ParkStash, "The AirBnB of Parking"

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New College of Engineering alum Sameer Saran (MS Computer Engineering '18) is tackling San Jose State's worsening parking issue with an innovative new app called "ParkStash." Nicknamed "The AirBnB of Parking" by Saran, the app brings the sharing economy to downtown San Jose by connecting drivers with unused private parking spaces.

Impact of parking problem at SJSU on environment in 1 Semester

5582 overflow of cars spending on avg

30 mins finding a place to park

541 metric tons of CO_2 released

60,901 gallons of gasoline consumed

4.4 acres of forest destroyed

"I was paying for an expensive parking permit and spending thirty minutes a day driving around and looking for a space. I worried I would miss class and, when I finally got to class, I had to sit down and focus. I didn't want to stress about this any more," Saran explained.

This stress is not uncommon amongst SJSU students; around 41% of students identify as commuters and an ever-growing student body has created a *three-to-one ratio* between drivers and available parking spaces on campus. Additionally, ongoing construction has resulted in the closures of some of the school's main parking lots, affecting not only students but faculty and staff as well.

Saran and three other computer engineering students recognized this issue and launched the app late last year. Since then, use of the app has grown to 600 users who log in and pick from an array of parking spaces offered up by homeowners with an empty driveway or unused car port. In developing a business model, the students found support in Hooman Bolandi, another College of Engineering alum whom they met as a judge in the University's annual Silicon Valley Business Plan competition.

"The big question was: How do you bootstrap this app? It requires not only work but a lot of investment," says Bolandi. "At last year's competition, Sameer took my comments to heart and improved on his project. I saw passion and willpower and eventually joined ParkStash as co-founder."

Through a mighty grassroots effort, Saran and the team have stretched ParkStash's reach to the suburbs near Levi's Stadium and SAP Center, giving event-goers a cheaper, faster choice for parking. Next, they plan on adding more spots near campus so that more students, faculty, and staff can have this same choice.

Interested in learning more about ParkStash (https://www.findparkstash.com/)? The app is available at the Apple App Store (https://goo.gl/df8xqm) or the Google Play Store (https://goo.gl/kbwcmr).