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ANNUAL

40

2023
Niagara

UNDER FORTY BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

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ABOUT

BUSINESS MEDIA GROUP



Established in 2003, The Business Link has transformed into becoming a leading expert within the publication landscape and business development.

During these past 20 years we faced our share of challenges. Our first big challenge, after much research was our decision to move our print publication online. It presented its own learning curve, but allowed us to reach a larger audience.

Then the infamous 2020 pandemic lockdown brought challenges many of us have never witnessed. It forced us to adapt and persevere, making decisions about our services. But there was gleamer of hope during this time, a new unforeseen technology was emerging, one that shows promise to change how we interact and engage with each other.

Business Link Media Group has pioneered in navigating the ever-evolving landscape of modern marketing. Elevating our reach, influence, and effectiveness of business marketing, outreach, and representation across traditional and cutting-edge Web 3.0 platforms. Our mission is to empower businesses through this new evolution of advertising and marketing. As devoted community builders, we have fostered deep connections in the Niagara Region and are currently expanding our digital presence to create new and exciting opportunities. While serving a global community, we are dedicated to collaborating with and giving back to our cherished home region of Niagara, Canada.

An exceptional example of our collaborative efforts is the celebrated '**40 Under Forty Business Achievement Awards**', an annual event that proudly marks its *20th year* in 2023. An event hightlighting young talent in Niagara.

Through our diverse media platforms, which encompass digital publications, event marketing, virtual landscapes, and much more, we have facilitated meaningful connections and provided comprehensive solutions to amplify our clients' message and impact.

At Business Link Media Group, we are driven by our commitment to equip our clients with the essential resources, strategic messaging, and innovative solutions to not only reach their target audience but to make a significant and lasting impression.

We hope you join us as we shape the future of business in an increasingly interconnected world.





2023 40 Under Forty WINNERS!



Adam Ahlstedt Ahlstedt Homes Ltd	Natasha Bell Black Owned 905	Amanda Bolger SoulScape Services	Jess Boulay Giant Shoe Creative Agency
Greg Brunet Niagara Outdoor	Meghan Chayka Stathletes	Katie Clarkson R2G Construction Inc	Kaitlyn Daw Kaitlyn Daw Photography
Jeremy Delacruz CAA Niagara	Gina Delle Rose-Ash Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority	Jesse D'Hulster SS Brand It and DH Media	Katherine Dodge St. Catharines Downtown Association
Jessica Elia Jessica Elia DC	Steven Emslie Beatties Business Products	Crystal Fehlow From the Art Studio	Kelly Frechette Board Boss Drywall Inc.
Jaclyn McPherson Fruci Lemon Collective Marketing Inc.	Ashley Gauthier Acro Academy	Arienne Good YWCA Niagara Region	Michelle Grocholsky Empowered EDI
Olenka Lyle ClaraDerma	Dr. Sarah Hopkins BodyLab Recovery Science	Grace Howes St. Catharines Public Library	Dr. Stephanie Marie Kafie Totally Yours Family Medicine
Sarah Kaufman Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum	Paloma Lara Paz Bakery	Christina Le Rose Music Studio of Dr. Christina Le Rose	Kattawee Henry Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Consultant and Lecturer
Julie Mannell Julie Mannell Author	Matthew Melnyk Brock University	Julie Mercier Lemon Collective Marketing Inc.	Sarah Milan-Biancaniello SARAH'S SOAPS
Nate Moore GorillaCrete Inc.	Andrew Muehlenbeck Maverik Electrical Construction & Maintenance Inc.	Nidhi Punyarthi City of Niagara Falls	Carlos Robayo FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre
Katrina Steeves Langley Tide & Vine	David Thompson PlanET Biogas Solutions	Suzanne Veenstra Niagara Community Foundation	Michael Warchala City of Niagara Falls

CONGRATULATIONS

YOU DESERVE IT

Each recipient of the **40 Under Forty Business Achievement Award** is a distinguished individual under the age of 40 who consistently demonstrates excellence in the business realm while actively contributing to their respective communities. Business Link Media Group extends its heartfelt congratulations to the 40 distinguished business professionals being honored tonight.

These awards serve as a tribute to the notable obstacles you have overcome and the significant progress you consistently make in advancing the Niagara Region. We extend our sincere gratitude to all those who took the initiative to nominate these exceptional individuals. Without your efforts, these deserving individuals may not have garnered the recognition they rightly deserve.

**ALL THE BEST ON
YOUR CONTINUING EFFORTS!**

40 UNDER FORTY GALA

ITINERARY

RECEPTION

5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

WELCOME, REFLECTION, & DINNER

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

AWARDS & PRESENTATIONS

8:30 PM - 10:00 PM

MASTERS OF CEREMONIES



**Jessica
Potts**

Jessica Potts (Class of 2006 Alumna) is known for getting people on the same page to get things done (while having fun!). She is on a mission to help people everywhere live their best day ever at work. As an expert in workplace and community engagement, Jessica helps leaders build their dream teams through strategic planning, soft skills training, 1:1 coaching, and keynote/conference speaking.

**Zach
Dadson**

Zach Dadson (Class of 2018 Alumnus) works in Government Relations at Brock University. Outside of his professional career, Zach is the Chair of Strive Niagara, a childcare not-for-profit, and is an active member of Fitzgerald Neighbours, a midtown St. Catharines neighbourhood association, where he lives with his partner Melissa and young son Henry.



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Krystal Riddell
Owner / Funeral Director



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Adam Ahlstedt



Adam founded Ahlstedt Homes Ltd in 20-, and has been building custom homes and doing renovations in Niagara ever since. Part of the winning formula for the business is utilizing Niagara's great resources for both materials and trades, keeping the jobs right here and not outsourcing to larger outfits from out of the area. His attention to detail insures both the highest level of quality and an unrivalled level of customer service, and the final products and customer reviews are a clear reflection of that.

Company:
Ahlstedt Homes Ltd.

Amanda Bolger



Amanda is a heart centered entrepreneur with a mission to help people find their passion, meaning and purpose. She's the founder and clinical director of SoulScape Services Psychotherapy and Wellness Hub. They are a team of practitioners that are dedicated to depth-oriented psychotherapy, which aims to empower and enlighten people to create positive change and growth. She privileges a holistic approach to mental health and wellness and is always looking to incorporate a mind-body-spirit approach to the services that they offer, as well as the work that she does as a clinical supervisor and clinic owner.

Company:
SoulScape Services

Natasha Bell



Natasha Bell was Born and raised in St.Catharines. Natasha is an underground railroad freedom seeker descendant. She is a co-founder of Matter of Black a non-profit organization to uplift black voices in our community, focusing on bringing emancipation day celebrations back to the Niagara Region. Natasha is the founding Executive Director of Black Owned 905 which was founded in 2020. Black Owned 905 aims to highlight, promote and support black owned businesses within the Niagara Region, Black Owned 905 hosts many different BIPOC vendor markets throughout the community. Natasha enjoys being a vessel in her community and strives to make a difference.

Company:
Black Owned 905

Jess Boulay



Jess Boulay is a prominent marketing and design professional in Niagara with over 15 years of experience. As a partner of Giant Shoe Creative Agency and in the product development industry, she has led numerous successful projects, from branding to software integration. Her outstanding reputation and passion for philanthropy have led her to serve as the Lead of The Shoebox Project - Niagara Chapter, where she has delivered over 5,000 gifts to women in Niagara impacted by homelessness. Jess also serves as the Assistant Director for the 101 Deweguns...a Living Hearts Legacy, a project focused on truth and reconciliation through the arts.

Company:
Giant Shoe Creative Agency Ltd.



Greg Brunet



Greg co-founded Niagara Outdoor with his business partner Trevor Twardawa in 2007. A passion to design and build full scale outdoor living projects has fueled the growth to what is now a team of over 20. Recently recognized with the 2023 Casey Van Meris Award from Landscape Ontario for Innovation and Execution in Landscape Design, Greg continues to build Niagara Outdoor centered around their core values. With community being one of those, Greg is actively involved in giving back in the Town of Lincoln and numerous initiatives across the region, he enjoys being able to help make Niagara a better place.

Company:
Niagara Outdoor Landscaping Inc.

Katie Clarkson



Katie Clarkson has been co-owner of R2G Construction Inc. with her partner Jimmy Jackson since 2019. Since this date, they have also developed two sister companies, R2G Windows and Doors, and R2G Forming Services. Katie is a strong community advocate, an active volunteer, and an eager entrepreneur. When Katie takes off her steel toes, she spends her time organizing events, teaching dance, socializing with friends, lifting weights, learning new instruments, and creating new cocktails.

Company:
R2G Construction Inc.

Meghan Chayka



Meghan is the CEO and Co-Founder of Stathletes, a leading hockey data and analytics company in over 22 leagues worldwide. She's also a Data Scientist in Residence at the Rotman School of Management. She volunteers on three universities for data programs and for student conferences and mentoring, especially in the women in tech space. She was featured on the insert cover of the Hockey News' Top 100 of power and influence. Meghan and Stathletes have also been awarded Top Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Top 40 under 40 in hockey for the Athletic. She is on the board of advisors of US Integrity in the sports betting space.

Company:
Stathletes

Kaitlyn Daw



Kaitlyn is a storyteller. In her day job, she works at Brock University as the alumni communications officer, where she supports the execution and promotion of alumni programming for over 115,000 members of the alumni community. Kaitlyn not only weaves stories with words, but tells stories visually as the owner of Kaitlyn Daw Photography. She helps document life's milestone moments and creates heirlooms of her clients' precious memories. A dedicated volunteer at heart, Kaitlyn gives her time and talents to many causes across Niagara, including Gillian's Place, YMCA, and the Lincoln County Humane Society.

Company:
Kaitlyn Daw Photography



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**Jeremy
Delacruz**



Jeremy has worked for CAA Niagara for the last five years. In 2019, he helped the club achieve top Rewards program in Canada, which earned him a promotion to Associate Director of Business Development. Currently, Jeremy focuses on innovating and growing the club, playing a pivotal role in exciting projects like CAA Niagara's acquisition of Niagara Airbus and rebranding the club's advocacy efforts to "Safety for Life".

Born and raised in St. Catharines, Jeremy is committed to giving back to his community. In his free time, he coaches youth basketball and serves on the board for Strive Niagara.

**Company:
CAA Niagara**

**Jesse
D'Hulster**



In 2014 Jesse founded DH Media, a photography and videography company dedicated to providing lasting memories at affordable prices. In 2020, Jesse and his wife Melissa became owners of Silvestri Sports, a 40-year-old, Niagara-local business. In the years since, Silvestri Sports—now SS Brand It—has won multiple Readers' Choice awards and has also established a scholarship at Saint-Jean-de-Brebeuf, and continues to provide custom embroidery and design to businesses and customers across the Niagara region. When not behind the counter or at a downtown Welland BIA meeting, Jesse can be found reading, writing, or behind his camera.

**Company:
SS Brand It & DH Media**

**Gina
Delle Rose-Ash**



Gina is a certified logistics professional with over 13 years of experience in maritime transportation and joined the Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority in 2018. A graduate of Brock University, she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Business Communications. She holds a Certificate in Marine Transportation through the Shipping Federation of Canada & Concordia University & is a Certified Logistics Professional through the CITT program. Gina sits on the Board of Directors for The Marine Club & the Niagara Industrial Association and is an Advisory Committee member for the McMaster Institute for Transportation & Logistics. Passionate about inclusion and women empowerment, Gina pioneered the annual "Women in Logistics" event and supported the development of the Great Lakes Seaway Review's Impact!

**Company:
Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority**

**Katherine
Dogde**



Katherine Dodge is a Niagara College Business graduate serving small businesses and the community as Marketing & Communications Director for the St. Catharines Downtown Association. She aims to share the importance of main streets and ensure downtown is welcoming for all. Previously, Katherine worked with nonprofits to spread warmth across Niagara and a local call-centre, where she worked her way up to recruiting manager. Driven by connection and creativity, Katherine also uses art to build awareness for important causes.

Katherine volunteers with various organizations and is the current coordinator for the Hamilton-Niagara Brain Tumour Walk.

**Company:
St. Catherines Downtown Association**





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Dr. Jessica Elia



Dr. Jessica Elia is a Chiropractor practicing in Niagara Falls, ON. Growing up, Jessica developed a curiosity for the human body. After graduating from Brock University in Science with Honours, she completed her Doctor of Chiropractic Degree at D'Youville College. Then, she obtained her Medical Acupuncture Certification from McMaster University.

Jessica started her own Chiropractic Business in 2015 within the multidisciplinary clinic of InspireHealth Niagara. She has received multiple diamond readers choice awards in the Niagara Falls Review and Niagara This Week for Best Chiropractor and Best Chiropractic Clinic.

Company:
Jessica Elia DC

**Crystal
Fehlow**



Crystal is an energetic leader who is valued for her accountability, integrity, and persistence. From the Art Studio began in mid-2022, seeking artistic expertise and commitment from her long-time friend, Joanne Hearn, the studio became an instant success. From the Art Studio specializes in paint-your-own ceramics located in central St. Catharines at 117 Lake Street with the desire to provide a creative modern space for our community. Mrs. Fehlow never hesitates to get involved in local initiatives and credits the community for her success in being a Platinum Hall of Fame Broker with Re/Max Niagara Realty Ltd., Brokerage

Company:
From the Art Studio

**Steven
Emslie**



Steve, a lifelong resident of Niagara, joined Beatties in 2021. The company has a rich 160+ year history in the Region. Under the guidance of Steve and the rest of the Senior Leadership Team Beatties has achieved record year-over-year growth and all time high employee satisfaction despite much ongoing economic uncertainty. In addition to the numerous charitable donations and initiatives done through Beatties, Steve continuously seeks opportunities for personal community involvement, most notably volunteering his services as Treasurer of the Board of Directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara.

Company:
Beatties Business Products

**Kelly
Frechette**



In 2017, Kelly and her husband, Steve, founded Board Boss Drywall. What started as a company of one employee, quickly grew to a company of over 40. As a proud alumna of Niagara College, Kelly's background is in Business Administration and marketing, which allows her to run the office, bookkeeping and marketing components of the company. Her passion for finding personal financial freedom has grown into multiple residential properties, a commercial property and three corporations. 2022 became a very meaningful year for her family when they decided to foster a beautiful baby girl, and she is now going through the adoption process.

Company:
**Board Boss Drywall &
FW Developments**



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Congratulations!

To all the Nominees & Winners
of the 40 under 40!

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Jaclyn
McPherson Fruci



Jaclyn co-founded Lemon Collective Marketing Inc. in 2017 after working in a few marketing roles that didn't challenge her or bring her joy. Over the past six years, Jaclyn and her business partner have grown Lemon Collective from small-scale local projects to serving clients across Niagara and North America, becoming a go-to for businesses and not-for-profit organizations looking for creativity and strategic thinking. Jaclyn has worked hard to empower and promote other female-entrepreneurs and creatives through her work with Lemon Collective, her podcast she co-hosts and as co-chair of HIVE Niagara – a new Niagara-based women's entrepreneurship group.

Company:
Lemon Collective Marketing Inc.

Arienne
Good



YWCA Director of Fundraising, Arienne Good (she/her) started her career at the regional non-profit as a temporary contract worker in 2016, but quickly took a permanent position and was promoted to her current role in 2021. She runs the YWCA's Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser. Arienne has overseen an increase in overall fundraising by 29%, but has her sights set on growing major and planned gifts through transformational fundraising, letting donors create change in the community. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature, a certificate in Corporate Communications and Public Relations, and is a Leadership Niagara graduate. Recently, she won the 2022 Young Professional Award at the GNCC's NBAA.

Company:
YMCA Niagara Region



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Ashley
Gauthier



Ashley Gauthier founded Acro Academy in 2016. After nearly 15 years of teaching gymnastics and dance programs, Ashley created a studio that supports the acrobatic skills for all ages and abilities. Now having over 8 years of success within the studio and hundreds of enrolments each year, Ashley would like to expand Acro Academy. Ashley hopes to provide the Niagara region with more programs such as an inclusive movement program, fitness and health classes and to create an even larger award-winning competitive dance team.

Company:
Acro Academy

Michelle
Grocholsky



Driven by the philosophy that we must lift as we rise, Michelle is an award winning equity strategist with global distinctions in the areas of innovation in engagement and inclusion. She has devoted her life's work to understanding and addressing the root causes of bias and discrimination across our workplaces and realizing Empowered's vision to make organizations more equitable by improving the way people decisions are made and human resources practices operate. Michelle believes that when organizations move beyond talk and symbolic gestures to build a systemic, strategic approach to EDI, they can build workplaces and cultures where all people can prosper and thrive.

Company:
Empowered EDI



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Kattawe Henry



Kattawe (she/her/hers) has both a lived experience of intersectional feminist issues of the Niagara region as well as an academic understanding of the theories and complexities of feminist issues. As a Brock alumnus with a BA in Sociology and a MA in Gender Studies and Feminist Research from McMaster University, she brings a background enriched with experiences and understandings of the difficult conversations that are essential to developing lasting and effective change. She is moved by the resilience of marginalized communities and has committed her research and professional career to understand the social and structural nature of racism.

Company:
Anti-Racism and Oppression Consultant and Lecturer

Grace Howes



Grace Howes is the Communications Specialist at the St. Catharines Public Library where she strives to call attention to the Library's beyond-books approach to serving its customers. With public relations roots in non-profit, Grace's passion for serving her community extends beyond the workplace. She is most proud of her volunteerism with NextNiagara, a young professionals' advisory council, as well as her title of Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara. Grace calls St. Catharines home where she lives with her husband and two rescue dogs.

Company:
St. Catherines Public Library

Dr. Sarah Hopkins



Dr. Hopkins founded BodyLab Recovery Science in 2012 as a sole Chiropractor and has grown BodyLab, with a team of top-performing practitioners, to a stand-alone clinic in St. Catharines. BodyLab's approach to patient first treatment and inclusive care; including hands on physiotherapy, massage and chiropractic therapies has made it a top choice as a health clinic. As a high-level Triathlete Dr. Hopkins knows the advantage of complete recovery and the value a great team offers.

BodyLab also understands how valuable community is and readily volunteers their time and financial support to Niagara based organizations.

Company:
BodyLab Recovery Science

Dr. Stephanie Marie Kafie



Dr. Stephanie Kafie is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of "Totally Yours Family Medicine," the first virtual medical clinic in Ontario to offer counselling in Natural Family Planning. She is a Family Physician and an Assistant Clinical Professor (Adjunct) at McMaster University's Niagara Medical Campus. She currently works as a hospitalist, and an attending physician in retirement homes and long-term care homes. As the mother of 3 small children, she brings the perspective of a "Doctor Mom" to her clinical encounters - with the medical knowledge to guide families and the life experience to provide compassionate care.

Company:
Totally Yours Family Medicine



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Sarah Kaufman



Sarah's strong belief in preserving history has enabled her tenure as head of the NOTL Museum to be characterized by a significant increase in organizational capacity, a major expansion campaign, and substantial growth in community presence. The Museum has been recognized for innovative programming, including The Tiny Museum (a portable gallery), The Poppy Project (Outstanding Achievement, Niagara Region), Making Her Mark (OMA Excellence in Publications,) Voices of Freedom Park (Award of Excellence, Niagara Region). Sarah, a recent finalist for the Women in Business Awards, believes a leadership style of collaboration and vision will guide the NOTL Museum through the 21st century.

Company:
Niagara-on-the-Lake-Museum

Dr. Christina Le Rose



Dr. Christina Le Rose is an international award-winning classical pianist who has performed throughout North America and Europe and has taught music at the university, secondary, and elementary levels. In 2015, she established the Music Studio of Dr. Le Rose to share her passion for music with students of all ages. She also teaches music to over 700 students at the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Dr. Le Rose has given benefit concerts throughout Canada and has donated proceeds to charitable organizations. She received the Brock University Distinguished Alumni Award, Niagara Catholic Distinguished Alumni Award, Niagara Symphony Orchestra Award, and the Niagara Falls Arts and Culture Wall of Fame Award.

Company:
Music Studio of Dr. Le Rose & Niagara Catholic District School Board

Paloma Lara



Paloma is the co-founder and CEO of Paz Bakery, a frozen food manufacturing business focused on naturally gluten-free ready-to-bake products. Paz Bakery's Cheese Dots & Waffles can be found all throughout Southern Ontario in gourmet retail locations and in many Real Canadian Superstores. Paloma is originally from Brazil and to her, it is important to maintain a multicultural environment in the company, that aims to unite and bring peace through the power of food. Committed to more sustainable practices, the bakery has a zero food-waste process and Paloma is actively raising awareness on ways to avoid waste.

Company:
Paz Bakery

Olenka Lyle



Olenka is the co-founder, nurse practitioner, and medical director of ClaraDerma, a medical aesthetics and laser clinic. ClaraDerma was built to fill the gaps Olenka saw in the aesthetics industry and strives to be an inclusive, inviting and trusted place for clients to be heard and understood regarding their skin care concerns. Knowing that it can be vulnerable to share insecurities, especially if clients have looked for help in other places, ClaraDerma provides a safe space and hope in the form of a unique skin care plan, products, and treatments. In 2022, Olenka and her business partner Alicia, were honored to be finalists for the GNCC Women in Business awards and Olenka is an RBC Women of Influence nominee for 2023.

Company:
ClaraDerma+ Medical Aesthetics & Laser Clinic



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Julie Mannell



Julie Mannell is an author of poetry, fiction and memoir. Mannell is a Top 30 Poet Under 30, a CBC Poetry Prize finalist, and winner of the Lionel Shapiro Award for Excellency in Creative Writing and the Mona Adilman Poetry Prize. She holds an MFA from the University of Guelph, with Harper-Collins and Constance Rooke scholarships. This April, The Writers' Trust of Canada declared her a "Rising Star." Of Mannell's work, author Richard Van Camp said: "The word I wrote down when I read her was 'velotic.' I can already feel her velocity and hunger as a writer and composer of wonder."

Company:
Julie Mannell Author

Julie Mercier



After life handed her a few lemons, Julie made lemonade and co-founded Lemon Collective Marketing Inc. in 2017. Along with her business partner, Julie has grown what was once a small-project company working out of local coffee shops to a consistently growing creative agency working with businesses and not-for-profit organizations in Niagara and across North America. Julie is a passionate volunteer, community advocate, and founding member and co-chair of HIVE Niagara – a Niagara-based women's entrepreneurship group. Julie is committed to enriching the community by empowering and supporting fellow female-identifying entrepreneurs.

Company:
Lemon Collective Marketing Inc.



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Matthew Melnyk



Matt Melnyk is the Director of Student Recruitment at Brock University, leading the team that designs, develops, and implements Brock University's global strategy for undergraduate student recruitment. Matt has three degrees from Brock, including a BA in History & Philosophy, MA in History, and a BEd in Adult Education. Matt also recently completed Graduate Certificate in Strategic Enrollment Management from Royal Roads University. Originally from Toronto, Matt chose to set roots in Niagara after studying at Brock. He has served on multiple committees and Boards, and currently serves as the staff representative on Brock University's Board of Trustees.

Company:
Brock University

Sarah Milan-Biancaniello



Sarah started Sarah's Soaps in 2013 at the age of 19. Over the last decade, Sarah's products have become a wildly known name in local households, and have been purchased all across North America. Both as a horticulturist and a bioregional herbalist, Sarah crafts products for all bodies that are simple, functional and effective. She has been featured in the Toronto Star, Canadian Living, CBC News, and most recently a worldwide spread in Willow and Sage Magazine. Loyal customers have voted Sarah's Soaps products as Niagara's Best Beauty for 5 years in a row. Sarah's Soap Drive initiative helped to donate over 1000 personal care products to Community Care, and she continues to donate her products to multiple community organizations.

Company:
Sarah's Soaps



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The best way to support a community is to be a part of it.

At the heart of every community, you'll find organizations fueled by committed people who are passionate about building a better future for us all. We are inspired by our friends at **Business Link Media Group** and their continuous efforts to contribute positively to the growth and development of our community.

Let's Make Someday Happen



CONGRATS

NIDHI PUNYARTHI + MICHAEL WARCHALA

on their accomplishments with the City of Niagara Falls!

AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE RECIPIENTS FOR 2023!

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Niagara Falls CANADA

Nate Moore



GorillaCrete started as a side business in 2019. Working a full-time job and running GorillaCrete after work and weekends turned into a full-time business in 2021. Our explosive entry into our industry was driven by passion, knowledge, professionalism and top of the line workmanship. GorillaCrete is more than a company, it's a lifestyle. To push yourself past your limits. Using everyday to educate yourself, perform and excel. I am a 35 year old sober advocate, entrepreneur, father and husband that is taking my story to employ, give back to my community and set a new bar within my industry.

Company:
GorillaCrete Inc.

Nidhi Punyarthi



Nidhi Punyarthi is the City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services and Risk Management at the City of Niagara Falls. She advises and represents the City of Niagara Falls in a variety of matters. In her practice, she focuses on but is not limited to municipal law, planning and development, construction and procurement, enforcement and regulation, corporate/commercial law and litigation. She is a strong advocate for her client groups, confidently handles litigious negotiations and proceedings, and provides useful risk assessments based on her several years of experience. Before her role at the City of Niagara Falls, Nidhi was construction and civil litigation counsel at the City of Brampton.

Company:
City of Niagara Falls

Andrew Muehlenbeck



Andrew, a Niagara native, began his career as electrical technician after high school. He also attended Niagara College/Brock General Arts and Sciences program. After graduation, he worked in a shop as a technician and draftsman. All while helping out in public thanks to his wife Sara. It wasn't until he completed his apprenticeship that he realized he needed more from life, so he started his own business and became involved with the St. Catharines Jaycees, eventually becoming a National Vice President. Today, Andrew has taken a few steps back from the public eye to concentrate on running his own business. Along with raising and donating time to his three kids and their respective sports.

Company:
Maverik Electrical Construction & Maintenance Inc.

Carlos Robayo



Carlos migrated to Canada from Colombia in 1998. He attended York University where he received a BA in Psychology, a BA in Health Studies specializing in Health Policy and a Master of Public Policy, Administration and Law. Carlos was part of the opening team at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts in 2009, and moved to St. Catharines in 2014 to begin his role at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, where he currently leads the finance, administration and ticketing services teams. Carlos is passionate about equity, diversity and inclusion with a primary focus on opportunities for advancement and representation. He is proud to work in the arts industry, helping to shape the fabric and values of our community.

Company:
FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre



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**Katrina
Steeves-Langley**



In spring of 2012, Katrina (Kat) hit the road with a splash in the Niagara Region with her partner and a 1974 Volkswagen van named Pearl, providing oyster bars and grilled seafood at wineries and food festivals. Today you can find Kat contributing to Tide & Vine's multi - award-winning restaurant with her creative culinary influence and exceptional eye for detail and inclusive hospitality. Kat's tenacity to build the business while improving the customer experience and the staff's working culture has helped Tide & Vine's rise to success.

Company:
**Tide & Vine Oyster House
& Seafood Supply**

**Suzanne
Veenstra**



Suzanne began her career in the non-profit sector in 2009 and has been dedicated to finding a path that would allow her to amplify the message of the charitable sector across Niagara, while also being an active community developer and facilitator. Suzanne has been with NCF for the past five years and in 2022 she took on her current position and lead the organization through a comprehensive rebrand. Outside of her professional life, Suzanne received a Volunteer Recognition Award with the City of St. Catharines in 2020 for her work co-founding Fitzgerald Neighbours, where she lives with her two kids and husband.

Company:
Niagara Community Foundation



**David
Thompson**



David is an experienced business leader, project manager, and engineer with nearly a decade of experience in the renewable energy industry. While at Walker Industries from 2015-2022, he had led several successful large-scale projects in Niagara, including the General Motors St. Catharines landfill gas to energy project, which reduced the plant's reliance on grid electricity and cut its net GHG emissions by ~70%. Currently as Director of Business Development at PlanET Biogas, a global biogas technology leader, David is responsible for expanding the company's renewable energy business activities across North America. His innovative and persistent approach to project management has earned him recognition as a respected member of the business community in Niagara.

Company:
PlanET Biogas Solutions

**Michael
Warchala**



Michael has been with the City of Niagara Falls, Economic Development Department since 2010. Initially with the Small Business Enterprise Centre, Michael oversaw the introduction of various entrepreneurship programs for local businesses; and forged many strong community partnerships helping build an entrepreneurial ecosystem in Niagara Falls. Today, Michael works with the Niagara Falls business community to ensure Niagara has a strong economic base for both businesses and residents. Outside of his professional life, Michael is avid soccer fan and enjoys volunteering his time coaching local youth soccer.

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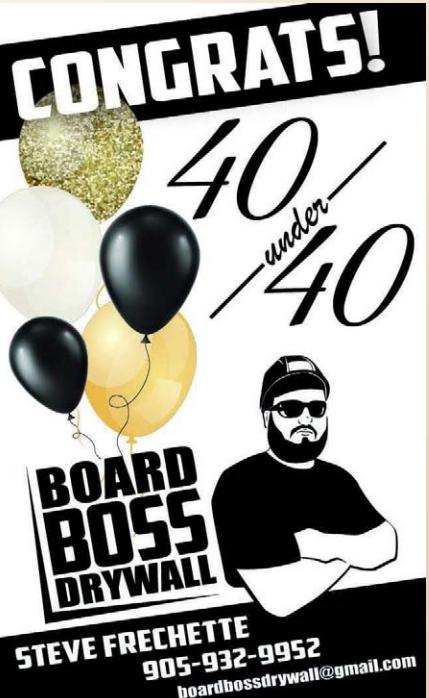
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