

BMO Recognizes Influential Women Leaders in Ottawa
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OTTAWA, Oct. 5, 2017 /CNW/ - BMO honoured three women leaders at the BMO Celebrating Women program event in Ottawa last night in the following categories: Innovation and Global Growth, Community and Charitable Giving, and Expansion and Growth in Small Business. BMO Celebrating Women recognizes female leaders in their communities as part of the bank's commitment to the advancement of women.

The following honourees were recognized:

- Innovation and Global Growth: **Marina Kun**. Ms. Kun is the Owner and President of Kun Shoulder Rest Inc., a global manufacturer of shoulder rests for violins and violas. She's responsible for transforming the company into a household name in the international strings world. It now holds dozens of patents and distributes product to no less than 80 per cent of the world. Ms. Kun was listed as one of Canada's top 100 Women Entrepreneurs in 2006 by *PROFIT*.
- Community and Charitable Giving: **Francine Whiteduck**. Ms. Whiteduck is the Founder of Whiteduck Resources Inc., a consulting firm that provides research and evaluation to local, national and international Indigenous organizations. Algonquin and from the Kigitan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, she supports the developmental lending needs of Aboriginal small businesses across the country. In addition, she's the Board Director for Prosper Canada, a charity that develops economic opportunity for Canadians living in poverty through program and policy innovation.
- Expansion and Growth in Small Business: **Anna Belanger**. Ms. Belanger is the Owner of Anna Belanger and Associates, a group of clinics designed to meet therapeutic needs of women of all ages. In 2009, after her intensive training at the West Coast College of Massage Therapy (WCCMT), she opened Ottawa's first message therapy clinic for women. Ms. Belanger has grown the client base from 12 to more than 16,000. She plans to expand her business to include other health care services and open more locations in the Ottawa area.

"These honourees are powerful leaders that inspire the community's entrepreneurial spirit," said Victor Pellegrino, Senior Vice President, Eastern Ontario Division, BMO Bank of Montreal. "We proudly applaud them for their incredible contributions in business and to our communities, as well as their continued work for the advancement of women."

The BMO Celebrating Women program follows the bank's second Catalyst Award win for its industry-leading work to accelerate diversity and inclusion in its workplace and dedication to gender equality.

In addition, BMO has partnerships with GroYourBiz, WBE Canada, Women Presidents' Organization and Catalyst. It has developed products and services to support its female clients, including the recent Women in Leadership Mutual Fund – the first impact investing mutual fund offered by a Canadian bank focused on gender diversity. It has also spearheaded studies around women entrepreneurs, such as *A Force to Reckon With: Women, Entrepreneurs & Risk* – an eye-opening report, in partnership with Carleton University, that debunked myths around the notion of women being risk averse.

For more information about BMO Celebrating Women, please visit: bmoforwomen.com and join the social conversation using #BMOforWomen.

About BMO Financial Group

Established in 1817, and currently marking its 200th year of operations, BMO Financial Group is a highly diversified financial services provider based in North America. With total assets of \$709 billion as of July 31, 2017, and more than 45,000 employees, BMO provides a broad range of personal and commercial banking, wealth management and investment banking products and services to more than 12 million customers and conducts business through three operating groups: Personal and Commercial Banking, Wealth Management and BMO Capital Markets.

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