

# HAMPTON VA

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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## Tech company founder named Emerging Global Entrepreneur by White House, SBA

**May 11, 2015** - Aazia Mickens Dessaso, founder of FreePing, a client at the Peninsula Technology Incubator in Hampton, is one of five people to be named an Emerging Global Entrepreneur by the White House and Small Business Administration.

Thomas Flake, director of the Incubator, said the recognition "caps off what has been a remarkable run for FreePing" and the Incubator. A special ceremony was scheduled for Monday, May 11, in Washington.

Launched in 2014, FreePing provides news and other information to prepaid mobile phone subscribers in Brazil, South Africa and other emerging markets. The White House said the selection highlights the importance of investing in women and young entrepreneurs to solve problems such as poverty, extremism, access to education and healthcare.

In a news release, Flake said: "In a community where it has often been said that it is difficult to raise money for startups, for women-owned businesses and for minorities, Ms. Dassaso and FreePing have broken all of the perceived barriers. They have raised almost \$100,000 and are building what is unquestionably a high-tech business in what has been a stereotypically white/male dominated industry. Ms. Dessaso is an incredible role model, I am proud to know her and call her a friend."

Flake also said that in the last 18 months the Incubator and related companies have been:

- Winner, Hottest Tech Startup in Washington D.C. – FreePing
- Winner, Hottest Tech Startup in Baltimore – HIS Energy
- Winner, Hottest Tech Startup in the Nation – HIS Energy
- Winner, Semper Startup – Aesop Technologies
- Winner, Get Started NOVA – Feedback Enterprises
- Winner, Babson College/Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses – Crossrope
- Recognized as one of the top 50 Accelerators in the Nation by Small Business Administration – Peninsula Technology Incubators
- Recognized by Technopolicy as one of the top two knowledge based Incubators in the World in the "New Category" – Peninsula Technology Incubator.

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