

BMO Recognizes Women's Contributions to Small Business and Community in Kitchener
Friday, June 16, 2017 10:00:00 AM (GMT)

KITCHENER, ON, June 16, 2017 /CNW/ - Three women were honoured through the annual BMO Celebrating Women program in Kitchener in two categories: Community and Charitable Giving and Expansion and Growth in Small Business. The program recognizes female leaders in local communities as part of BMO's commitment to drive the advancement of women.

At the Kitchener event, the following honourees were recognized:

- Community and Charitable Giving: **Cathy Lasby**. Ms. Lasby is the owner of Preferred Agri-Marketing Services, a public relations firm that specializes in the agriculture sector. Her commitment and dedication to women and youth in agriculture extends to several organizations, such as Dufferin 4-H, the Ontario and Canadian Junior Hereford Associations, and local and provincial agriculture fairs.
- Community and Charitable Giving: **Erika Lindner**. Ms. Lindner is the President of the Waterloo Regional Synchronized Swim Club, a non-profit club that creates and promotes health and fitness opportunities for girls. She has given her time and financial resources to encourage young women to strive for the intangibles that come along with the sport.
- Expansion and Growth in Small Business: **Lorna Hundt**. Ms. Hundt is the President of Great Canadian Holidays, a company that arranges excursions for large groups. In 1990, it purchased its first motor coach and expanded to include charter transportation services. Today, the company is Ontario's leading motor coach and tour operator, with over 50 vehicles in its fleet.

"These women are role models in our community," said Julie Barker-Merz, Senior Vice President, South Western Ontario Division, BMO Bank of Montreal. "As inspirational female entrepreneurs and leaders, we're proud to honour them for the strides they've made in 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 organizations such as GroYourBiz, WBE Canada, Women Presidents' Organization, SheEO and Catalyst. It has also developed products that address the needs of 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 – and 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: bmoformen.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 \$719 billion as of April 30, 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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Countries: Canada

Industries: Finance & Insurance, Services

Languages: English

Primary Identifiers: BMO-CA

Related Identifiers: BMO-CA, BMO-US