



For Immediate Release

November 2, 2018

SMARTstart Program Celebrates 2018 Entrepreneurs

AIRDRIE, ALBERTA – Twenty up-and-coming local entrepreneurs representing 16 businesses were celebrated on Thursday, November 1 at the 2018 SMARTstart Program Celebration event in Airdrie.

The entrepreneurs spent the last eight months refining their idea for a new business or working to strengthen their existing business through the made-in-Airdrie SMARTstart entrepreneurial training program.

"This is the fifth year the program has been offered in Airdrie and we never tire of seeing the amazing progress made by our entrepreneurs over the course of eight months," says Sara Chamberlain, SMARTstart Organizing Committee Member. "The Celebration Event showcases their achievements, be it launching a new business, putting the finishing touches on a business plan or increasing their confidence. Everyone gets something different from SMARTstart and that's what makes the program so special."

The 2018 participants recognized at the event were:

- David Schroter and Kyle Wudrich, 948 Brewing Company Ltd.
- Debbie Gibbs, Healing market (idea)
- Dr. Laurence Dion, Chiropractic clinic (idea)
- Lindsey Cybulskie, Homegrown House and Pantry Inc.
- Angela Kosolofski and Daniel Kosolofski, Making Life Digital (idea)
- Sander Henriksen and Nick Bellemore, Ookabottom Adventure Games (idea)
- Rachael White, Valentia oncology and hair loss boutique (idea)
- Kim Shaffer, Kindred Spirits Healing & Wellness
- Dr. Katie Li-Broussard and Dr. Jonna McQuade, Airdrie Acupuncture
- Sarah Courneya, Custom Gemini
- Dean Constantini, Derivation Wellness
- Braeden Turnbull, Dynamic Laser Industries
- Melanie Taylor, Life of Wellness
- Zakk Trigg, Noodlebox
- Kim Koons, Tarin Resource Services,
- Lorianne Pauls, Willow 'n Wool

SMARTstart provided the participants with online business skills training, 11 in-person workshops delivered by Airdrie business experts, and a local mentor. Working with their mentor, each participant completed a business, strategic or feasibility plan.

"This program is fueled by passion and commitment to supporting others to be successful," said 2018 program participant Melanie Taylor, owner of Life of Wellness, in her speech at the event. "I learned so much about business planning, marketing, and the business of business that I will always put into practice."

The event was also an opportunity to celebrate 20 local businesspeople who volunteer their time to be SMARTstart mentors. Five mentors were honoured for volunteering for five years, since the program's inception in 2014.

- Gary Armstrong, Empowered Employee Education
- Jennifer Benner, Benner Database Designs
- Jacqui Jepson, The Pink Wand Cleaning Services
- Joan Traub, retired (formerly Airdrie Yoga & Fitness)
- Sid Van der Meer, retired (formerly Northwest Equipment Ltd.)

SMARTstart

setting new businesses up for success

SMARTstart was launched in 2014 and is an award-winning program delivered by Airdrie Chamber of Commerce, City of Airdrie Economic Development and Community Futures Centre West. SMARTstart has now provided training to 89 entrepreneurs and has helped a dozen new businesses open.

The program is made possible with support from local sponsors:

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

Applications for the 2019 program are open until December 12, 2018. Entrepreneurs with an idea or new businesses (in operation for less than three years) are invited to learn more at information sessions on November 21 or December 6 at 7 p.m. at the Airdrie Chamber of Commerce, #102, 150 Edwards Way NW.

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



The 2018 SMARTstart participants. Back (from left): Sarah Courneya, Zakk Trigg, Kim Koons, Nick Bellmore, Braeden Turnbull, Daniel Kosolofski, Kyle Wudrich, Jonna McQuade, Sander Henriksen and David Schroter. Front (from left): Katie Li-Broussard, Laurence Dion, Melanie Taylor, Lindsey Cybulskie, Kim Shaffer, Lorianne Pauls and Debbie Gibbs. Missing from photo: Angela Kosolofski and Rachael White.

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