

InnovateHER Business Challenge Statement of Support

December 3, 2015

It is with great pleasure that the Bucknell University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) nominates **Mary Tiffin, CEO and Founder of Mangata LLC**, and inventor of [RunLites](#) for the national InnovateHER Business Challenge.

In November, regional media outlets and economic development partners joined the SBDC in announcing the InnovateHER challenge throughout central Pennsylvania. From a highly competitive pool of applicants, three finalists advanced to a review by an external panel. Judges included Tea Jay Aikey, Executive & Finance Assistant for the Central Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce; Jessica Brazier, Vice President of M&T Bank; and Renee Gerringer, Director of Programs & Development with the Greater Susquehanna Chamber of Commerce. The program leader for the local challenge was Maureen Hauck, Assistant Director of Business Consulting, recently named 2015 State Star of the Pennsylvania SBDCs. Ms. Hauck also coordinated and provided consulting services to each of the entrepreneurs and business owners participating in the challenge.

Entrepreneurs were called upon to submit business plans and offer presentations demonstrating how their business or product 1. Impacts **the lives of women and families**, 2. Has **potential for commercialization**, and 3. Fills a **need in the marketplace**. The SBDC and our judges laud Mary and her RunLites product as meeting each of these criteria to a very high degree:

1. The lighted RunLites gloves impact the lives of women and families by providing an opportunity for women and families to sustain and improve their health and wellness outside of daylight hours; as well as making daily household and around-the-yard tasks easier and safer to accomplish.
2. As described in the Business Plan (attached) for Mangata LLC, RunLites have excellent potential for commercialization through a world-class team of advisors, a rigorous product development process, a strong understanding of marketing, sales, and distribution channels, and a well-informed financial analysis featuring a track record of securing outside investment.
3. In primary market research such as surveys, focus groups, and consumer interviews conducted at targeted industry trade shows, Mary and her team have gauged the market acceptance of RunLites to be extremely high. She is also pursuing and has attained protection for her intellectual property. Preliminary indications are that she

As her attached business plan and the media mentions therein describe, Mary has overcome great adversity: as a widowed mother of three boys and a pioneer of numerous innovative programs for a nationally recognized health system; Mary knows very well the limits of time in a day. Knowing that finding time for one's own health in a busy work and family schedule can be challenging, she designed and patented a sleek glove with built-in high-powered LED lights that are perfect for runners, cyclists, and other athletes who want to exercise after the sun goes down... or before it comes up. She has been promoting Runlites in national publications and regional venues such as the Comcast Health and Fitness Expo at the recent Philadelphia Marathon.

In an announcement of Mary as the winner, Pennsylvania Representative Lynda Schlegel Culver stated that "Mary's innovative concept and development of RunLites is a story of great achievement that will hopefully motivate other aspiring women in our region to reach for their goals and succeed. I wish her the best as she moves forward to the next round of the competition". Culver's record of support for small business is a distinguished one: in 2012 she was recognized by the Bucknell SBDC with the Charles H. Coder Entrepreneurial Leadership Award, and in 2015 she was the recipient of the Adam Smith Distinguished Leadership Award from Economics PA. In partnering with Representative Culver, Chambers of Commerce, and M&T Bank; the SBDC also helped to shine a light on several high-achieving woman-owned businesses in our region.

The impact that these entrepreneurs, products, and services have on the lives of women and families is highly positive; and Mary's story of invention, determination, and success is an inspiring one. In serving her as a client over a period of many years and several ventures, we have come to admire her persistence, optimism, and the generosity of her spirit; and are continually impressed with the developments and advancements she is able to accomplish.

In summary, we are exceptional pleased and proud that the result of this highly competitive process was the selection of Mary Tiffin as our local winner and national InnovateHER nominee. I invite anyone with interest in or questions about RunLites or this nomination to contact me at steven.stumbris@bucknell.edu or 570-577-1249 at any time!

Sincerely,



Steven Stumbris
Director
Bucknell University Small Business Development Center

