



For Immediate Release

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SMARTstart Launches 2017 Program

AIRDRIE, ALBERTA – The 2017 SMARTstart entrepreneurial training program officially launched last night with an enthusiastic group of local entrepreneurs and mentors.

“It’s exciting to welcome another group of entrepreneurs into our program,” says Sara Chamberlain, SMARTstart Entrepreneur Coordinator and Organizing Committee Member. “It was invigorating to see their anticipation and excitement at our Launch Event. We’ve seen great things happen as a result of this program and we’re confident this year won’t be any different.”

Now in the fourth year of the program, SMARTstart has helped more than 50 local entrepreneurs with their new business (in operation less than 3 years) or business idea.

Twenty-one entrepreneurs, representing 18 businesses, have been accepted into this year’s program. The 2017 entrepreneurs include:

- Deborah Proskow, Abstract Digital Paintings
- Erica Hatch, Balance Within Osteopathy
- Adam and Veronica Boccinfuso, Bocc Home Inspections Ltd.
- Ashley Williams and Drucilla Heighton, Byoode Bar
- Margo Drever, Cumberland Accounting & Bookkeeping Consulting Ltd.
- Edward Wilson, EPW Elements Inc.
- Heather Dunbar and Maryanne Warnke, Home "Maid" Help
- Ashton Bennett, Lace & Locket Photography
- Heather Doyle, Loving Hands Partners in Care Inc.
- Amie Bursaw, Luminosity CrossFit + Yoga
- Kerri Kuefler, Made in the Shade Blinds & More!
- Vladimir Gonzalez, Maxi Foods
- Dana Remillard, Mosaic Learning Solutions
- Barbara Brown, My Myo Smiles
- Jenn Lisoway, Pure Creations Events & Design
- Emily Fleming, The Art of Steel
- Kara Fulton, Thumbprint Craft Beer Market

Over the course of eight months, the entrepreneurs will complete the *100 Essential Business Skills* online training from GoForth Institute, participate in 11 in-person workshops, and work with a mentor on the completion of a business, feasibility or strategic plan.

“One of the program’s strengths is its mentors,” says Jodie Eckert, SMARTstart Mentor Coordinator and Organizing Committee Member. “We have an amazing group of local business owners who volunteer their time and put their heart and soul into mentoring our participants.”

The 16 local business leaders volunteering as mentors are:

- Gary Armstrong, Empowered Employee Education
- Wendy Bates-Wiebe, The Hair Lounge
- Joan Bell, retired (former owner of Airdrie Yoga Studio)
- Jennifer Benner, Benner Database Designs



- Dr. Jacqueline Boyd, Access Chiropractic and Wellness Centres
- Danielle Coulter, Tutor Doctor
- Jody Funk, ABBL Hardware
- Tracy Goodbrand, Irricana Kountry Kennel
- Jacqui Jepson, The Pink Wand Cleaning Services Ltd.
- Jody Keller, Carstairs and Didsbury Pharmasave
- Danielle Kot, Simply for Life
- Kari Lines, Budget Blinds of Airdrie
- Kelly Paisley, The I.T. Company
- Robyn Pearson, A Friend Indeed
- Lorelei Talbot, Astoria Asset Management
- Sid Van der Meer, retired (former owner Northwest Equipment Ltd)

The Launch Event was held February 28 at Airdrie's Hampton Inn & Suites. The 2017 participants, mentors and sponsors were introduced. While mentors and entrepreneurs met in a speed networking activity, guests had the chance to hear from past SMARTstart participants. Beckie Lower, owner of BL Fitness Coaching, and Pat Denis of Omega Fire Protection completed the program in 2016 and shared their stories at the event.

SMARTstart was launched in 2013 by the Airdrie Business Resource Partnership. It is an award-winning program delivered by Airdrie Chamber of Commerce, City of Airdrie Economic Development, and Community Futures Centre West.

The program is made possible with support from the following local sponsors:

- Title Sponsors: Astoria Asset Management and BMO Bank of Montreal Kingsview Market
- Entrepreneur Sponsors: Airdrie Women in Business Association, Sid Van der Meer and The Pink Wand Cleaning Services Ltd
- Friend Sponsors: Kerry Oswald, Edward Jones – Derek Lalonde
- Media sponsors: Air 106.1FM, airdrielife, Airdrie Echo, and Here's the Scoop.

To learn more, visit www.smartstartbusiness.ca or e-mail info@smartstartbusiness.ca.

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