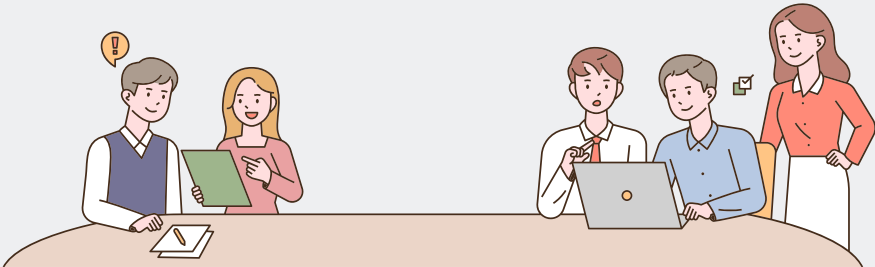


# ASSISTANCE FOR ACHIEVING SELF-ACTUALIZATION

MARUI GROUP has launched two programs for the purpose of accelerating open innovation and creating new businesses. These programs are drawing participation from members of younger generations boasting innovative ideas as well as from young entrepreneurs driven by their convictions to build a more prosperous society through business. Through these programs, MARUI GROUP's assets and expertise are being used to offer assistance for achieving self-actualization.



## Future Accelerator Gateway Program for University and Graduate School Students

Together with IT education program operator Life is Tech, Inc., MARUI GROUP launched the Future Accelerator Gateway program in October 2020. This program solicits new business ideas from university and graduate school students (or from people in the equivalent age range of 18 to 24). Participants whose ideas are selected form teams with MARUI GROUP employees to refine their business ideas under the guidance of entrepreneur mentors over a period of three months. The mentor for the first iteration of the program was Life is Tech CEO Yusuke Mizuno, while second iteration participants were mentored by BASE CEO Yuta Tsuruoka and TSUKURUBA CEO Hiroki Murakami. Presentations were judged by well-known entrepreneurs together with MARUI GROUP President Hiroshi Aoi. This robust support network aided the young participants in shaping their passions toward the businesses they envisioned.



### The passion of younger generations rekindled our spirit of entrepreneurship.

It was amazing watching the students participating in the Future Accelerator Gateway program put their heads together to come up with their ideas and having fun while giving their absolute all amid the tense atmosphere on the day of the presentations. The open-minded, unfettered ideas produced by the participants were truly stimulating, and it rekindled our spirit of entrepreneurship. I hope that the students will remain conscious of the importance of being proactive and initiating action so that they will not be hesitant to embark on the first step of new ventures.

\*"Im La Floria" brand of care products for delicate areas, developed by Mellia Inc. (in Japanese only)  
im-official.com/

### Comments from Judges of First Program Iteration



Yuki Hara  
Representative Director  
and CEO  
Mellia Inc.



Yuki Wada  
Representative Director  
and CEO  
Mellia Inc.

## Marui Co-Creation Pitch Program for Start-Up Companies

Marui Co-Creation Pitch is a program for soliciting business ideas from start-up companies created jointly with SAMURAI INCUBATE INC. in February 2021. SAMURAI INCUBATE conducts venture capital businesses in which it invests and supports the growth of relatively young start-up companies and promotes open innovation with large companies and municipal and other government agencies. The first Marui Co-Creation Pitch event saw the proposal of business ideas for 10 companies selected from among 35 applicants via written and interview screening. Each of the proposals exuded a strong sense of passion and sparked a lively back-and-forth of questions with judges. In the end, four companies were selected for the grand prize. Co-creation is already underway with some of these companies, like HERALBONY, winner of a grand prize as well as the audience prize, with which we are issuing collaboration cards.

### Four Grand Prize Winners

Name	Business Activities
Ellie Inc.	Development of SILKFOOD, a next-generation food product made from silkworms
ShareWing, Co., Ltd.	Operation of OTERA STAY service for staying overnight at temples and CLOUD HOTEL online service for experiencing pilgrims' quarters
DATAFLUCT, Inc.	Provision of solutions for resolving corporate and social issues using data science
HERALBONY	Social measures based on the theme of combining art with disabilities (sale of artworks, fabric art, space production)



HERALBONY EPOS Card



Pop-up shop opened to commemorate launch of HERALBONY EPOS Card (Yurakucho Marui)  
Photograph by Shinsuke Sugino

**HERALBONY EPOS Card Moving Society**

**Forward with Each Purchase**

Committed to its mission of helping people express their unique color, HERALBONY is a start-up company that works with artists with disabilities across Japan to create a new culture focused on welfare. MARUI GROUP partnered with this company to launch the HERALBONY EPOS Card in November 2021 through which 0.1% of every purchase is donated to welfare facilities via HERALBONY. By using this card, customers are able to donate to art creation, gallery operation, and welfare facilities when they do their everyday shopping.



### I want to help produce MARUI GROUP's crowning co-creation success stories.

MARUI GROUP cannot achieve its vision and mission alone; it will need to create new value through open innovation. The Marui Co-Creation Pitch program was born out of this recognition as we searched for ways to develop a program that could create new businesses through open innovation by combining the assets and experience of start-ups with those of MARUI GROUP.

We have received a number of unique ideas for co-creation through this program, and I was proud to help initiate our first co-creative undertaking through this program. I want to help evolve the Marui Co-Creation Pitch program so that it can keep producing MARUI GROUP's crowning co-creation success stories.

Behind-the-scenes discussion about Marui Co-Creation Pitch 2021 (in Japanese only)  
www.to-mare.com/tf/2021/005.html



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