founders gain access to the networks and resources they need to thrive.

Learn more & apply:

Together, we're not just building companies—we're strengthening communities through inclusive entrepreneurship. Let's keep the momentum going!

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Program Update:

In April, at the 25th Annual Rice Business Plan Competition (RBPC), TiE Houston recognized and supported innovation among university-led startups. RBPC welcomed 42 teams globally. The TiE Houston selected team, Re.Solution out of RWTH Aachen placed 3rd overall in the competition.

22 TiE Houston Charter Members participated as judges this year! 40+ CM and guests attended the Gala.

Last year, we awarded Paul Reiss and Michael Meadows founders of Protein Pints from Michigan State University, and substantially oversubscribed our investment award! We welcomed them back this year as judges and speakers for the competition.

Also back in Houston to partake in RBPC 2025 festivities are previous TiE RBPC Investment Award winners Alexander Igelmann Alexander Kanitz from Lidrotec-RBPC 2022. Robert Brüll Alexander Lüking from FibreCoat- RBPC 2021.

2025 marked the 14th year partnered with Rice Alliance and TiE Houston. In January 2025, TiE Houston Angels completed a $300k investment into Protein Pints, which visited their old RBPC stomping grounds after winning first place in 2024. The TiE Houston “Golden Ticket” went to Re.Solution from RWTH Aaachen.

8 different Charter Members spent time selecting and mentoring our international TiE RBPC selection.

For RBPC 2026, TiE must select our 2 companies by January 15th, 2026. RBPC 2026 will take place in early April so that will give use 3 months to mentor.

Our current plan is to leverage the TiE University competition to source two companies. One Asia team and one EU team.

TiE Houston historical Golden Ticket results:
- 2025 Re.Solution- 3rd place
- 2024 Power2Polymers- 3rd place
- 2023 Inzipio
- 2022 Lidrotech - 1st place
- 2021 Fibrecoat- 3rd place

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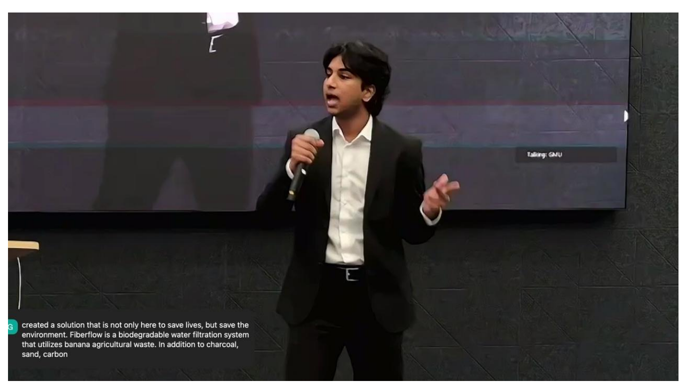
Program Update:

TiE Houston proudly relaunched its TYE program this year, mentoring 12 student teams across 5 schools through workshops, coaching, and 2 pitch competitions. Two teams—**FiberFlow** and **Step In**—represented Houston at the **TYE Global Finals** in Washington DC from June 19-20.

FiberFlow earned **Best Elevator Pitch** and a **Top 3 overall finish**, impressing judges with their banana-fiber water filtration system for rural India. **Step In**, a language learning platform for EAL students, also advanced to the finals.



Program Update Cont'd:

Special thanks to **Junior Achievement Southeast**, **Village School, Houston Community College**, our mentors, and committee leads for making this success possible.

Committee and Mentors:

- Ravi Brahmbhatt- Committee Lead
- Sunil Garg
- Ram Shenoy
- Hubert Vaz-Nayak
- Sri Vaidyanathan

"The TYE program has been a transformative experience for our students, providing them with real-world exposure, mentorship, and the confidence to pitch their ideas on a global stage. Having two of our teams—Fiber Flow and Step In—compete at the TYE Global Finals in Washington, DC was an incredible honor. I'm deeply grateful to the TiE Houston leadership for their unwavering support, guidance, and commitment to nurturing young entrepreneurs. Their impact on our students will be felt for years to come."

— Tania Daniel, Vice President of Entrepreneurship Initiatives, Junior Achievement Southeast

"Watching our students prepare and compete on the global stage was incredible. TYE not only taught them entrepreneurial skills, but gave them the confidence to share their ideas with the world. We're grateful to TiE Houston for reigniting this opportunity."

— Ginny Philps, Entrepreneurship Director, The Village School