



For Immediate Release

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SMARTstart Launches 2022 Program

AIRDRIE, ALBERTA –The 2022 SMARTstart entrepreneurial training program officially launched on Wednesday night with an enthusiastic and dynamic group of local entrepreneurs and mentors.

“The launch is such an exciting part of the program,” says Jessica Williamson, SMARTstart Entrepreneur Coordinator and Organizing Committee Member. “It was the first opportunity for the mentors to meet this new group of entrepreneurs and everyone was excited to connect and learn about each other. We’re very excited to see where they will be in eight months when they complete the program.”

Launched in 2014, SMARTstart has assisted 125 local entrepreneurs with their new business or business ideas. As a result, 23 new businesses have opened their doors and 34 businesses have expanded their operations or services.

Ten entrepreneurs, representing nine businesses, have been accepted into this year’s program.

Entrepreneurs with an idea:

- Chelsea Dunlop, Ecology of Ease
- Martin Linlove, Emotional Intelligence Coaching & Training
- Emalyn Plazo, Cheng’s Bubbler
- London Richard, Bella & Bourbon
- Becky Urban, Warehouse Spin & Barre

New business owners (in operation less than three years):

- Jessica Abramyk, Jesa Travel
- Jonelle Beaulieu, Bright Little Minds
- Jay Raymundo, NRG Fitness Inc.
- Courtney & Jaret Steranko, Bonfire Shades

Over the course of eight months, the entrepreneurs will complete the *100 Essential Business Skills* online training from GoForth Institute, participate in 11 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 11 local business leaders volunteering in 2022 are:

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| • Gary Armstrong, Empowered Employee Education | • Tracy Goodbrand, Irricana Kountry Kennel |
| • Dr. Melanie Beingessner, Blessingways Family Wellness | • Heather Harke, Shoplift Deals Limited |
| • Jennifer Benner, Benner Database Designs | • Kari Lines, Budget Blinds of Airdrie |
| • Michelle Carre, LochSmith Consulting | • Tara Pickford, Ambition Performing Arts |
| • Ankur Goklaney, La Capitale Financial Security | • Joan Traub, former owner of Airdrie Yoga Studio |
| | • Jo-Anne Yau, Robertson LLP |

“SMARTstart mentors tell us they get just as much from the program as the entrepreneurs,” says Jodie Eckert, SMARTstart Mentor Coordinator and Organizing Committee Member. “It ignites their creative enthusiasm and they reflect on and appreciate the support they received when first starting their own businesses. The mentors welcome the chance to pay it forward.”

The Launch Event was held on March 2 at Woodside Golf Course where the 2022 participants and mentors 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 the 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
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- Entrepreneur Sponsors: Beckie Ryan, Blessingways Family Wellness, NWEL Holdings Ltd. (Sid Van der Meer)
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To learn more, visit www.smarstartairdrie.ca. Applications to the program are accepted in the Fall of each year. Be in the know about applications for the 2023 program by adding your name and email address to our [mailing list](#).

Photo 1 – Mentor Gary Armstrong ‘speed connecting’ with the owners of Bonfire Shades

Photo 2 – SMARTstart launch event at Woodside Golf Course

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Contacts:

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

Jessica Williamson, SMARTstart Committee
City of Airdrie Economic Development
Phone: 403.948.8800 x 8746
E-mail: jessica.williamson@airdrie.ca