

## From Class App to Company

by Viola Brown '17

Kalamazoo College juniors **Giancarlo Anemore '15** and **Guilherme "Will" Guedes '15** have created Versapp, a mobile application for the iPhone and Android that allows people to communicate with friends anonymously. "It creates a context that is only possible within the app," says Anemore. In a sense, the app creates a new reality. "You can have anonymous conversations and interactions with people that you know personally," adds Anemore. "That's impossible in everyday conversation."

The app started as an assignment for "Mobile Computing," a course taught by Associate Professor of Computer Science **Pam Cutter**. The enthusiasm with which it was received convinced its creators to transform the class project into a company.

"Operating as a limited liability company (LLC) allows for the funding we need to provide the best customer service, and it protects Giancarlo and I from personal liability for the enterprise," says Guedes.

Vice President for Advancement **Albert DeSimone** introduced Guedes to alumnus **Trevor Hough '08**, principal of Hornet Angels, LLC. Hornet Angels, LLC has invested \$30,000 into Versapp, LLC so that the Anemore and Guedes could develop the infrastructure to ensure the success of the app. "These two students are a testament to the quality of individual that Kalamazoo College helps introduce to the world," says Hough. Their ideas, drive, and intellect are impressive. Anonymous communication is one of the hottest niche spaces in Silicon Valley. What they have done is provide a unique way to communicate anonymously not only with the world, but specifically with friends."

It takes a village—in this case a K village—to raise a good business idea. Provost **Mickey McDonald** provided key support, Professor Cutter assisted with giving cryptographic advice. Students (and part-owners of the company) **Ian Geiman '14** was responsible for design and **Riley Lundquist '16** was responsible for iPhone operating system development.

Juggling app development and building a company with full course loads at K wasn't easy. Anemore jokes that he didn't sleep for six months, but "K is a unique school and because of the unique situation at K we have been able to thrive. We have sort of shifted the way that we view our free time," he adds.

"Everyone is being very supportive and we will definitely give back all this support to Kalamazoo College. We want to make our computer science department known nationwide," says Guedes.