

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent
Community Development
Economic Development Services
Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jamie Rainbird, Manager, Economic Development Services
Date: November 3, 2020
Subject: Starter Company Plus Program – Successful Applicants

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

The Starter Company Plus Program, fully-funded by the Province of Ontario, is an initiative that provides training and mentorship geared towards assisting those entrepreneurs in need of business knowledge and support as well as providing the opportunity to apply for a business grant of up to \$5,000.

Upon completion of mandatory training via webinar, applicants that pursue the \$5,000 financial grant are required to submit a viable, sales-ready business plan and engage in follow up consultations for a minimum of three months with Chatham-Kent Small Business Centre Business Consultants. This is a competitive process and a limited number of grants are awarded after each training session held twice yearly. Applicants must be able to contribute cash or in-kind of at least 25% of the grant amount.

Eligibility

- 18 years of age or older at the time of application
- Proposing a new company, expansion of an existing company or buying a business in Ontario
- Not attending school full-time or not returning to school
- Be a resident of Ontario
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Have not previously participated in the Starter Company Plus Program
- Not enrolled in other provincially employment or self-employment related programs that include or do not include financial assistance

- Not currently enrolled concurrently in any self-employment or entrepreneurship training/financing programs offered by government funded organizations (some exceptions may apply due to COVID-19)

Business or Proposed Business must:

- Be an independent, for-profit business venture based in Chatham-Kent
- Not be a business that relies on commissioned sales (MLM)
- Be a legal business in Ontario
- Not be a franchise
- Operated at arms-length from family business ventures
- Operate full-time as defined in the business plan
- Have a Master Business License or Articles of Incorporation, or register the business prior to launch
- Maintain a business banking account
- Follow all government rules and regulations and applicable by-laws for the operation of the business
- Demonstrate a viable and sales-ready business plan at the time of funding

Comments

On July 20-24, 2020, a five-day training webinar took place with interested eligible entrepreneurs who were provided a wealth of business advice and knowledge. After the training was completed, those entrepreneurs interested in pursuing the financial grant, completed and submitted their viable business plan to the Small Business Centre. Based on a scoring matrix, the following nine businesses were awarded grants of \$5,000 each:

La Cabello Salon & Colour Bar

Located in Chatham, La Cabello Salon & Colour Bar is a full-service hair salon offering up-to-date and current hairstyles with expertise in precision cutting techniques.

“The Starter Company Plus program is a fantastic program for anyone venturing into a small business endeavour. It was extremely informative and helpful as far as marketing ideas, financial planning, creating goals and plans/ideas for future advancements in business. As a new business owner of La Cabello Salon & Colour Bar, the help I received financially assisted me in obtaining a complete retail line of high-end salon products, which has helped to boost my retail sales greatly.

Thank you Starter Company Plus!

Beth Gilhuly, Owner, La Cabello Salon & Colour Bar

PERUCAN Enterprises, Inc.

PERUCAN Enterprises has two divisions: Real Estate and Imports. PERUCAN's Real Estate division buys and sells properties and offers short-term rentals. The Import division, imports quality Peruvian accessories, cotton/alpaca products and jewelry.

"The "Starter Company Plus Program" was a great learning experience. It has been very important during the COVID-19 situation. I was able to get all the answers to my questions from a professional consultant. I learned special techniques and marketing strategies that I can use during these difficult times. The company has improved the social media and online tools. We are building the web site that will include E-Commerce. Our business model needed to be changed not only to survive but also to grow.

I am truly thankful for the support that I have been receiving. I feel very motivated to continue working on the online and storefront in downtown Chatham."

Cecilia Mackey, Owner, PERUCAN Enterprises

Five-Eau, Erieau

Five-Eau is a family business that get to share the love of the water, the Great Lakes and a special love of Erieau by selling Erieau logoed apparel. This logo includes sweatshirts, hoodies, beanies, paddleboards and t-shirts.

"Coming from a formal education background focused on teaching and teacher education rather than business, I found the opportunity to access the team at CK Business Development and the chance to gain some foundational knowledge through participation in the Starter Company Plus program incredibly valuable.

The enthusiasm and support of the team paired with the expertise of the course instructor and the shared experiences of others participating in the course, had a significant impact on our desire to push our development goals for Five-Eau forward and our subsequent success in meeting and exceeding many of those goals.

Being awarded the grant has allowed us to focus on some important details of our advertising and operations that might otherwise have taken much longer to develop. We are continually grateful for the opportunities opening up to us as we grow as a company and brand in Chatham-Kent."

Lucy Rizzetto, Owner, Five-Eau

Simple Pleasures by Colleen

Simple Pleasures by Colleen is a spa related setting offering manicures and pedicures as well as body waxing and spa treatments as well as selling retail products with a spa touch such as candles, bath bombs, body salts, essential oils, body lotions, soaps and body scrubs.

“Thanks to the support of the Starter Company Plus Program and all the information you receive, I was able to make a dream of mine come true and open my own spa “Simple Pleasures”. I’m so fortunate to receive the funds from this program to help with start-up cost and tools. This dream wouldn’t have been possible without this amazing program. Thank you Starter Company Plus.”

Colleen Antunes, Sole Proprietor, Simple Pleasures by Colleen

Myrtle Flower Shop

The Myrtle Flower Market is a pop-up flower shop, operating out of a home studio in Ridgetown. Fresh spiral bouquets, European-style and seasonal arrangements are available for purchase daily at The Glasshouse Nursery in Chatham. Stylish and long-lasting flowers can be an affordable addition to any space, and Liz at the Myrtle Flower Market works hard to provide them.

“My name is Liz Nauta, and I am the owner and designer at The Myrtle Flower Market. This past summer I participated in the Starter Company Plus program run by the Chatham-Kent Small Business Centre. I went into this program with a partially completed business plan and a great hope that participation in the program would help me to complete it. It turns out that joining Starter Company Plus thoroughly helped with completion of the business plan, but it also offered so much more. By the end of the week, I had received a crash course in Business Planning & Vision, Marketing, Cash Flow, Accounting and Publicity.

An incredible amount of information was provided in simple and effective webinar sessions. I was initially unsure whether the webinar platform would suit me, but that too was an easy adjustment. The subsequent grant money has allowed me to invest in the future of my business including website build, logo development and purchasing various technologies for improved photography of my work. Thank you to the Chatham-Kent Small Business Centre for this amazing opportunity.”

Elizabeth Nauta, Owner, Myrtle Flower Shop

Sixty One

Sixty One offers a lifestyle brand offering customers men’s, ladies and children’s clothing, home goods and gifts. Considered a lifestyle because of the embodiment of customer’s values, opinions and style, Sixty One supports local artisans and carry their unique products in the store.

"The Starter Company Plus has helped us review our business plan and review our projections in line with where we'd like to move forward. This was helpful to us as we grew so fast, it was a great way to take a step back and implement the proper tactics. The grant has allotted us to increase our marketing budget. Resulting in an increase of followers, customers and sales.

Overall, we're so thankful to have the guidance of the Chatham Kent Municipality and programs like the Starter Company Plus to help build and grow our business."

Sydney Shaw, Owner

Petley Laundry & Vending, Blenheim

Located in Blenheim, Petley Laundry & Vending is a full-service coin-operated laundromat offering additional laundry services onsite and vending. Owned by Andrew Petley with over 30 years of experience in different areas of business, Petley Laundry & Vending is a family-oriented business.

Common Ground Acoustic Café, Ridgetown

Owned by Amber Nussey, Common Ground Acoustic Café regularly hosts live music performances as well as offering hot/cold beverages, and breakfast and lunch menu items. Common Ground Acoustic Café also opens their stage as a platform for artists to gain experience or try something new.

Freedom Collective

Marrying the best parts of Montessori and outdoor education, Freedom Collective is an outside the box space for inspired learning located on 78 acres of naturalized farmland. Freedom Collective is a private school for children aged 4-14 offering education through wide-open spaces and the focus on being outdoors and one with nature.

Consultation

No other departments were consulted in the preparation of this information report.

Financial Implications

All grant and training costs associated with this program are covered by funding through the Province of Ontario. Economic Development Services' staff provide mentoring, business plan and business advice assistance to the small business entrepreneurs through their normal job duties.

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Attachments: None

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