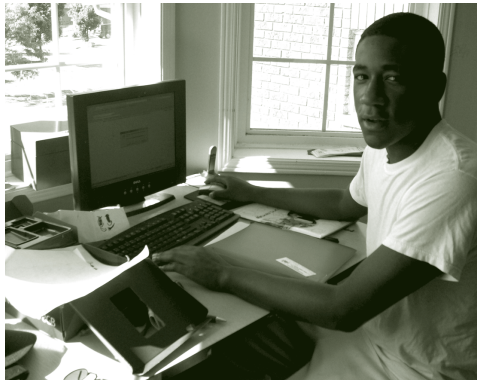


Summer
Company

2009
YEARBOOK



BE YOUR **OWN**BOSS

ontario.ca/summercompany



SUMMER COMPANY EXPERIENCE (2009)

Ontario's economy is driven by entrepreneurs and small business. In fact, 99 per cent of all businesses in our province have fewer than 500 employees. Entrepreneurs are creative, take risks and generate new opportunities for Ontario domestically and abroad.

Since the Summer Company program began in 2001, over 2,500 high school, college and university students from all areas of the province have taken part. Operating a wide range of businesses reflecting a variety of interests and pursuits—from swimming camps and cafés to personal training and website development— participants have worked hard, taken advantage of unforeseen opportunities and overcome unexpected challenges.

The following stories are some of the over 600 exciting ventures that young Ontarians launched last summer. Those profiled here—and all the other Summer Company participants are to be congratulated for their effort and determination. Clearly, they have what it takes to become tomorrow's business leaders and contribute to Ontario's growth and prosperity.



WANT A SUMMER JOB YOU'LL LOVE?

CREATE YOUR OWN BUSINESS WITH SUMMER COMPANY

With **Summer Company**, you can start up a business of your own and receive up to \$3,000 to run it. You will get a mentor to guide you and gain valuable business and leadership skills along the way. Who knows, it could be the start of something big. Apply now at ontario.ca/summercompany

 **Ontario**
Paid for by the Government of Ontario



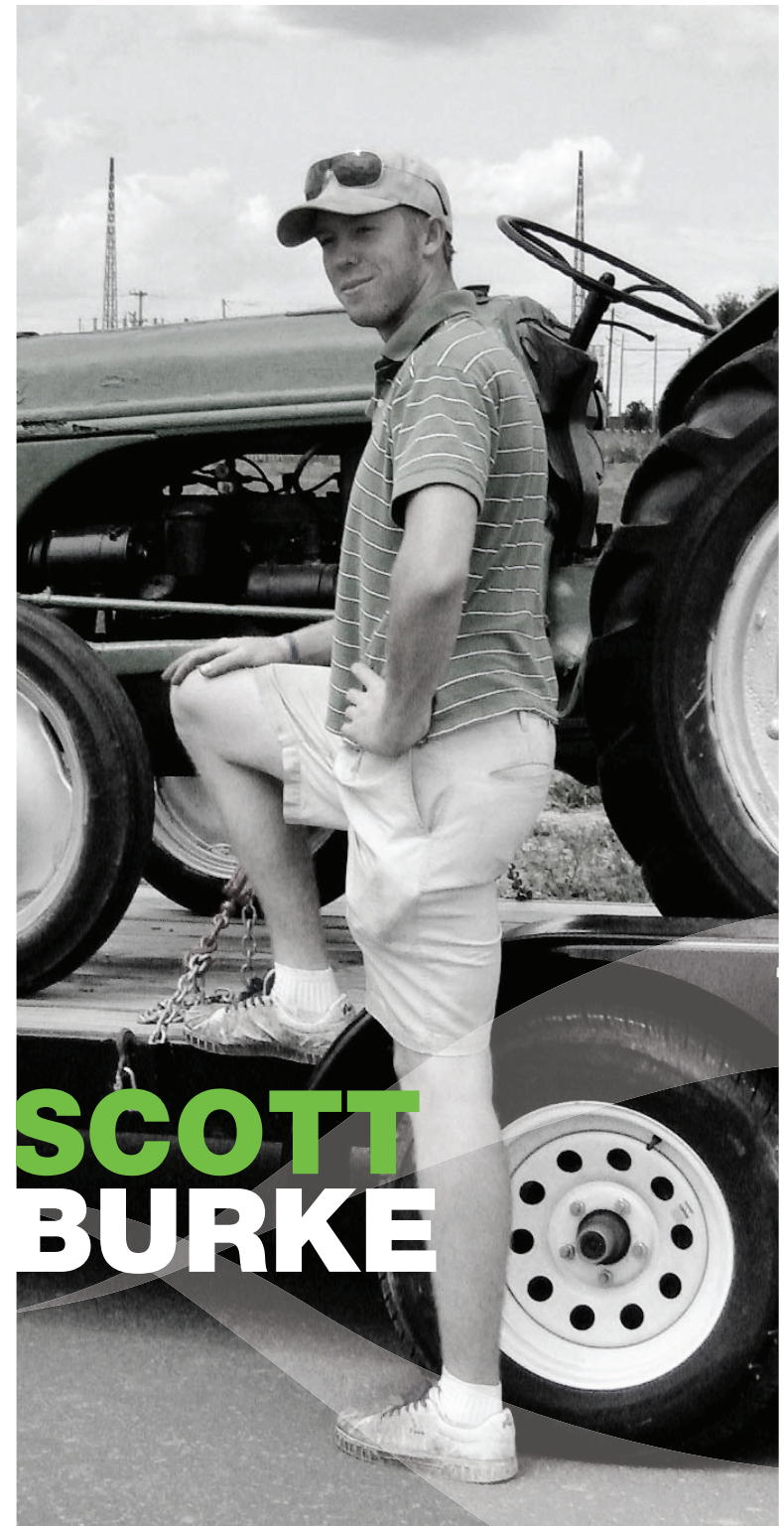
WINDSOR, ONTARIO **BURKE BROS. LANDSCAPING**

For Scott Burke, it was a very fortunate thing that the grass really wasn't greener on the other side.

The 20-year old owner and operator of Burke Bros Landscaping, a Summer Company, started out by selling his lawn care services to residential home owners. But, when Scott noticed that the vacant building lots in his home town were not being cut regularly, he seized the opportunity to let his company evolve. Scott approached the owner of the lots and offered to cut the grass for a fraction of what the city would charge for the same service.

He started tapping into that niche market by approaching other developers and securing additional contracts. Scott's business was so successful that he exceeded his projected sales by an impressive 58 per cent!

Scott's summer was extremely rewarding both financially and experience-wise. As this year's Summer Company chameleon, Scott tells future entrepreneurs, "Always adapt to further your business and embrace change." Scott Plans to run his business for a number of summers to come.



BURLINGTON, ONTARIO

BRIGHT NATION LONGBOARDS

After three years of making longboards for himself and his friends, Stephen Turliuk, then in grade 12, was asked if the boards were available for sale. Seeing an opportunity, he decided to start Bright Nation Longboards with the help of the Summer Company program. "It would have been much harder to run [a business] without the assistance of the program," Stephen says.

To create the skateboards, Stephen purchases sheets of thin wood veneer that he presses together and shapes into high-quality skateboards.

As a one-man operation, Stephen had a tough time getting his name out there. "I sold my boards wholesale to a customer in Toronto, and none of the boards that were put up for sale had my company name on them." The mistake taught Stephen the importance of brand awareness.

"I do see entrepreneurship as a career choice," says Stephen. "It's fun being your own boss, especially when you're doing something you love." Thanks to the knowledge and experience gained through the program, Stephen plans to continue the business next summer.



WIKWEMIKONG, ONTARIO

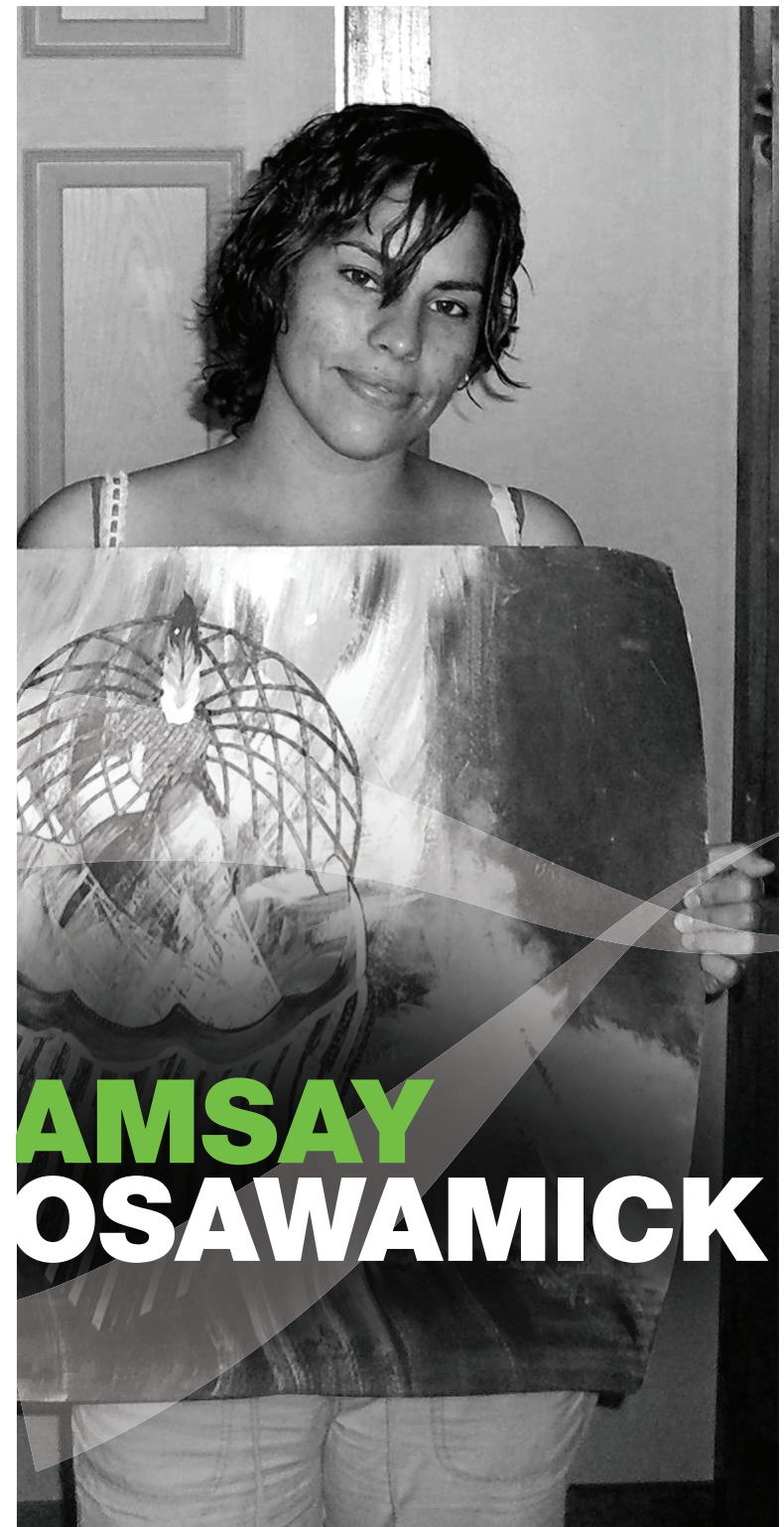
FRAMED IT

Starting a business had not even entered artist Amsay Osawamick's mind. Then the 22-year-old saw a posting for Summer Company and decided to create a business selling her original paintings and photography of nature and Aboriginal culture, set in her own handcrafted frames. And that's how Framed It came to life.

Early in the summer, Amsay realized her biggest challenge was keeping up with demand for the high-quality products. To keep up, she had to learn to schedule her time between carving frames, taking pictures, creating paintings and selling. Since much of her work was sold at events like powwows and cultural shows, Amsay had to both assess which events would generate the big-ticket sales and then make time to attend them. "Planning became my summer. I made the most of my time."

Amsay achieved her goal of earning money while doing something she loves. She also found that special requests from customers helped her grow and develop as an artist noting, "Some frames were really finely detailed. They sold for more than expected, but they took the longest to make."

With freelance photography emerging as a possible future career, Amsay's entrepreneurial adventures may have just begun.



AMSAY
OSAWAMICK

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

ONCE UPON A KINGDOM THEATRE STUDIO

Ekaterina Shestakova's passion for theatre and Russian culture gave rise to her novel Summer Company – a Russian-language theatre day camp for children aged 7 to 12. With almost eight thousand people in the Ottawa area identifying themselves as Russian or of Russian ancestry, Ekatarina knew Once Upon a Kingdom Theatre Studio could tap into a ready niche market.

Ekaterina admits that getting the business off the ground was not without its challenges. "I had difficulties finding [ways] to advertise in a short time-frame," she says of one problem. She wound up solving that problem through good old-fashioned word-of-mouth, and became well-known within the community as a result.

Coordinating a choreographer, costume designer and set designer for the production she put on with her nine students presented another challenge. But Ekaterina's production skills got her through it. The show's tremendous success was an indication of how much Ekaterina developed as a theatrical producer in a matter of weeks.

By summer's end, Ekaterina's business was gaining momentum, and the outlook for some fall business was "very promising." She plans to keep running Once Upon a Kingdom Theatre Studio in years to come. "Don't be afraid to take a chance and start your own business," she advises other youth. "You are young. Never stop exploring new possibilities."

EKATERINA SHESTAKOVA



FERGUS, ONTARIO

BIG CHEESE ORGANICS

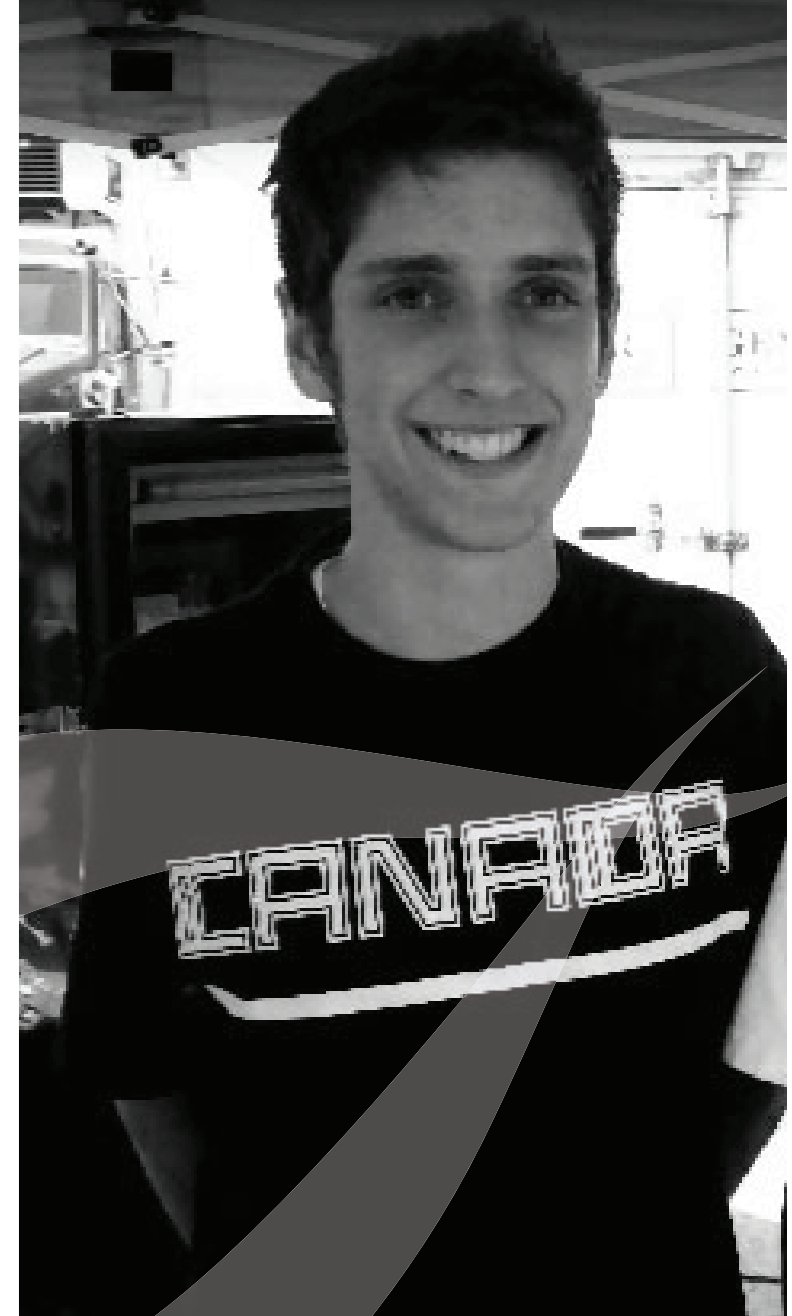
Denis O'Connor loved his local farmers market – the organic fruits, vegetables, honeys, fruit compotes and fresh pies. But the 18-year old realized something was missing – organic dairy products. So, with the help of the Summer Company program, he started Big Cheese Organics, a business that filled the gap by selling quality organic dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt at farmers' markets.

Denis purchased products from organic producers then sold them directly to consumers at local farmers' markets five to six days a week. The early mornings and long work days were tough but rewarding admitted Dennis, adding, "If you're late to the market, it really does hurt [business]."

Over the course of the summer, Denis worked hard to improve his time-management skills, and it paid off! His sales exceeded his initial target by 38 per cent. Denis' unique products and superior salesmanship kept customers flocking to his stand. "I had quite a few people coming up to me and telling me that they'd been referred by a previous customer."

Denis was glad to have had the opportunity to take part in the program saying, "It definitely changed my outlook on life."

DENIS O'CONNOR



OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

JANGLE RECORDS

Few teens dream about owning a music label, let alone create one. But seventeen-year old Elyse Simpson did just that. Combining her love for music and aptitude for business, Elyse launched a record label to mentor, market and merchandise its rock, folk and alternative musicians.

“I had pictured myself starting [a music label] much later in my life,” said Elyse. “After finding out about Summer Company, it gave me the advantage to start my company much sooner and, therefore, become more established at an early age.”

Within three months, Elyse had developed a website, signed two artists and held a public launch event covered by local media. But she’d also run into a challenge – the time it was taking to reach agreements with her artists also meant she was earning no revenue from selling their music. Elyse solved the problem by expanding into sales of T-shirts and other merchandise that complemented the music side of her business. “It helped balance out my income sheet,” she says.

Through a path that was unexpected, Elyse built a business that was more than she expected. By summer’s end, Jangle Records was growing and Elyse was looking forward to keeping it running during the school year.



BRANTFORD, ONTARIO OPEN SAYS-ME

Kiel Moreau used Summer Company to open doors – garage doors, that is. Through the program’s funding and guidance, Kiel, who admits he initially had no plans to start a summer business, founded Open Says-Me, a business that sells and installs garage-door openers to homeowners.

Early on, Kiel realized that if he didn’t directly target customers, they wouldn’t come to him. So he challenged himself and overcame his inhibition of selling door-to-door. “[It] was the most effective method to make sales,” he says.

Kiel also worked on improving his efficiency throughout the summer, managing to dramatically decrease the time it took him to install the openers. “It originally took three separate days and almost 15 hours of work. I’ve now narrowed that time to less than two hours per unit.”

For students looking to follow in his footsteps, Kiel suggests, “Work really hard, try as hard as you can and believe in your business idea.” Thanks to his Summer Company experience, Kiel plans to become an entrepreneur once he graduates from college.



NAPANEE, ONTARIO

SHESH KABOB KORNER

Wanting to bring a fresh culinary and cultural experience to her hometown, Hina Ahmed took advantage of the Summer Company program to open up Shesh Kabob Korner in downtown Napanee.

When she started the venture, it was a bit of a challenge for Hina not knowing which would be her most active business hours. “It took a while to get used to,” says the 18-year-old, “but once I knew the peak hours, I was able to prepare ahead of time for my customers.”

In August, Hina hit another roadblock. “I hadn’t accounted for the fact that many families go on a vacation during this month,” recalls Hina. Realizing she would not meet her projected sales figures for the month, Hina acted quickly. She increased her marketing efforts, taking advantage of free advertising on Fridays through her local radio station.

Hina took the summer as a learning experience and says her “participation in the Summer Company experience definitely provided ample opportunities to learn new skills and improve existing ones.” Although she never did before, Hina now sees entrepreneurship as a great career opportunity that she may pursue in the near future.



BROCKVILLE, ONTARIO

DOUG'S DOGS AND SAUSAGES

Dawson Beattie may have initially opened Doug's Dogs and Sausages last summer to make enough money to buy a guitar, but he ended up with a whole lot more. "I accomplished more than I ever thought possible," he says.

After making the decision to start his own business, Dawson didn't hold back. "I jumped in without a good idea of what I should do, how much inventory I should have on hand, etc.," he says. It took about three weeks for him to develop the rhythm and good, efficient business practices that he used all summer to operate and develop his hot dog vending business. "I learned to be consistent. If your hours of business state you are open at 11 a.m., be open by 11 a.m. sharp!"

By the end of the summer, Dawson had met his sales forecast (not to mention the money he needed to buy his guitar). He plans to use the extra cash he earned to help pay for his post-secondary endeavours. "I have a newfound respect for entrepreneurs," he says. "The Summer Company experience deeply enriched my summer."



DAWSON

BEATTIE

SUDURY, ONTARIO

ROGER'S ALUMINIUM RESTORATION

Facing the global economic recession last summer, Roger Touzin realized he would have to act fast to keep his newly-founded Summer Company venture going.

Roger's Aluminium Restoration, the company created by 21-year-old Roger, offered aluminium polishing services to truckers. The challenge for Roger was that his target market had been hit hard by the recession, "The first thing they cut from their spending was the aesthetic expenditures on their trucks, which meant aluminium polishing."

Being an entrepreneur, Roger rose to the challenge. He adjusted his prices to what the market dictated and went on a marketing spree, travelling to regional truck and car shows to promote his business. His commitment paid off, and his reputation for quality work grew along with his sales.

This was not Roger's first business and likely won't be his last. Still, he found the support the program provided to be helpful. "Hearing about Summer Company definitely gave me the motivation to get my business up and running," he says. Once he graduates from college, Roger plans to continue running his business. Watch out for him in the coming years!



NORTH BAY, ONTARIO **CAKE DESIGNS**

“Prior to learning about Summer Company, I had not even considered starting my own business,” says 16-year-old Jocelyne Bégin. She is the owner and operator of Cake Designs, a business that creates and sells custom cakes for all occasions.

Right off the bat, Jocelyne was surprised at the time commitment involved in running a business. “I figured I would work 35 hours a week and have the rest of the time to relax,” she says. “But I was constantly thinking about upcoming projects and things I had to accomplish.” Jocelyne had to learn how to effectively manage her time, especially on days when she had multiple cake orders to complete.

She also found that in order to generate sales, she sometimes had to step out of her comfort zone and actively offer her services to customers rather than wait for them to come to her. Over the summer, she became far more outgoing.

Jocelyne raved about her experience after running Cake Designs this past summer. “The sense of accomplishment is much greater than anything I’ve ever experienced.” Having proved to herself that she can run a business, Jocelyne sees entrepreneurship as a future career path.

JOCELYNE **BÉGIN**



HAMILTON, ONTARIO

LES PETITES POMMES FRENCH IMMERSION SUMMER CAMP

Mary Clements signed up for the Summer Company Program wanting to create a successful business teaching children French. In the summer of 2009 she launched Les Petites Pommes French Immersion Camp, and learned a few lessons along the way.

Mary picked up marketing, financial planning and time management skills. But her business would not have been successful had she not learned an even more important lesson. She says, “I found out the importance of building a good reputation.”

That lesson came about when a parent told Mary that the instructors and the children weren’t speaking enough French during the day. Sensing that her business’s reputation was on the line, Mary immediately set a rule that French was to be spoken at all times at the camp. Her quick reaction ensured a quality experience for the children and maintained her reputation.

“From this experience, I am definitely considering entrepreneurship as a possible career choice,” says Mary. “I’m very happy to have completed this project this summer. It’s truly been a milestone summer and a unique and rewarding experience!”



PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO

JOE PRO STUDENT PAINTING

Joseph Della Mora, had planned to start his own company for some time, so when he heard about Summer Company, he seized the opportunity. With plans to paint for over 50 hours per week, Joseph was ready to make JoePro Student Painting successful. It paid off.

“I managed to bust my butt to make the sales,” he says. Joseph, 19, also had an advantage over his competitors in Peterborough – as an independent business, he didn’t have to pay the franchise royalty fees that many other student painting businesses do. This allowed him to offer the lowest prices available.

By the end of the summer, JoePro had done so well that Joseph had several employees working for him. “I felt accomplished not only because I made a lot of money for myself, but also because I created summer jobs for local college and university students just like me.”

After meeting and surpassing all of his goals for the summer, Joseph returned to university in September. He sees a bright future for his business and plans to continue running it for summers to come.



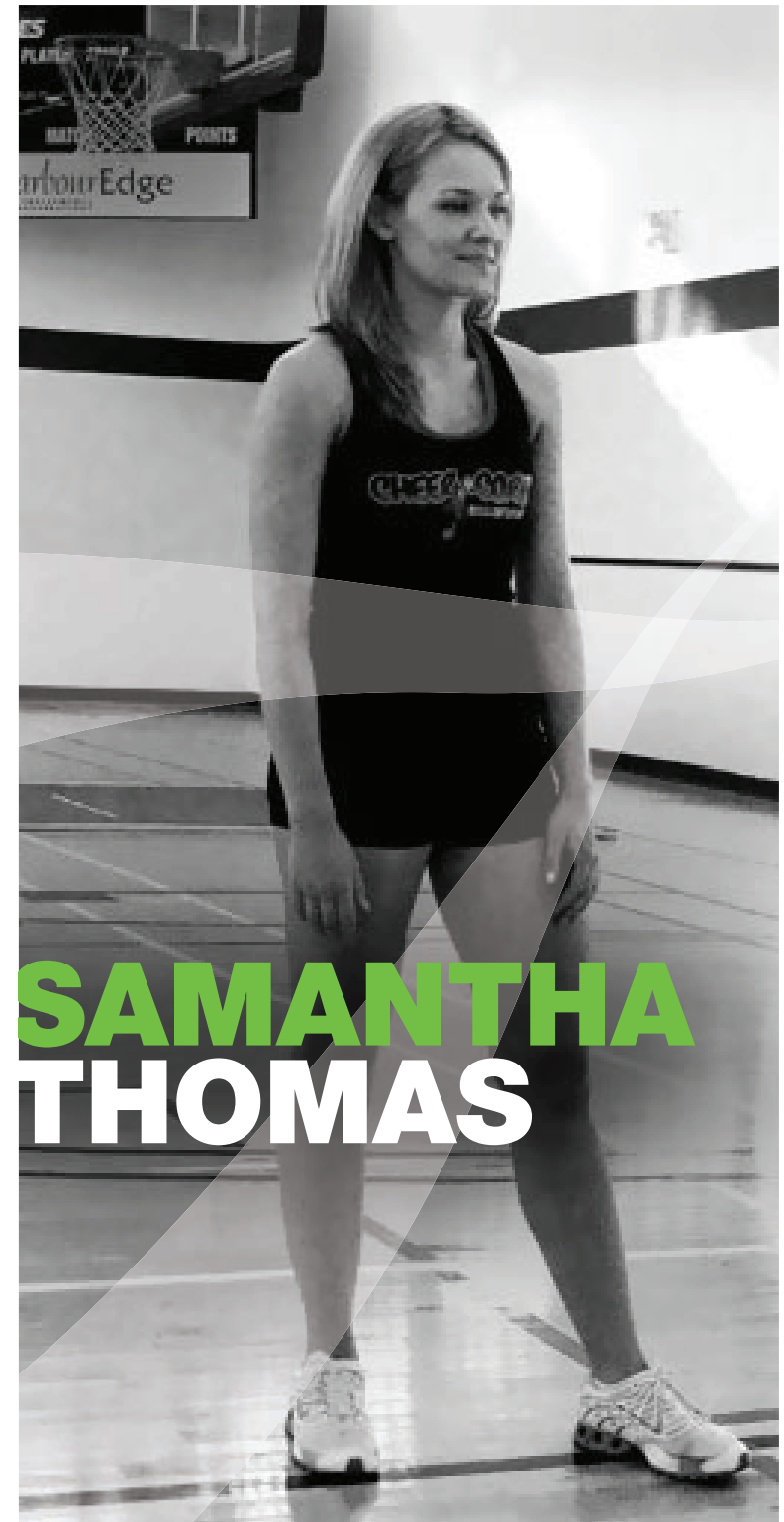
COLLINGWOOD, ONTARIO **CHEER CORE**

Samantha Thomas took advantage of the Summer Company program to start a business doing something she loved. The result was CheerCore, a cheerleading camp in Collingwood.

The overwhelming interest generated by her camp was a mixed blessing for the 22-year-old English major. “If I’d known there would be so many participants, I would have had their uniform shirts screen printed to save myself some time and money,” she said, referring to the uniforms handed out the first day.

Although the high enrolment forced her to incur unexpected costs for the uniform rush orders, Samantha compensated by cutting back on other costs like marketing – after all, word-of-mouth was working well for her.

By summer’s end, Samantha had coached over 40 participants – almost double her initial estimate of 25. When asked if she would continue to run her business, there were no two ways about it. “Absolutely!” she said. “I’m in this for the long run!”



BARRIE, ONTARIO

ARROW ADDICT

As the owner of Arrow Addict, 17-year-old Jordan Sookwah-Ragobeer launched his business to sell custom designed and hand drawn t-shirts. “During the Summer Company program I learned a lot of skills that could help not only in business, but in life.”

One thing Jordan learned early in the summer is that you have to be adaptable. When his plan to sell at Toronto’s Caribana festival fell through, he had to search for opportunities to connect with his customers closer to home. He found Kempenfest, Barrie’s largest venue event of the year. After managing to secure a great location at the festival free of charge, Jordan generated sales and introduced Arrow Addict to thousands of potential new customers.

Honing his marketing strategy also proved effective – Jordan replaced his standard flyers with custom-drawn stickers, which had a stronger impact on his teenage audience.

Jordan feels his Summer Company experience has been a success. “I believe that I am successfully branding Arrow Addict with my t-shirts and hopefully, as the company grows, it will be recognizable to consumers.”



JORDAN
SOOKWAH -
RAGOBEER

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO

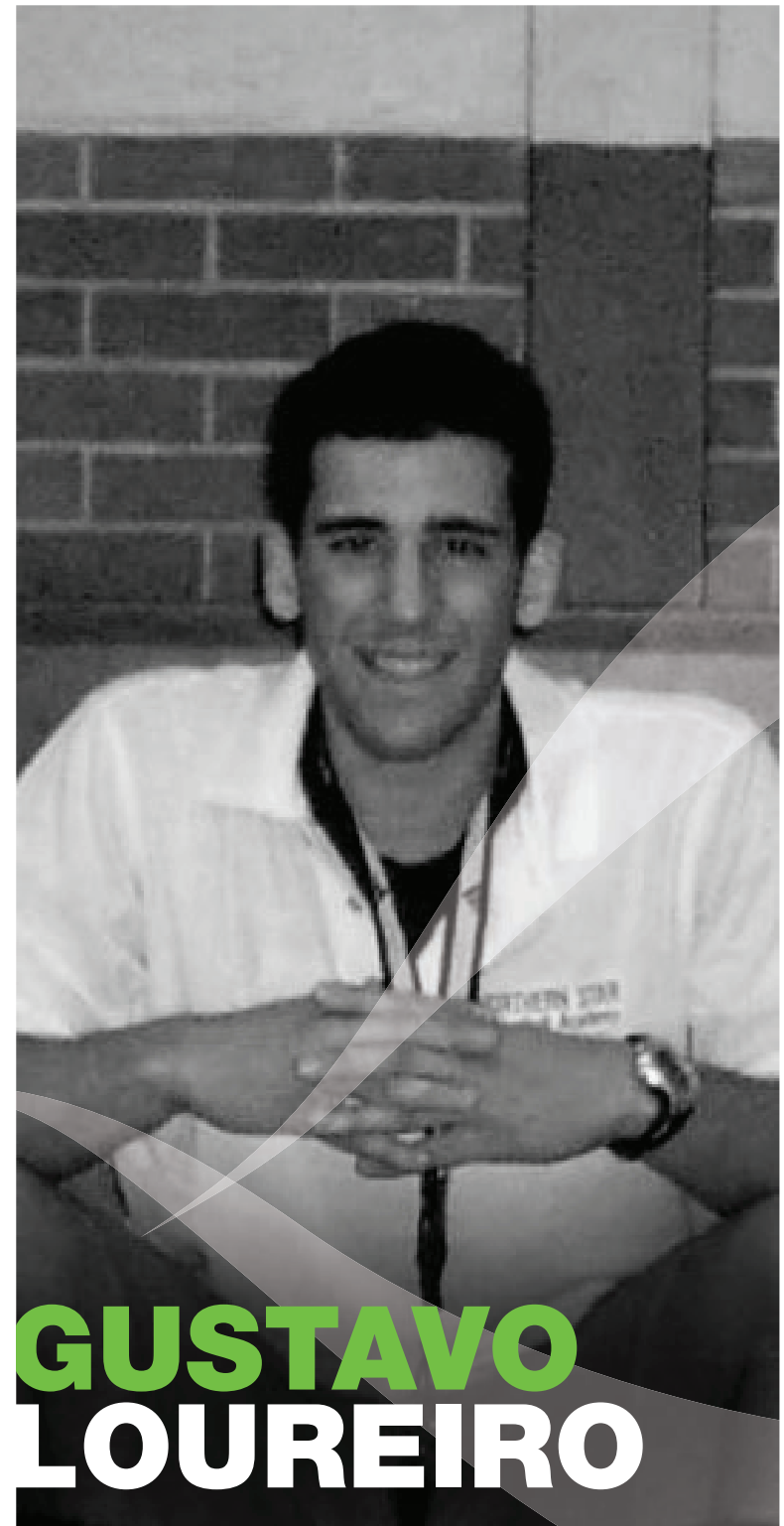
NORTHERN STAR BASKETBALL ACADEMY

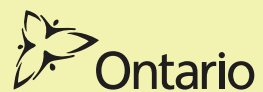
Basketball lover Gustavo “Nico” Loureiro had been considering starting his own business, and in 2009, with the help of the Summer Company Program, Northern Star Basketball Academy was born. The company offered fitness and basketball development programs for youth aged 6 to 18 years.

Nico will tell you that careful planning and preparation were the keys to his success. “You need to always think ahead and plan ahead...the more you plan, the more you can save,” he says.

After identifying his target market as elementary and secondary school students, Nico introduced himself to local schools and sent them information. The schools were happy to help a young entrepreneur and promoted his fitness-focussed business. That initial effort wound up generating enough word-of-mouth to keep Nico’s business in motion, something that saved him a lot of time and advertising dollars over the summer.

When asked whether he saw entrepreneurship as a possible career choice, Nico didn’t hesitate to say, “Definitely. I enjoy doing what I do. I like being my own boss.”





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

CALL 1 877 553-5507 or **VISIT** ontario.ca/summercompany