

Summer Company



be your own boss

2004
Yearbook

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YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES ONTARIO

The Summer Company Experience

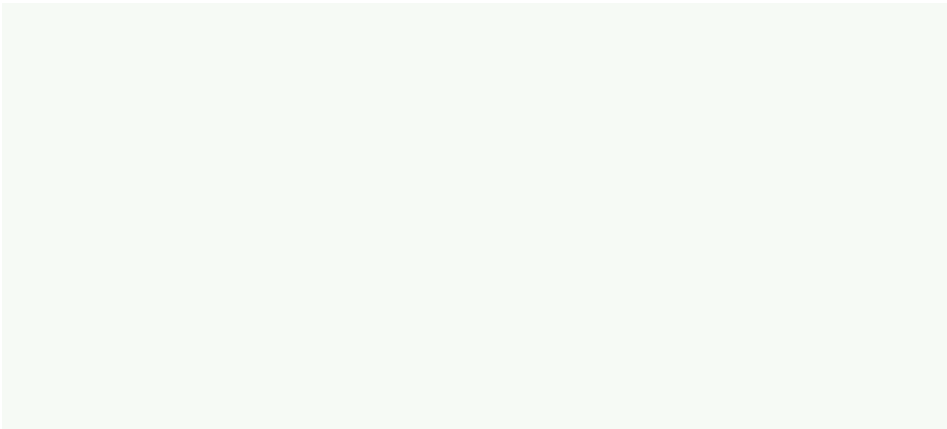
Small business drives the economy. Innovation turns ideas into new products, new services and new businesses. The students highlighted in these pages are the entrepreneurs of tomorrow, paving the way for a bright future in Ontario.

The government of Ontario is committed to doing more to help small business grow.

The *Summer Company* program gives full-time students the opportunity to run their own small business over the summer. Students submit a business plan and upon acceptance into the program receive hands-on training and funding towards the start-up costs of their business.

Volunteer mentors from the local business community team up with *Small Business Enterprise Centres* to provide guidance and advice to the students on how to operate a successful small business. The rich array of guidance provided by these committed volunteers brings out the initiative and creativity of the participants.

- ■ ■ The *Summer Company* program gives full-time students the opportunity to run their own small business over the summer ■ ■ ■



This past year, entrepreneurial and innovative students from small and large communities across Ontario successfully completed the *Summer Company* program. They developed and marketed their products and services, built up a customer base, analyzed sales trends and inventory levels and made tough decisions based on cash flow.

■ ■ ■ It is thrilling to see young people reach their goal
of running their own business ■ ■ ■

It is thrilling to see young people reach their goal of running their own business and experience the excitement of making it on their own. Their hard work, commitment and determination are a shining example of Ontario's youth.

Congratulations to all of the *Summer Company* students and everyone who has contributed to the program.

You Can Have a Summer Company

Are you looking for a challenging opportunity and a great way to take charge of your future?

If you're between 15 and 29 years old and going back to school full-time in the fall, then you can apply to the program. First, you need to come up with a good idea for a summer company. Next, you have to write a detailed business plan. Don't worry — you can get help doing this from your nearest *Small Business Enterprise Centre*.

If your business plan and application are selected through a competitive process, you'll complete 12 hours of business training and receive up to \$1,500 in May or June for your venture's start-up costs and up to \$1,500 for your return to school.

■ ■ ■ looking for a challenging opportunity and a
great way to take charge of your future? ■ ■ ■

Find out more about *Summer Company* and the location of the *Small Business Enterprise Centre* nearest you. Call 1 800 387-5656 or visit www.ontariocanada.com/summercompany.

Summer Companies

13% of *Summer Companies* are involved in manufacturing.

Summer Company participants are pretty much an even mix of highschool and post secondary students.

22% of *Summer Company* participants come from Northern Ontario.

Almost 850 students have taken part in the *Summer Company* program. Participants come from all parts of the province, from Kenora to Hawkesbury to Niagara Falls to Windsor. They are full-time students at schools, colleges and universities. They start summer camps, they open restaurants and stores, they give swimming lessons, wash windows, paint cottages, and design jewellery, clothing, skateboards and software.

What all of these participants have in common is a desire to experience entrepreneurship for themselves and be their own boss. They work hard and overcome unexpected challenges. They also take advantage of unforeseen opportunities, discover hidden talents and learn the value of mentors and networking.

Some of the businesses are very profitable. In other cases profit levels are modest. But every participant comes away from the experience with a wealth of knowledge about entrepreneurship — and their own ability to be entrepreneurs. When the season ends, many of the *Summer Company* students know for certain that a full-time career running their own business will be a part of their future.

The stories that follow are a sample of the many exciting ventures that young entrepreneurs launched over the summer of 2004. The profiled owners and their peers in the *Summer Company* program are to be congratulated for their hard work and determination. They have proven that they have what it takes to be the business leaders of the future.



Vix Wooden Creations

Vicki Akey — Foxboro

Vicki had always dreamed of running her own business. With a sister and various other relatives owning businesses, it was really the only career choice she had ever thought of. So her plan to manufacture and sell wooden crafts such as Muskoka chairs, potato bins, lawn ornaments and outdoor ashtrays from her home over the summer fit in well with her future aspirations.

- ■ ■ Vicki accomplished all of her objectives over the summer: to have fun, to gain experience running a business and to earn money to buy a car ■ ■ ■

Still, she admits she could have been more prepared. Extra time spent researching her competition would have helped her planning. And she underestimated the time commitment required. However, with help from the *Enterprise Centre*, mentors and the other participants in the program, Vicki managed to not just successfully run her business but to exceed her revenue targets.

Vicki accomplished all of her objectives over the summer: to have fun, to gain experience running a business and to earn money to buy a car. She now feels ready to launch a full-time business once she is finished with school.



Matters of Décor

Megan Blanchard — Ottawa

Megan had just completed her first year of studies in interior decorating and wanted to put into practice some of what she had learned in the classroom. Her resulting business, Matters of Décor, is a home decorating business offering at-home consultations — paint colour choices, furniture placement, and custom designs of window treatments, bedding etc.

When she started her company, Megan wasn't sure what she would do to fill her days before she got some clients and began doing consultations. She soon found out that the initial start-up was the busiest time in her summer. Setting up her website was very time consuming, but the site proved to be "the backbone to the company's success". In order to help out with initial costs, she struck a deal with a website developer to help polish and revamp her logo and website. In exchange, she helped him with the renovation of his kitchen.

At the end of the summer Megan had successfully served 10 consultation clients. She is hopeful that repeat and word of mouth business will keep her busy in her spare time throughout the coming school year and provide her with a head start next summer when she runs Matters of Décor again, full-time.

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Misty Meadows Fine Culinary Herbs & Edible Flowers



Logan Brazeau — Campbellcroft

For his *Summer Company*, Logan focused on what he considered an untapped niche in the local marketplace: growing and selling certified organic herbs and a variety of edible flowers. His business sense turned out to be right on target. The demand for his products was significant and only expanded as awareness levels grew.

Logan created several unique product collections packaged to catch the interest of the consumer. Included among the various samplings his consumers enjoyed was the “Chef’s Garden Collection”, which consisted of ten different herbs, a recipe book and a garden layout for planting. Another popular product was the “Window Sill Collection” which consisted of five different potted edible flowers, care instructions and ideas for use.

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local marketplace ■ ■ ■

Logan has already expanded his business with 800 sq ft extension to his greenhouse operations and has plans to construct a new store operation in the spring. Logan also plans to expand his mobile operations with attendance at an extended array of markets across central and eastern Ontario.



Oh Geej

Jessica Butler — Sarnia

As a craftsperson, Jessica was interested in learning about how to run her own business so that she could maintain control of her artistic output. A textiles student at Sheridan College, Jessica thought that a business designing and silk-screening shirts would be an ideal summer job for her. Taking her inspiration from objects in the community, her rough sketches are transformed into silk screens, and later transferred onto her t-shirts and tank tops.

// By running my own business
I would be able to create work that
I'm excited about doing. //

Jessica had plenty of support at home in planning her company. Her parents run their own business and her grandfather is a chartered accountant. Even so, she found the bookkeeping confusing. However, by the end of the summer she was feeling much more confident about handling her finances.

Jessica quickly learned that networking would be the key to her success. People she approached were supportive and helpful, and Jessica eventually found a store to carry her shirts and events where she could sell directly.

Summer Company has definitely kindled Jessica's interest in entrepreneurship as a career: "By running my own business I would be able to create work that I'm excited about doing. I think that when you love what you do it is evident to other people."



A Taste of the Theatre

Leah Currie — Campbellford

During two-week sessions throughout the summer, children aged 7–10 at Leah's day camp were introduced to several different aspects of theatre including dance, vocal, acting, and even set design and creation. The rights to perform two plays were obtained by Leah allowing her students to put their new skills to the test in a final production in front of parents and friends at the conclusion of each session. The students involved in Leah's program also walked away with new-found appreciation for teamwork, developed new levels of self-confidence and acquired a love for theatre.

Leah, an eighteen year old with no prior business experience or education excelled in acquiring a vast array of new business skills. Although very knowledgeable in the arts and quite talented thanks to her impressive portfolio in theatre, Leah was required to develop a breadth of business skills quickly in order to launch a successful business. She learned the importance of time management to cope with the long hours of teaching, planning and bookkeeping and developed a new knowledge base and appreciation for financial management. Like a true entrepreneur, she became adaptable to new situations and problems, allowing her to modify plans and create and implement effective solutions quickly and efficiently.

Her innovative lesson planning and high degree of professionalism also drew praise from the many parents who interacted with her. This resulted in repeat sign-ups for additional summer sessions and subsequent requests for a 2005 theatre program.

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Hattie's House of Beads

Hattie Dunstan — Caledon East

Hattie had been beading and making jewellery for about six years before she decided to turn her hobby into a summer business designing, producing and selling necklaces and earrings made from vintage and reclaimed glass beads. Originally, Hattie had expected to generate the majority of her income through direct sales at flea markets and craft shows. As time went on, it became clear that resale through established stores was a more lucrative strategy, and Hattie changed marketing efforts to focus on cracking the retail market.

Being responsible for all aspects of the business is challenging for a new entrepreneur. Not only did Hattie have to order stock, design the jewellery and teach her subcontractors how to create the pieces, she also had to conduct all of the sales, establish and maintain a bookkeeping system and ensure quality control. Dealing with her subcontractors was a particular area where Hattie developed skills. She learned that she alone had to be responsible for a quality product and how to deal with problems that can arise when other people are working on your behalf.

With her products established in six retail stores in the Orangeville region, Hattie plans to continue her business throughout the school year and full-time next summer.

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a more lucrative strategy ■ ■ ■



Computer Medic

Matthew Gitter — Thornhill

Matthew had quite a bit of experience with computers and was working towards becoming a certified technician, so Computer Medic was an obvious choice for his *Summer Company*. Matthew offered virus removal, data recovery and networking support services to the residential and commercial market.

Matthew started his business understanding that the key to success was an effective marketing campaign. He tried a variety of methods to reach his target market, including media releases, flyers, door-to-door canvassing, newspaper inserts and e-mail. His hard work paid off when he received a television spot on Rogers Community Television as well as an article in the Canadian Jewish Newspaper.

Through an effective marketing campaign, Matthew was able to keep himself busy in a very competitive industry. Like a true entrepreneur, he used continuous feedback from clients and his mentors to identify add-on services that he could provide to clients to diversify and increase his sales.

Computer Medic will continue to operate on a part-time basis while Matthew completes his education. He plans to eventually expand the company to a full-time business venture.

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Retrospect Designs

Rachel Hills — North Bay

Having never taken business classes in high school or in college, Rachel had no idea how to write a business plan. However, with help from her local *Small Business Enterprise Centre*, she quickly learned what needed to be included and how to put down on paper her plans for a retail business selling original works of art, clothing, and jewellery.

Rachel's business got off to a slow start. Although she had expected to begin selling early in the summer, she didn't make any sales until August. But she considers the summer an excellent learning experience, and says her time management and organizational skills are much improved.

Rachel especially enjoyed the sales and marketing aspect of her job. With the freedom that comes from owning her own business she designed and took pictures for her own website. She also enjoyed networking and making contacts as far away as Stratford, Sauble Beach, Ottawa and Sault Saint Marie as well as at home in North Bay.

Her marketing efforts paid off and sales picked up in August. By the end of the month she had sold eight paintings and assorted jewellery and t-shirts.

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Red Om Glass

Melody Jewitt — Thunder Bay

Before entering her third year of the Arts and Design Program at Sheridan College, Melody decided that not only was she going to work at a job related to her field over the summer, but she was going to choose her own hours as well.

Melody came up with the idea of starting her own flame working glass business, which is essentially glass blowing on a smaller scale — and requiring a smaller capital investment. Her company, Red Om Glass, manufactured and sold mouth blown and flame worked glass jewellery and decorative wares.

■ ■ ■ surpassed her forecasted sales and received much media coverage from local and regional media sources ■ ■ ■

Melody's business was successful right from the beginning. After working on her business plan for six months, she was well-prepared to quickly start-up the business in high gear as soon as she had approval.

Melody surpassed her forecasted sales and received much media coverage from local and regional media sources. The Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal ran a full page colour story on Melody and the CBC radio visited her open house and ran a seven-minute interview on her and her studio the next day. The media hype leading up to her open house saw over 250 customers visit that open house and Melody made \$1,700 in one evening.



Sink or Swim

Rob Klein — Merlin

An entrepreneur sees business opportunities where others might not. This was certainly the case for Rob. When the local YMCA stopped providing swimming lessons over the summer, Rob wrote up a business plan and prepared to leap into the opportunity presented by their absence. A National Lifeguard Service qualified swimming instructor, Rob planned to offer swimming lessons in his clients' own pools.

Rob quickly learned the value of personal contact with potential customers. "I learned that it doesn't matter if people see your name in the paper, if you actually talk to people they will be a lot more willing to hire you. Phone calls and personal visits are a must." Rob learned this lesson so well that he had to hire his sister to help him instruct 130 children at 32 different locations.

Rob ended the summer with revenues well over his target and enough money to go back to school with some left over to save for the future. He also fulfilled one of his more personal goals: "I also wanted a job that made a difference. I like to think that I made some small difference."

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C&C Creations

Caroline Krisciunas — Thunder Bay

Caroline was not planning to start her own business. However, when people at horse shows saw her equitation apparel and horse equipment and asked where they could buy it, she realized she had a real business opportunity. Still, because she didn't know a lot about running a business, she probably wouldn't have launched C&C Creations without help from *Summer Company*. "Before the *Summer Company* program I didn't have any experience with having my own business or any business related jobs so I didn't know very much when I was starting out. All of the training and planning and mentoring were a big help."

Over the summer she listened to her customers, figured out what worked best and constantly refined her designs for such items as mane protectors, riding hat and saddlebag covers, chaps and blankets.

Initially shy about approaching potential customers, Caroline gained confidence as she made sales. She hopes to continue selling her product as she travels around Canada showing her horses.

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Paul's Worms

Paul Laderoute — Westmeath

Renfrew County has over 900 lakes and five major rivers, offering many opportunities for tourists and residents that enjoy fishing. This abundance also created an opportunity for 15-year old Paul: a business supplying worms to the many anglers that are drawn to the area.

Paul's business involved long, long hours — many spent while his customers were still asleep. But it was worth it. Before starting his company, Paul didn't really know what was entailed in running a business. Over the summer he picked up a lot of skills, including business planning, time management and sales and marketing.

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The most important marketing technique he learned was to listen to his customers. As a result of their feedback he has lots of new ideas for when he reopens his business next summer.



Free in Barrie

Celia Laur — Barrie

Celia came into the *Summer Company* program with an idea she was passionate about: to research, design and publish a guide to free activities in her hometown. The guidebook, Celia's "tribute to a great city" would be used by tourists and residents alike to discover special places and events in Barrie.

Celia quickly generated interest in her community for her business venture. The guidebook was promoted throughout the summer in several newspaper articles and by local businesses. She went into research mode and soon had enough information to fill a 60-page book and lay it out electronically. All that remained was to sell advertising — her only source of revenue since the book would be offered free of charge.

With enough advertisers to cover the cost of printing, the guidebook was made available to the public at the end of summer. Copies also will be inserted in the Barrie Public Library Welcome Information package given to newcomers to the community. The City of Barrie and Tourism Barrie have also expressed an interest in distribution. As for Celia, "Entrepreneurship is now a realistic option in my future".

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William Li & Associates Tutoring Services



William Li — Mississauga

William's best advertisement for his business was himself — as the top student in Mississauga and the Peel District School Board, he had been featured in local newspapers and was able to leverage his reputation into a profitable business. Focusing on math and science, William Li & Associates assisted summer school students as they earned credits, enabled struggling students to catch up and helped strong science and math students to reach their full potential.

William began the summer with a strong marketing push. His high school math department distributed a letter endorsing the business with all 1,400 final report cards. As well, the department informed other schools in the Peel District about the venture. Soon William's phone was ringing and he quickly secured 20 students. Additional free publicity and word of mouth kept him busy all summer and enabled him to surpass his financial goals.

William looks forward to studying Engineering Science at the University of Toronto and perhaps another business venture in the form of a technology company start-up. "While the nature of the business would be different than offering tutoring services, the skills that I have gained and the wide range of experiences that I have enjoyed over this summer would be very applicable to any enterprise."

- ■ ■ Additional free publicity and word of mouth kept him busy all summer and enabled him to surpass his financial goals ■ ■ ■



Bikini Cups Café

Meaghan Lockhart — Golden Lake

Meaghan found that creativity and a sense of humour would take her business far after she opened Bikini Cups Café in Deacon. The friendly restaurant served coffee, ice-cream and pastries and proved to be a popular meeting spot for local residents.

Throughout the summer, Meaghan worked hard tweaking the menu according to customer demand, dreaming up inventive ways to promote her café and forming relationships with other businesses. The unique business name, restated in coffee cup sizes and supported by sales of homemade bikini tops, garnered Meaghan tons of free publicity from local newspapers.

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Running a restaurant is hard work and Meaghan had to quickly learn some time-management skills, often doing paperwork during slow periods in the afternoon. With a handsome profit in her pocket, and so many regular customers sorry to see the café close down when she returned to the University of New Brunswick in September, Meaghan feels that entrepreneurship remains a definite option for her future.

Megan MacLennan School of Dance



Megan MacLennan — Chatham

It had always been a dream of Megan's to run her own dance studio. With plenty of experience teaching dance in somebody else's studio, she knew she was ready to start her own business. Hoping to expand beyond the traditional ballet and tap classes, Megan offered lessons in musical theatre, jazz, lyrical dance, modern dance, hip-hop and cheerleading.

Megan found many marketing opportunities as local businesses and even other dance schools stepped forward to distribute her brochures. With these unforecasted opportunities, Megan's advertising expenses rose, but it was worth it as enrolment increased with the additional expenditure. In the end, she beat her initial revenue targets by 50%.

Megan learned many skills over the summer, most notably time management, negotiating and contingency planning. She plans to run the business again next summer and possibly turn it into a full-time venture in the future.

■ ■ ■ found many marketing
opportunities as local businesses ■ ■ ■

Student Pressure Washing



Joel Martin — Gilmour

Joel's first priority — and one of the keys to his success in operating his summer business — was customer service. As a result of his attention to detail and his determination to keep his customers happy, word of mouth was one of his most effective marketing tools. Another powerful tool was free media. Joel was featured in a local newspaper after he sent out a press release about his business. With the addition of 2,000 brochures sent out through the mail, Joel was in business and kept very busy for the entire summer. So busy that he often worked late into the night and on weekends.

Joel's company, Student Pressure Washing, provided services such as washing siding, windows, eave troughs and vehicles, as well as stripping and refinishing decks and cottages. Because he had previously done some pressure washing for a former employer, Joel had a good idea of what was involved and how to deliver a quality service.

He credits the *Summer Company* program with helping him to adequately plan his business, and with keeping him on track with his bookkeeping: "because of the program requirements I was forced, to my benefit, to keep my books up to date and accurate. I am certain that without the program my financial management would not have been as well disciplined."

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Puppeteer Productions

Sonja Miokovic — Toronto

In Sonja's estimation her *Summer Company*, Puppeteer Productions, was a big success. The experience she gained running her own business was invaluable and her profits, though smaller than forecast, would help pay her tuition at Ryerson University.

Puppeteer Productions is an interactive art program that teaches children teamwork and creativity through the production of a puppet show. The kids do everything from writing the story line and making the puppets to organizing a final presentation to their friends and families. For Sonja, the most rewarding aspect of her *Summer Company* was providing an environment that fostered the imagination of children. "I could see how much the puppet show meant to them. The kids would arrive with elaborate character sketches and script ideas. Knowing that they took what they learnt in class home meant a lot to me."

- ■ ■ an interactive art program that teaches children teamwork and creativity through the production of a puppet show ■ ■ ■

Early in the summer Sonja realized she had been over-optimistic in setting her revenue goals. Marketing to her target audience and getting actual registrations was more difficult than she had expected. Ever resourceful, Sonja was willing to expand her activities to increase her cash flow. Over the summer she performed at birthday parties, gave art lessons, did volunteer fundraising and hosted workshops with Toronto's Art in the Park Program. These extra activities also reinforced her marketing, ensuring her clients in the future. She is now well-positioned to take this business forward.



Soft Designs

Jennifer Parkes — Oakville

Housework can be such a dreary task. So why not inject a little fun with hand decorated rubber gloves? It was this kind of thinking that led Jennifer to start up Soft Designs, a small wholesale and retail business specializing in unique giftware and home accessories.

After a slow start, Jennifer quickly became comfortable making cold calls and selling her product to gift stores, as well as directly to customers from booths at craft shows and markets. As summer progressed, Jennifer refined her marketing techniques and sales really picked up; by August, sales were well over forecast. She also expanded her product line to include gardening gloves, matching hand towels, flower pins, hair clips and gloves in men's sizes.

Jennifer returned to her studies in Visual Merchandizing Arts at Sheridan College with a new appreciation for the work involved in starting a small business. She has no regrets about how she spent her summer: "this is the best summer job I have ever had. I love working for myself."

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for myself. //



AtYourService

Sylvain Primeau — Sudbury

Sylvain started his summer with carefully laid plans. His general service company would target four segments of the population: companies needing temporary assistance, older people having difficulty maintaining their homes, frequent travelers requiring house-sitting services and busy professionals who don't have time to handle their personal affairs.

// Thanks to *Summer Company* I was able to gain valuable experiences and I will continue to run my business as I return to university studies. //

Approaching his market with a broad array of services including cleaning, minor repairs and renovations and general office work, AtYourService was designed to fill a variety of needs and provide one-stop shopping for its clients.

Sylvain's planning and commitment paid off. During a very busy summer he managed to triple his revenue forecasts, while still managing to find time for some social activities. Sylvain feels the summer was a great success, "Thanks to *Summer Company* I was able to gain valuable experiences and I will continue to run my business as I return to university studies".



Elias on Fire

Elias Repka — Grand Valley

Elias spent his summer juggling with fire and astonishing crowds from Orangeville to Toronto with his circus arts performance. His shows can be formatted to suit a wide variety of events, such as festivals, corporate events and parties.

Elias was planning to run a street performance business before he heard of summer company, but he is convinced he would not have done so well on his own without the program. "The most important way in which this program helped me was to give me great motivation early on (the first weeks of my summer), and it is because of this that I was able to run Elias on Fire so well for the rest of the summer."

Thanks to this motivation and encouragement, Elias surpassed his revenue targets and made some important contacts with festival organizers, other performers and service providers. This will be useful when Elias continues his business next summer.

// The most important way in which this program helped me was to give me great motivation early on //



Église de Grilled Cheese

Wes Scheer-Hennings — Huntsville

Wes demonstrated entrepreneurial determination and flexibility in getting his food preparation business up and running. Wes's plan to offer "a product with the finest, most unique and most wholesome ingredients at a competitive price, and with outstanding service" almost didn't happen when the Ministry of Health told Wes he couldn't operate his summer business as forecast. However, he altered his plans to address their concerns and was soon up and running with their stamp of approval.

- ■ ■ challenges in getting operating insurance, hiring an employee and keeping track of his expenses kept him busy all summer ■ ■ ■

Originally, his grilled cheese sandwiches made from a variety of locally produced breads and premium cheeses, were to be sold from a cart. Because of Ministry of Health regulations, this became an enclosed kiosk — by doing most of the construction himself, he saved money. The idea for keeping his goods on ice also had to be abandoned. Wes had the additional expense of purchasing a fridge.

Further challenges in getting operating insurance, hiring an employee and keeping track of his expenses kept him busy all summer. However, he received plenty of assistance from his local *Small Business Enterprise Centre*: "Without the help of its manager, I literally would not have been able to operate".



Juice It Up

Karla Smith-Brown — Toronto

After a summer spent selling fresh mango, guava and strawberry juice at Toronto's busy Kensington Market, Karla has found what she wants to do for the rest of her life. "I love having my own business, even though it is a lot of work. I believe that being an entrepreneur is the career that fits me best."

The summer was not without its difficulties, however. Karla found that administration took up more time than she had expected. So much so, that at times she was finding it difficult to get enough sleep and to eat properly. As a result, she feels that the key to being successful is time management.

For Karla, networking was one of the most valuable uses of her time over the summer. "I met so many people that are willing to help me continue my successful juice business. I received many ideas and tips and have many connections that will help me in the future."

■ ■ ■ I believe that being an entrepreneur is the career that fits me best ■ ■ ■



Touch Body Care

Arne Stinchcombe — Thunder Bay

Arne's business idea came from a hobby. He had long been interested in making natural, handmade soaps as a more therapeutic alternative to commercially available products. When he became aware of *Summer Company* he jumped at the chance to work at something he truly enjoyed, rather than a summer job that he wasn't passionate about.

With the help of a graphic designer, Arne put together some arresting product displays and started making the rounds of local festivals. Selling product at \$3.50–4.00 per item is a hard way to make cash, but Arne persevered. In retrospect, he says he would have been more financially successful had he managed to place his product in stores or have a permanent retail space of his own.

While Arne did not meet his revenue targets, he did discover a new talent: a flair for marketing. He plans to pursue marketing and product development as a career.

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All-around Summer Maintenance

Patrick Thomsen — North Bay



All-around Summer Maintenance was an odd job business that provided a wide range of services, including activities such as painting of houses and decks, yard maintenance, lawn cutting, minor in-house repairs, reinstalling docks, and refuse removal. Although these events were anticipated to be in highest demand, All-around did not limit itself.

Patrick found several summer contracts with large commercial properties in addition to residential ones. He hired one full-time and two part-time employees to assist him with the work. Patrick was kept very busy throughout the summer as a result of his successes.

■ ■ ■ As the summer progressed I became more and more proficient at keeping my schedule organized ■ ■ ■

As a medical student, Patrick had very little business experience prior to this program. However, he worked hard on his organizational skills and managed to become very organized by the end of the summer. The business experience also allowed him to develop his time management and delegation abilities.

"As the summer progressed I became more and more proficient at keeping my schedule organized."

A Mentor's View

Donna Taylor, Owner,
The Apothecary, Blyth



Donna and her husband began running their own business in 1992 and know first hand the many challenges faced by entrepreneurs.

"Working with the mentor one-on-one allows the student a private opportunity to discuss their difficulties and success. The program not only allows students to learn about all aspects of running a business, but also allows them to learn a lot about themselves."

Donna became involved with the program as a result of her work with the Huron Business Development Board. After her third year as a *Summer Company* mentor Donna said "I have enjoyed the experience very much and will be more than happy to assist again next year. All the students were passionate about their businesses and worked very hard to fulfill their goals for the summer."

A Mentor's View

Stephen Wong, President & Founder,
ESM Group Inc., Markham



Stephen appreciates the real challenges faced by the *Summer Company* participants. As president and founder of ESM (eCommerce System and Marketing) Group Inc., and a partner and founder of the eTraining-ROOM, a distance learning development company, he faces many of these challenges himself.

An important element of Stephen's success as a mentor is the seriousness with which he approaches the task. "All of the mentors in Markham treat the companies as real, viable businesses. That's important".

Stephen has been a mentor for four years. He thinks this experience gives him an insight into which companies will really succeed over the summer. "You can't select participants based on the business plan alone. It's all about the attitude and confidence displayed by the student during the interview."

Stephen is inspired by the seriousness of these young people who are pursuing their business dreams at such a young age and he enjoys working with them to help fulfill their goals. "I have always enjoyed teaching. *Summer Company* is another way of teaching, but it's not so much teaching a skill as an attitude — how to be entrepreneurial and a good business person. It's a way of helping the next generation."

A Mentor's View

Donna Hilsinger, President, Algoma's Water Tower Inn, Sault Ste Marie



Donna has been working in the hospitality industry for close to 30 years, and is currently President of Algoma's Water Tower Inn where she continues to work with the staff to create an Inn of Excellence.

She initially became involved with the *Enterprise Centre Sault Ste. Marie* when asked to participate as a judge in the *Ontario Secondary School Business Plan Competition*, which then led to her working on the *Summer Company* program.

Donna says she would "most definitely participate in the program again" after completing her first year. "I very much enjoyed working on the *Summer Company* program. It's wonderful to be able to share my skills and knowledge and learn from the energy and ideas of the kids".

According to Donna, one of the most important aspects of the program is "that the kids get a chance to take their ideas and think through them by writing a business plan to make their business case. Then they get some experience with a lot of help and their hard work to learn how to take that plan and turn their vision into a reality."



Find out more about *Summer Company*
and the location of the *Small Business*
Enterprise Centre nearest you.

Call 1 800 387-5656 or visit

www.ontariocanada.com/summercompany

www.youthjobs.gov.on.ca

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