



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Starter Company growing youth entrepreneurship in northern Ontario

Timmins, ON: The Business Enterprise Centre is proud host the second-annual Building Momentum networking event on March 23rd, 2016 to support and recognize the success of the young entrepreneurs from the Starter Company Program.

The success was further recognized by the recent announcement of Timmins Chamber of Commerce's 2016 Nova Business Excellence Award finalists. Three previous Starter Company participants were nominated - Dr. Karine A. Briand, owner of Family Eye Care, Kathleen Montigny and Julie Sheldon, owners of Jump City, and Christine Fortier, owner of Natural Health Solutions. Starter Company encouraged the entrepreneurs behind these companies: the community responded by encouraging and supporting the businesses.

Dr. Karine A. Briand, owner of Family Eye Care, says, "The Starter Company program was a great asset in helping me write my business plan. By purchasing an existing business I had all the information needed to write my business plan. Starter Company helped me to organize the information. The program also helped me to further understand my purchase along with set a clear vision for my goals and expectations as a business owner. Their help was truly valuable."

The Building Momentum networking event will provide an opportunity to wrap-up the past year of entrepreneurship programming, encouraging networking among young entrepreneurs, community partners, and business mentors while recognizing the value of youth entrepreneurship to the region. The event also provides a platform to launch the next year of programming, thanks to funding secured through the Government of Ontario.

Youth entrepreneurship is a critical part of developing vibrant communities and robust economies. In the past year, 48 young entrepreneurs across northeastern Ontario participated in the Starter Company program which provided training, mentoring and the tools necessary to develop their business ideas. This is a 50% increase over the previous year, which saw 24 individuals participate in the inaugural year of the program. In the second year of the program, seven new businesses opened, one business expanded, and nine jobs were created. More businesses are expected to open in the upcoming months. The Starter Company program also offers participants the opportunity to apply for a micro-grant to assist with business costs. In the second year of the program, a total of \$39,700 was awarded to eight grant recipients. To date, a total of \$59,700 has been awarded to 12 grant recipients.

"The Starter Company program encourages young entrepreneurs to make their dreams a reality, creating economic benefits and improving quality of life in our local communities. The Building Momentum event is a wonderful opportunity for these individuals to network and develop their own entrepreneurial community," says Fred Gibbons, Chairperson of the Timmins Economic Development Corporation. "We are so proud of the past participants who have moved on to become finalists of the 2016 Nova Awards and pleased that The Business Enterprise Centre will be continuing to host this program and support young entrepreneurs in our region."



About The Business Enterprise Centre and Starter Company

Starter Company is a free program that provides young entrepreneurs with resources and support to help them start, expand, or launch their business. The program is hosted by The Business Enterprise Centre and funded by the Ontario government as part of the Youth Jobs Strategy.

The Business Enterprise Centre provides free assistance to start-up and existing small and medium enterprises during any stage of the business cycle. It serves a territory which extends along the Highway 11 corridor and includes all communities from Hornepayne to Iroquois Falls, Timmins, and communities along the James Bay Coast. The Business Enterprise Centre is a member of the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE) and operates in partnership with the Timmins Economic Development Corporation and the province of Ontario.

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