

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, January 25, 2016

**\$75,000 IN STARTER COMPANY GRANTS PRESENTED TO 15 LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS
BY THE WINDSOR-ESSEX SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE IN 2015**

Windsor-Essex, Ontario Canada – Monday, January 25, 2016 – In 2015, the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre (SBC) approved **15 Starter Company Program grants totaling \$75,000** to assist youth who were starting a business in the Windsor-Essex region. The Starter Company Program provides mentoring, training and seed capital to youth (15-29) interested in starting, growing or buying a small business. Eligible applicants under 30 years of age receive structured training, a \$5,000 grant, and on-going support from the SBC and paired with a business mentor from the region for a minimum of six months for continued support. The Starter Company Program continues into 2016.

In 2014, the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre became the **Regional Grant Administrator of the Starter Company Program**. In collaboration with the Province of Ontario the Small Business Centre assumed responsibility for establishing and governing the operations of the Starter Company Program, to include: the establishment of a Grant Review Committee, management, oversight and disbursement of all Starter Company submissions and allocation of micro-grants across the wider Southwestern Ontario region encompassing Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia, London, St. Thomas, Woodstock and Huron County.

Shelby Pellow, Owner of Shelby's Sweet Shop said, "I was lucky enough to take part in the Starter Program that was instrumental in helping me grow as a small business owner. They (SBC) aided me in creating my business plan and understanding what I needed in order to accomplish my goals as an entrepreneur. They were so easy to reach whenever I had questions, and quick to help me solve the problems that so many small business owners face when they start out. It's safe to say they were a huge part of helping my business become more successful, and I'm so grateful for the experience!"

Rakesh Naidu, CEO (Interim) of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation stated, "There is such diversity in the types of businesses these young entrepreneurs started with everything from a fitness facilities, a gourmet bakery, beauty spa, manufacturer of drones, personnel agency and for those that like solving puzzles and clues a trendy entertainment business. The investment we make in our young people with the programs delivered by our Small Business Centre like Starter Company will go a long way in helping to retain youth and grow the small business sector in our region."

The Small Business Centre operates as a department of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Belonging to a network of offices that serve Ontario's small business community, the Small Business Centre is your local source for small business support services. **More: windsorsexsmallbusiness.com**

Media interviews can be arranged

with Starter Company recipients by contacting:

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