



***For Immediate Release***

March 6, 2018

## **SMARTstart Launches 2018 Program**

AIRDRIE, ALBERTA – The 2018 SMARTstart entrepreneurial training program officially launched last week with an enthusiastic and dynamic group of local entrepreneurs and mentors.

“We are thrilled to launch the fifth year of our program,” says Marie Lauer, SMARTstart Organizing Committee Member and Executive Director of the Airdrie Chamber of Commerce. “Once again, we have a diverse, interesting and engaging group of entrepreneurs enrolled in SMARTstart. We’re excited to help them move their businesses forward with training, business planning and mentorship.”

Launched in 2014, SMARTstart has assisted close to 70 local entrepreneurs with their new business or business idea. As a result, 11 new businesses have opened and a further 30% of participants had expanded their business operations by the end of the program.

Twenty-four entrepreneurs, representing 19 businesses, have been accepted into this year’s program.

**Entrepreneurs with an idea:**

- 948 Brewing Company Ltd., David Schroter and Kyle Wudrich
- Alternative Health Options Cooperative, Debbie Gibbs
- Chiropractic Clinic, Dr. Laurence Dion
- Homegrown House and Pantry Inc., Lindsey Cybulskie
- Making Life Digital, Angela Kosolofski and Daniel Kosolofski
- Ookaboddom Escape Game, Sander Henriksen and Nick Bellemore
- Stage It Yourself Décor Rentals, Lori Goodrich and Tara MacDonald
- Valentia (Oncology and hair loss boutique), Rachael White
- Tea house and healing rooms, Kim Shaffer

**New business owners (in operation less than 3 years):**

- Airdrie Acupuncture, Dr. Jonna McQuade and Dr. Katie Li-Broussard
- Custom Gemini, Sarah Courneya
- Derivation Wellness, Dean Constantini
- Dynamic Laser Industries, Braeden Turnbull
- Kalesa De Manila, Corazon Chivinda
- Life of Wellness, Melanie Taylor
- Noodlebox, Zakk Trigg
- NuVida Immigration Services Canada, Jenica Lang
- Tarin Resource Services, Kim Koons
- Willow 'n Wool, Lorianne Pauls

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.

Mentors are volunteers from the Airdrie business community. The 20 local business leaders volunteering in 2018 are:

- Gary Armstrong, Empowered Employee Education
- Joan Bell, Retired (Airdrie Yoga Studio)
- Jennifer Benner, Benner Database Designs
- Jacqueline Boyd, Access Chiropractic and Wellness
- Michelle Carre, MichelleCarre.com and The Carre Group
- Danielle Coulter, Tutor Doctor
- Ron Farrell, Beneficial Insurance Solutions
- Jody Funk, JF Management
- Natalie Gibson, InnoVisions and Associates
- Phil Gilkes, PG2 - FocalPoint Business Coaching
- Tracy Goodbrand, Irricana Kountry Kennel
- Jacqui Jepson, The Pink Wand Cleaning Services Ltd.
- Stacey Lauer, CTR Refrigeration
- Kari Lines, Budget Blinds
- Adam Morand, Cantest Solutions Inc
- Kelly Paisley, The I.T. Company Ltd.
- Robyn Pearson, A Friend Indeed
- Sid Van der Meer, Retired (Northwest Equipment)
- Wendy Bates-Wiebe, The Hair Lounge
- Jo-Anne Yau, DD West LLP

The Launch Event was held March 1 at Airdrie's Hampton Inn & Suites where the 2018 participants, mentors and sponsors were introduced. A "speed connecting" session was held to provide the opportunity for program mentors and entrepreneurs to meet.

SMARTstart 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 sponsors:

- Seminar Sponsors: BDC, MNP
- Entrepreneur Sponsors: Airdrie Women in Business Association, McKee Homes, Sid Van der Meer
- Friend Sponsors: Ecole Des Petis Amis, Edward Jones, Healthy Meals Made Easy, Kerry Oswald
- Media sponsors: Air 106.1FM, airdrielife, Airdrie Echo, Here's the Scoop, Spruce & Sparrow

To learn more, visit [www.smartstartbusiness.ca](http://www.smartstartbusiness.ca).

*Photos submitted: Credit to Spruce & Sparrow*

*Photo 1 – Mentor Ron Farrell and entrepreneur David Schroter meeting at the speed connecting session*

*Photo 2 – Program mentor Jennifer Benner of Benner Database Designs MC'd the March 1 Launch Event*

-30-

#### **Contacts:**

Jodie Eckert, SMARTstart Committee  
Community Futures Centre West  
Phone: 403.464.5734  
E-mail: [jeckert@albertacf.com](mailto:jeckert@albertacf.com)

Sara Chamberlain, SMARTstart Committee  
City of Airdrie Economic Development  
Phone: 403.948.8800 x 8455  
E-mail: [sara.chamberlain@airdrie.ca](mailto:sara.chamberlain@airdrie.ca)