

# student life

## SILENCE IS GOLDEN FOR THIS STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR *By Sarah Thompson*

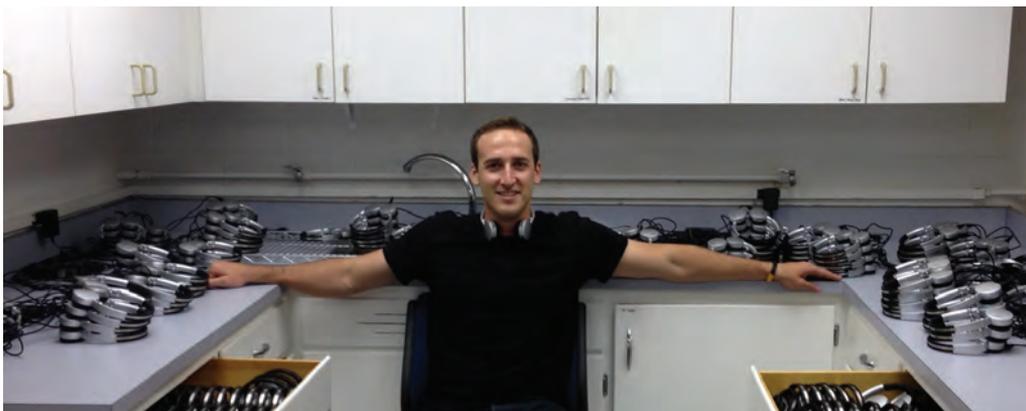
When Jacob Reisch '14 transferred to the Dyson School a year ago, he wasn't really sure what he wanted to study.

But a summer spent working for AeroFarms, a Marathon, N.Y.-based company commercializing aeroponic agriculture for urban applications, sparked his entrepreneurial spirit and led him to Professor Deborah Streeter, who helped turn his business dreams into reality.

"I've always been really impulsive. I see random, cool opportunities and kind of push the button and go," Reisch said.

In January 2013, Reisch pushed the button to launch Party Headphones. The company provides multichannel wireless headphones for silent discos, an international trend allowing partygoers to listen at their

own volume but dance together. Less than a year later, with help from Cornell's eLab Incubator by Student Agencies, Party Headphones has hired several full-time contractors, shipped its products all over the country and worked with clients such as



Nestle, Red Bull and MTV2. Streeter has been a huge resource, working with Reisch on solutions and helping him develop long-term relationships with alumni. That's how he connected with Dave Pelletier '72, CEO of Annalee Mobilitee Dolls, Inc., who now mentors Reisch and his sales team through weekly phone calls and has helped him navigate through challenges such as leading peers, negotiating international contracts and hiring.

This summer, the Geneva, N.Y. native ran Party Headphones while interning at another startup, Next Jump. Come fall,

coursework began again, as did Reisch's duties as adviser of Energy Corps at Cornell, a student organization promoting sustainability on campus, which he founded in 2012.

"Jake's experience is such a great example of the leadership challenges start-ups run into—the micro-details—and a great example of how CALS students interested in business are envisioning new things and getting lots of exposure," Streeter said.

## GOING TO BAT FOR STUDENT BUSINESSES *By Alex Koeberle '13*

In his white T-shirt and jeans, Ali Hamed '14 appears to be dressed for a baseball game rather than a business meeting. But that's where he's heading. Sidelined by injuries, the former student-athlete has converted his time on the diamond to a relentless passion for entrepreneurship at Cornell.

The interdisciplinary studies major is involved in several start-ups, as both partner and investor. He co-founded POPSHOP, a collaborative space meant to serve as a launch pad for student start-ups, with seven friends and business partners. It opened for business in April 2012 with a small storefront on Dryden Avenue and has since expanded to a new location at 325 College Ave., thanks to funding from Cornell eLab.

It's not the only risk Hamed has taken as a student entrepreneur. He is also involved with CoVenture, a New York



City-based collection of young entrepreneurs who look for experts in their respective industries who have great ideas but lack the technical expertise to launch their business. CoVenture employs a team of engineers to build out tailored technologies for the budding businesses, provides mentors, and helps their owners

connect with funding sources in exchange for equity in the business. Early successes include Bib + Tuck, a members-only online community for women to trade fashion items, and Motrixi, a business that aims to build mobile advertisement technology.

"We've made six investments, helping these companies raise over \$5 million in financing and over \$8 million in revenue within a year," Hamed said. "We will be investing in 15 new companies by the end of 2015."

Hamed believes that dorm rooms are where incredible ideas are born, and he's dedicated to guiding fellow student entrepreneurs from ideas to fruition. As a partner in the Dorm Room Fund, he gives students the financial boost they need to make it happen.

"Even small amounts of capital can support huge ideas," he said.