

13 Serious Games Created by Students Won Awards in Serious Play Awards Annual Competition

MONTRAEEL — Sept.29, 2025 — 13 educational games created by students have been cited for excellence in the 2025 International Serious Play Awards Program.

Gold Medals for digital games created by students went to:

- [StepUp - Hygiene Hero Cup](#): a 3D tablet game developed in partnership with the World Shoe Fund to teach critical hygiene skills to underserved youth ages 10–14. Designed for Android devices and tested in Ghana, the game uses sports-style challenges to make learning about handwashing, foot care and shoe-wearing engaging and effective. Playtests demonstrated measurable improvements in students' hygiene awareness and behaviors, positioning Hygiene Hero Cup as a scalable solution for global health education.
- [Cards of Heart](#): developed by students at the University of Southern California (USC) in collaboration with USC Games and the Creative Media and Behavioral Health Center, is a cozy digital card game that introduces mental health concepts to players aged 14-22 through engaging role-play and therapeutic mechanics. Inspired by therapies such as CBT, DBT and ACT, the game follows Amalia as she learns to manage her mental health and overcome negative thought patterns in a supportive, interactive environment. The project was guided by clinical psychologists and features a diverse team of students and advisors dedicated to promoting mental health literacy and empathy among youth.

Bronze Medals for student games were awarded to:

- [Answer Campus: First Semester](#) – Answer Campus: First Semester is an interactive narrative game from NERDLab at the University of Miami, designed for players ages 16+ to navigate the social and academic challenges of college life. Through engaging dialogue and branching choices, participants experience authentic situations involving stereotypes and microaggressions, fostering empathy and critical thinking. Relationship dynamics shift based on player responses, creating a safe space to practice handling difficult conversations.
- [Other People's Money](#) - A new game developed in the Godot engine invites Americans of all ages to better understand wealth inequality by visualizing the immense fortunes of the ultra-rich alongside concrete alternatives, such as building libraries or funding public projects. Designed with expert-backed communication techniques, the game uses engaging gameplay, eye-opening visualizations and reflective in-game text to encourage critical thinking and inspire calls for positive change. Playtesting has shown that players leave with a deeper awareness of inequality and a greater interest in solutions.
- [Haunt & Hospitality](#) - Haunt & Hospitality is a single-player simulation and management game developed by William Peace University Simulation and Game Design students, including Ethan Minnich, Caedmon R. Holland, Ben Gonzales, Jaelynn Berry, Ozzy Ochoa-Lara, and Tre'quan Harmon. Designed for students aged 13 and up, the game invites players to manage a quirky, haunted hotel set in the 1990s while building strategic thinking and resource management skills. With its playful art style and engaging gameplay, Haunt & Hospitality offers a fun, educational experience that teaches responsibility and adaptability through humor and interactive challenges.

- [An Interactive Tour of the International Space Station](#) - Students at Michigan State University's Media and Information program, in collaboration with the Abrams Planetarium on campus, created an immersive, interactive tour of the International Space Station, featuring a 3D replica developed for both desktop use and planetarium dome projection. Utilizing official NASA models, the experience allows visitors of all ages to freely explore ISS modules and learn about space technology through engaging activities and educational panels. The tour authentically simulates a microgravity environment and offers a unique opportunity for both self-guided and narrated learning.
- [CECO Activities](#) - CECO Ladder Mini-Games, a collaboration between Conductive Education Center of Orlando (CECO) and CelleC Games Studio at Full Sail University, introduces a suite of interactive mini-games designed to enhance therapy for students with Cerebral Palsy and neurological disabilities. The games, playable on a customized ladder device or PC, encourage engagement, reward and positive reinforcement as students develop physical abilities through themed experiences like plant-watering, music-making, ice cream stacking and cycling. The interactive ladder has been donated to CECO, with CelleC Games at Full Sail University serving as publisher. Six educational Student Tabletop/Board games have been cited for excellence in the 2025 International Serious Play Awards Program.

In the tabletop category, Silver Medals for student-created board games went to the following:

- **Pivot** - Developed by Oma Makhija and Aria Makhija. Pivot is an award-winning math card game that transforms mental calculations into a thrilling competition. Perfect for 2-5 players ages 11 and up, this friends and family game features two difficulty levels, Level I (21 cards) and Level II (31 cards). Players work with basic operations like addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication.
- **Primes** - Developed by Oma Makhija and Aria Makhija. PRIMES is an award-winning card game perfect for ages 10 -127. The deck of cards offers 100 unique combinations to challenge your arithmetic skills. Make the prime number displayed in the center of any card using the four numbers displayed in the corners. Players will marvel at the not-so-random distribution of prime numbers.
- **Death Coffee Time** - Created through collaborations with Carnegie Mellon University and New York University, Death Coffee Time is a card deck that fosters meaningful, intergenerational discussions around aging and death. With a research-backed structure and narrative prompts, the game builds comfort and connection across generations, preparing families to navigate end-of-life conversations before a crisis occurs.
- **Campaign Trail 3000** - Designed for civics classrooms and casual play alike, Campaign Trail 3000 puts players in the circuits of post-apocalyptic robots running political campaigns. Created by Alex Kaplan, Leigh Allen, and Juan Galan, this four-player drafting game simulates campaign decision-making while keeping the tone light, allowing players to explore fundraising, policy and political dynamics through strategic gameplay and thoughtful debriefs.
- **The Consent Game** - Developed by junior high student Phoonseeraah (Ada) Tieworn at Choate Rosemary Hall, The Consent Game teaches youth ages 8–18 how to recognize, request, and respect consent in everyday situations. Inspired by Ada's interviews with former sex workers and implemented in Thai schools, the game blends

role-play, storytelling, and discussion to build communication skills, assertiveness and mutual respect.

A Bronze Medal went to the student-created game:

The Braille Bistro - Created with the support of the Michigan State University Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities, The Braille Bistro is a tactile matching game that invites sighted players to experience ordering from a braille menu while blindfolded. Designed to raise awareness about accessibility, the game includes a reflective "Next Level Sheet" and actionable resources, making it a powerful tool for businesses, educators and designers to improve inclusion

[Serious Play Conference](https://seriousplayconf.com/awards/) brings together professionals who are exploring the use of game-based learning, sharing their experience, and working together to shape the future of training and education. For more information on the Serious Play Award Program, go to: <https://seriousplayconf.com/awards/>

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