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- [Summer Company Yearbook 2015 \(https://www.ontario.ca/document/summer-company-yearbook/summer-company-yearbook-2015\)](https://www.ontario.ca/document/summer-company-yearbook/summer-company-yearbook-2015)

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Summer Company Yearbook 2015

Message from the Minister

It has been said that the best way to ensure your future is to go out and create it. This year, 865 Ontario students did just that: they used their ideas, creativity and drive to launch their own summer businesses.

I am pleased to present the 2015 Summer Company Yearbook, which showcases 28 of these young entrepreneurs. These are the Ontario youth who chose to become job creators rather than job seekers, with businesses ranging from eco-friendly social enterprises to new ventures in drone photography and software development.

Ontario's future prosperity depends on our youth having the right skills, experiences and supports to participate actively in the economy today and tomorrow. Our investment in the Summer Company program supports a new generation of entrepreneurs with hands-on opportunities in business training, mentorship and start-up grants. Since 2001, over 6,850 businesses have been started by program participants.

Congratulations to all of this year's participants. Your entrepreneurial spirit is inspiring. I wish you well in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Brad Duguid
Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure

Amy Kocher, Sew Cool by Amy, Stratford



The art of keeping customers in stitches

Amy Kocher's first foray into the world of retail sales at a local farmers' market did not go well.

But if there was one thing the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) student learned during Summer Company, it was how to adapt and meet obstacles head on.

"I was in a building in a remote location and I was disappointed with the results," says Amy. "I realized changes were necessary."

The next time she went to market, she secured an outdoor location with a greater volume of traffic and spread the word about her custom sewing business, **Sew Cool by Amy**, through social media.

Amy said she learned she needed to create positive experiences out of negative ones – like the changes she made after her initial disappointing experience at the market – so she could stay motivated to stick with her business.

The program not only gave her an opportunity to run her own business but also to earn credits toward her SHSM seal through the Summer Entrepreneurship Co-operative pilot.

"Being in complete control of all decisions was stressful at times but a valuable learning experience," says Amy, who plans to continue her business part-time during the school year in order to expand her product line to reach a greater target market; and increase brand awareness.

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Anna Dalcin, Anna's Lawn Care, Hornepayne (Timmins)



Change the oil and check the books

Some may say a small town of 1,000 people off the main track is not an ideal location for a new business, but young entrepreneur Anna Dalcin saw an opportunity.

Backed by careful observation, thorough market analysis, and experience maintaining family and neighbours' lawns, Anna decided to start **Anna's Lawn Care**, a business offering quality and reliable lawn care services to her community.

At first, she capitalized on the high demand from a largely retired population of seniors often away on travels. As word spread of her services, Anna diversified her business to include commercial contracts as well as residential work. She increased her revenue streams by adding garden care and hedge trimming. Rainy days offered a pocket of time for bookkeeping and marketing.

Anna advertised via flyers and Facebook, but the outdoor-loving young woman found her most effective marketing was simply being seen hard at work.

Her biggest challenge? Learning to maintain her lawn equipment. "Now I know how to change oil and fuel filters *and* calculate profit margins."

She credits her Summer Company program provider, mentor and other business advisors. "I was able to overcome all of my roadblocks," says Anna, who plans to continue her business part-time during the high school year, and next summer.

[facebook.com/annaslawncares](https://www.facebook.com/annaslawncares) (<https://www.facebook.com/annaslawncares>)

Avery Campbell, Awarding Canada, Kingston



Ingenuity takes flight

Avery Campbell loves to travel. The third-year Queen's University Law student also loves to save money. Applying ingenuity to the travel points reward process, he came up with a way to travel to more than 50 countries for much less than the average ticket price. In the process, and with the help of Summer Company, a business idea took flight.

Awarding Canada offers two services: award bookings and credit consultations. *Award bookings* processes travel requests based on the client's inventory of frequent flyer points and miles. *Credit consultations* advises individuals and businesses on how to structure their credit card portfolio to maximize return on credit spending.

"Consumers are frustrated with how difficult it is to redeem frequent flyer points and miles", says Campbell. His company helps passengers avoid the expensive fees charged to redeem points for travel.

Avery also writes a popular travel blog on frequent flyer points and miles. He's been buoyed by the rapid success of **Awarding Canada**, which has garnered clients from across North America and achieved significant revenues in its first few months.

"Summer Company provided the funds I needed to start the company, without which, I would not have started due to risk aversion," he says.

"It offered education and supervisory services that helped me start and grow the business", which he plans to continue.

www.awarding.ca (<http://www.awarding.ca/>)

[facebook.com/dctaca](https://www.facebook.com/dctaca) (<https://www.facebook.com/dctaca>)

dcta.boardingarea.com (<http://dcta.boardingarea.com/>)

Cassie Wilson, Cassie's Southern Kitchen, Manitoulin Island (Sudbury)



A recipe for success

Cassie Wilson is a young entrepreneur who brought authentic Louisiana cuisine to Manitoulin Island with her food truck, fittingly named **Cassie's Southern Kitchen**.

"Cooking has always been a part of my life and when I had the opportunity to take part in Summer Company and start my own food truck, I was thrilled," says Cassie, a third-year student at Redeemer University College.

Her family's roots are in the Southern United States, and her relatives helped by sending key ingredients – mainly authentic spice mixtures – for her recipes.

Most days, she could be found serving up mouth-watering fare in the town of Mindemoya, but with a travelling "restaurant", she was able to bring her business to special events elsewhere on the island, such as her Canada Day opening, when she invited

islanders and tourists via her business Facebook page to "come get a hot bowl of gumbo and a fresh biscuit to keep you going all Canada Day long!"

With the start-up support she received from Summer Company, Cassie plans to keep her kitchen rolling along for at least a couple of more seasons. "This makes perfect sense" she says, "since there is a shortage of both summer jobs, and places to eat, on Manitoulin Island."

[facebook.com/cassiessouthernkitchen](https://www.facebook.com/cassiessouthernkitchen) (<https://www.facebook.com/cassiessouthernkitchen>)

Cavan Laferriere, Temiskaming Kayak Academy, Temiskaming



Finding smooth waters

With four paddles nested below eagle's wings, pointing east, west, north and south, the **Temiskaming Kayak Academy's** logo is an apt image for the way Cavan Laferriere has guided his company since launching with Summer Company's support.

Describing what he teaches with words like "edging" and "bracing", you might guess that Cavan Laferriere was in the construction business.

Instead, you'd find the University of Guelph student demonstrating these skills in the crystal waters off the shores of Temiskaming, where he spent the summer teaching and promoting the sport of kayaking to adults and kids alike through his popular day and weeklong camps.

Seasonal businesses can be challenging. Using skills he learned from the Summer Company program, Cavan promoted his business through multiple channels, including colourful brochures to advertise his courses and a Facebook page filled with images of paddlers of all ages.

He also diversified by forming strategic arrangements with other local businesses, such as a popular adult kayak and yoga weekend retreat collaboration, and programs for guests of nearby hotels, as well as his core after-school kid's programs and adult lessons.

"I have learned a lot about running my own business, especially the importance of good bookkeeping and accounting," said Cavan, who plans to continue his business next summer.

[facebook.com/TemiskamingKayakAcademy](https://www.facebook.com/TemiskamingKayakAcademy) (<https://www.facebook.com/TemiskamingKayakAcademy>)

[tsacc.ca/m/listing/view/TemKayakAcad](http://www.tsacc.ca/m/listing/view/TemKayakAcad) (<http://www.tsacc.ca/m/listing/view/TemKayakAcad>)

Charlee Johnston, NakdBasics, Owen Sound



Creating a healthy bottom line

What goes onto your skin can also have a big effect on what goes into your body.

Inspired by her background in the health and supplements field, 25-year-old Georgian College nursing student Charlee Johnson decided to launch **NakdBasics**, her own line of all natural skin oils, scrubs, and spritzes, to give customers a natural, effective alternative to the harsh chemicals found in many beauty products.

She found success by listening to her clients' unique needs and adapting quickly to create custom versions and new lines of her products, resulting in a large spike in sales shortly after starting her company.

Nominated for the Owen Sound and District Chamber of Commerce's New Business of the Year *and* the Young Entrepreneur Award, Charlee largely credits her Summer Company experience for her success. She learned how to build a business plan and developed bookkeeping and financial management skills through the program.

"All progress takes place out of your comfort zone", she says. "I had no idea what to expect when going into Summer Company. I turned down a summer job to take a chance and I am so grateful that I did."

I am truly humbled by this experience and can't wait to push forward. This is the feeling I was craving: success."

[facebook.com/NakdBasics](https://www.facebook.com/NakdBasics) (<https://www.facebook.com/NakdBasics>)

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Daniel Pfingstgraef, MMD Data Systems, St. Thomas-Elgin



Time is everything

When Western University computer science student Daniel Pfingstgraef started off in the Summer Company program, he had full intentions to launch a web development company. What he learned along the way, though, led him to expand into a healthcare solutions business as well.

MMD Data Systems started off by creating websites for businesses in the St. Thomas area, including healthcare providers. He saw that many healthcare professionals were spending a large amount of time on paperwork, especially appointment booking and follow up, so he developed *appointmentmaker.ca*. This technology gives medical and dental patients the ability to book appointments, set up automated reminders and complete healthcare forms online. By the end of the summer, **MMD Data Systems** had achieved 150% of its financial projections.

Daniel says the various accounting and resource management skills he learned in the Summer Company program have been a real asset going forward.

"I also learned how to speak with others in a professional setting, and I've found that this is much more important than I ever imagined it would be," says Daniel.

Daniel's experience demonstrated how Summer Company gives participants an opportunity to develop and adapt their business plans, through the mentoring and expert advice provided by the program.

Daniel's business has continued to grow. He now provides services to clients in Manitoba and has hired an employee to help him take his business to the next level.

mmddata.website/company.php (<http://mmddata.website/company.php>)

Emma Arnott, Two Sisters Fruit & Vegetables, Niagara Falls



Harvesting passion

Emma Arnott has a great appreciation for what the Niagara Region has to offer – especially its exceptional fresh produce. She's also a big believer in buying locally.

With the help of the Summer Company program, the Niagara College student was able to combine those passions in her own enterprise, **Two Sisters Fruit & Vegetables**.

Bolstered by the business skills she learned from the program, such as sales and marketing techniques, Emma beautified a roadside stand and acquired a refurbished delivery van to get her produce business growing.

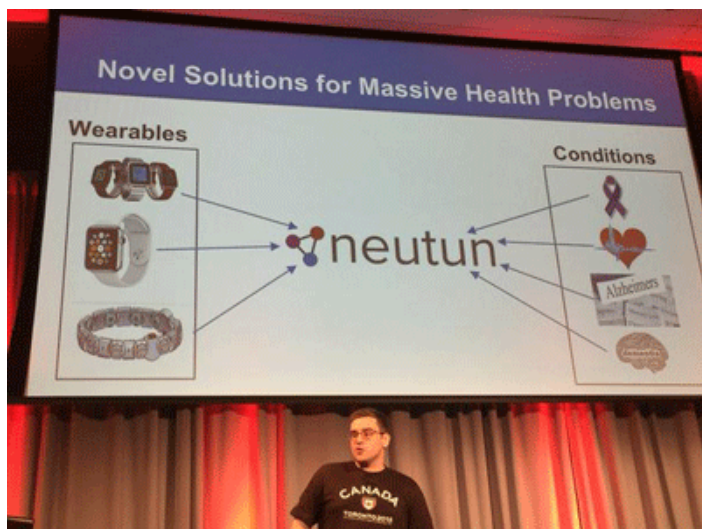
Receiving daily shipments of fruits and vegetables from local farmers, Emma's fresh produce quickly became a major hit with tourists and locals alike.

With repeat customers visiting the stand to stock up, she was able to exceed her sales targets and develop personal relationships with many people in the community.

Emma ensured that none of her unsold product was wasted, giving back to the community by making an arrangement with a local food bank that purchased her day old produce at a discount.

Inspired by her summer experience, she continued selling her produce into the fall, setting up a weekly booth at a local Farmers' Market. Emma intends to run **Two Sisters Fruit & Vegetables** again next summer and hopes to open a second location as well. Her dream: to own a farm of her own one day!

Eric Dolan, Neutun, Vaughan



Inspiration creates aspirations

As much as Eric Dolan's mother was the inspiration for his business, it would be fair to say the Summer Company program was the catalyst that helped turn his aspirations into reality.

As a student watching his mother struggle with epileptic seizures, Eric started researching the condition and found very little data existed on how epileptic seizures happen in real time.

He also discovered that there was no system or device in existence to capture data and provide an early warning to those suffering from epileptic seizures.

Through Summer Company, Eric developed **Neutun**, an app that works with smart watches and wearable devices to warn the wearer when a seizure is imminent. But that was just the beginning.

Over the summer, Eric secured new business partnerships and developed a user base, and then went on to expand into his current endeavour of creating wearable technology that will work with products such as the Apple Watch to monitor a range of chronic conditions in addition to epilepsy. Eric was so successful that, mid-way through the summer, he was accepted to a major incubator in Philadelphia, completing Summer Company remotely.

A postgraduate student at The John Hopkins University, Eric says the program created an environment where he could think about how to expand and grow, like the idea of partnering with local hospitals.

"Why go to Silicon Valley when there are opportunities here at home?"

neutun.com

(<https://t.ysware.com/tl/d002a298658e9ff27a83ca434e899e0e9da5ba41/8c1497c6e446b9c691ebbab3b71a99a5/d4ea9ff76a7b5701b3e88b7843a144b9?ytI=http%3A%2F%2Fneutun.com%2F>)

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Giselle Groskleg, French Hill Stables, Renfrew



Tall in the saddle

No matter what trail she ends up taking with her business, Giselle Groskleg can ride tall in the saddle for what she's done so far.

Giselle took her hobby of riding and caring for horses, and with the help of Summer Company, turned it into **French Hill Stables**, a business that provides horse training and riding lessons to students of all ages and levels, but mostly children.

A francophone, Giselle says her business was unique because she was the only riding instructor in her area who offered bilingual riding lessons.

The riding instructor/trainer gave private and semi-private lessons to large numbers of young students over the summer. She also attended horseshows with her students and helped them prepare to compete, even going as far as providing competition-level tack for their mounts.

Giselle appreciated having the opportunity Summer Company gave her to talk to other young entrepreneurs and share experiences about how they handled some of the same challenges she was facing.

"You get to hear about other people's journeys and you start to realize running a business is not as scary as you thought."

Giselle plans to continue her business sometime in the future, but for now she's focused on her studies at the University of Ottawa, where she is a first-year student working toward a Major in Psychology and a ~~B.A~~ in French.

Glen Reavie, Entostatic: Insect Taxidermy, Barrie



Shadowboxing Mother Nature

Aspiring entomologist Glen Reavie took a life-long fascination with all things insect, and with Summer Company's help, found a way to combine his passion with his desire to start a business.

Through the Summer Company program, Glen launched **Entostatic**, an insect taxidermy business selling hand crafted, colourful and esthetically pleasing pieces of framed insects and shadowboxes.

As he learned the finer points of running a company and executing a business plan, Glen noted that he found it interesting to see how the theoretical plan matched up against reality in areas such as time management and the most effective marketing techniques.

"I learned what works and what doesn't work in given situations," said the first-year University of Guelph environmental biology student. "I loved Summer Company. It was the best decision I ever made in my life."

Just as the ubiquitous ant is capable of moving freely around the world, Glen purposefully buys insects for his taxidermy creations from international farms located all over the globe. "This promotes the beauty of global insect biodiversity, and protects the population of insect species."

With this wide array of species, good quality materials, and hand crafted components, Glen has been able to stand out from local competitors and create a thriving, successful business, which he plans to run for the foreseeable future.

Greg DeLaunay, Tron-Club, Toronto



Business logic outside the box

Greg DeLaunay can tell you anything you need to know about building logic circuits and electronic games, but before he joined the Summer Company program, some of the basics of doing business simply did not compute for him. That changed during the summer as he learned about everything from social media to time management for his mail order circuit building kit club, **Tron-Club**.

The club delivered a new project every month to subscribers, allowing them to learn the inner workings of each "black box" device and build their own from scratch or receive the completed version if they preferred.

"One of the challenges was I had higher demand than expected, and the program instructors gave us great direction on so many things to do with management and financing."

While Greg welcomed the start-up funds he received and the legitimacy he gained in the eyes of friends and family when he was accepted into the program, he cites the experience he gained and exposure to other business people as a key turning point.

"The nicest thing was we had group sessions where entrepreneurs would come in, and it was great to hear from people who were going through the same thing," says the third-year engineering physics student at McMaster University, who plans to continue his overwhelmingly successful business.

"Now I live by one little motivation: 'Every day, every day, every day, no days off!'"

tronclub.com/ (<http://tronclub.com/>)

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James Juras, Hol Food, Toronto



The whole package

The brainchild of James Juras, a recent Neural Science graduate and current Master's degree candidate in Artificial Intelligence, **Hol Food** was born out of the desire to create holistic meal replacement options as an alternative to traditional formulas.

Inspired by the health benefits of his own active lifestyle, and perceiving a niche opportunity in the holistic foods market, James developed his business plan and launched his company with support from the Summer Company program.

Marketing **Hol Food** as "one of the first companies in Canada to provide holistic meal replacement options and one of the first in the world to provide customized-nutritional solutions", James further differentiated his company by adding a humanitarian objective to his bottom line.

"Since the beginning, the spirit of nutritionally complete food has been embedded with the idea that it has the power to change the world for the better," says James.

His goal in that sphere has been "to determine the positive impact nutritionally complete foods could have in disaster relief and other food insecure situations", and says he is in talks with a major disaster relief organization that has expressed interest in using **Hol Food** specifically in disaster situations.

James plans on continuing his business, hoping that **Hol Food** will ultimately become a renowned industry brand.

[holfood.com \(http://holfood.com/?variant=5557753347\)](http://holfood.com/?variant=5557753347)

[Twitter: @holfood \(https://twitter.com/holfood\)](https://twitter.com/holfood)

[Instagram: holfood \(https://instagram.com/holfood/\)](https://instagram.com/holfood/)

Jonathan Turco, SociusPro, Toronto



The big picture

There's a saying in business that the customer is always right. Jonathan Turco decided to test that theory by using technology to capture the true "face" of customer feedback through a video sharing platform.

SociusPro, the business Jonathan developed through Summer Company, uses a touch-screen TV and web camera to allow companies to collect customer testimonials, experiences, stories, and reviews in real-time on their premises. This specialized software application has a face recognition system that automatically categorizes the feedback as positive or negative.

SociusPro has already achieved success with clients such as Second City; and Jonathan hopes to penetrate the hotel industry next. The system was also showcased at the PanAm and Parapan Am Accessibility Conference at the MaRS Discovery Centre, a business incubator that helps entrepreneurs launch and grow innovative companies.

Jonathan credits his Summer Company experience with giving him the perspective he needed to deal with the day-to-day challenges of running a business.

"The biggest thing was realizing there are other people out there in the same boat," says Jonathan, a 25-year-old **MMSc** student at Ryerson's Ted Rogers School of Management.

"As a student trying to start a business, you see others who were facing the same struggle, and you realize if you just keep going, it can all pan out, because it's a marathon, not a sprint."

[sociuspro.ca/about.php](http://www.sociuspro.ca/about.php) (<http://www.sociuspro.ca/about.php>)

Josiah and Mattea Lodewyk, Tasty Turkeys (Josiah); Rapha Ridge Rabbitry (Mattea), St. Catharines





Sibling harmony

Teen siblings Josiah and Mattea Lodewyk share an entrepreneurial spirit and love of agricultural life. Josiah has had a turkey farming passion since age 10, and Mattea, an interest in rabbits since childhood. With help from Summer Company, they found themselves becoming the youngest farmers in the Niagara region as they turned their business ideas into reality.

"Farming is definitely a commitment," explains Mattea. "But it's really enjoyable. I love the agricultural way of life and seeing the life cycle of animals from beginning to end."

With some research, the 17-year-old discovered the rising demand for rabbit meat among both local and immigrant communities in the Greater Toronto Area, and established **Rapha Ridge Rabbitry** to provide lean, locally-grown, low calorie rabbit meat in a marketplace that lacked similar options.

Meanwhile, 15-year-old Josiah found a niche market with significant demand for his pasture-raised, antibiotic-free turkeys. Launching his business, **Tasty Turkeys**, he was able to pre-sell his entire flock to customers interested in purchasing these premium-priced birds.

Both teens have wholeheartedly taken to farming life and the opportunity to be their own boss. They plan to continue scaled-down versions of their businesses during the school year.

"You'd be tied down working at Tim Hortons, too, where you have shifts," Josiah said. "Running your own business, being at the farm, it's beautiful."

Keigan Goetz, Goetz Fabricating, New Hamburg (Waterloo Region)



Iron work takes steely resolve

Keigan Goetz has been helping his father in the metal shop since he was a young boy, so it was only a matter of time before he turned his hobby into a business.

He quickly learned, though, that he would need more than craftsman skills to make a go of his custom iron work business, **Goetz Fabricating**. That's where Summer Company came in.

"The Summer Company program helped me a lot with my confidence," says Keigan. "Before the program, I wasn't a very good salesman, and to be honest, quite shy when talking to people I didn't know."

Keigan learned different techniques and approaches for talking to others and networking, making him more self-assured when dealing with customers and running his business.

He sold several pieces at markets but found his true success in creating custom made to order items. He saw the revenue for his **Goetz Fabricating** business almost double month to month over the course of the summer, and he now has a waiting list for his custom iron work.

He plans to refine his techniques at welding school, so that next summer, he can offer customers an even greater range of work.

Kyrstan Edmondson, Take A Break, St. Thomas



The special perks of running a business

Kyrstan Edmondson learned a lot about running a business with her coffee shop enterprise, but the greatest insight she gained may have been what she discovered about herself.

As her mother Denise notes, Kyrstan's **Take a Break** business project selling coffee beans at the historic Caso Station in St. Thomas was a new and unknown experience that posed a special challenge for her developmentally disabled daughter, a student at Arthur Voaden Secondary School.

But with the help of her mother, program mentor and others in the Summer Company program, Kyrstan discovered what she already had inside her.

"I believe the best reward was proving to herself that she can do anything she wants when she puts her mind to it," says Denise.

Through the program and her experience running the coffee shop two days a week, Kyrstan learned a host of entrepreneurial skills, including how to partner with other businesses, deliver quality customer service, adapt her plans on the fly and polish her math and accounting skills.

And with the support of her mother, Kyrstan plans to continue her business by handing out flyers and selling specialty coffee beans on a per order basis.

"She has shown great growth in her self-esteem and confidence and has proved that her abilities are truly stronger than her disabilities."

Leslie Ashworth, Suite Melody Care©, Halton



Scaling the heights with musical gifts

An upbeat pop hit from the past urged everyone to enjoy the good feelings from singing a song.

In a sense, Leslie Ashworth is channeling those sentiments today with **Suite Melody Care©**, a volunteer program that encourages musically-talented youth to give back to the community by performing in hospitals, retirement homes and long-term care facilities across the G.T.A.

Summer Company was instrumental in helping Leslie, a homeschooled Grade 12 student, who takes online learning courses, get her business off the ground. With the marketing and networking skills she developed during the summer, she was able to attract the interest of new venues, students and sponsors while garnering praise from the community. In fact, she was recently awarded The Lieutenant Governor's Community Service Youth Award for her dedication to the community.

"The Summer Company Program was an incredible experience that enabled me to take my ideas for the **Suite Melody Care©** program to the next level," says Leslie.

"It gave me the tools, confidence and knowledge to build an organization that positively impacts our community and inspires others, young and old, to give back."

With more than a dozen volunteer performers and hundreds of attendees so far, **Suite Melody Care©** performances continue to be scheduled in venues across the region, and audiences can relive the performances through a complimentary CD/DVD produced by Leslie.

[suitemelodycare.com](http://www.suitemelodycare.com) (<http://www.suitemelodycare.com>)

Louise Marchand, Aura, London



Good work by design

The situation of foreign garment workers in countries with little or no labour standards weighed heavily on Louise Marchand.

So the fashion design student at London's Fanshawe College set about offering an alternative for consumers with her company **Aura**: a full service sewing and design company that specializes in socially conscious women's ready to wear and customized apparel. All of the **Aura** brand products are sweatshop free, made in Canada, and certified organic, ensuring a positive impact on society.

"Summer Company really showed me all the components necessary for the day-to-day running of a business," says Louise.

"They offered a safe environment to attempt, fail, learn, and adapt. I knew so many more things at the end of just four short months. And for starting a business, that is invaluable knowledge."

Louise really enjoyed networking and learning from other students in the program, which she notes helped keep everyone's successes and failures in context.

Many times during the summer when she felt like she was doing "a terrible job," she'd turn to those meetings with her peers for support and feedback.

"The biggest lesson I learned was that as an entrepreneur, you just have to persevere and stay optimistic," says Louise, who plans to continue her business. "We can all be our own worst critic, and I learned how to give myself the credit I had earned."

Candace, Natasha and Sabrina Pardo, Candace Piano Magic; Natasha Solutions; Party Adventures, Brampton



All in the family

The family business has long been a staple of the community, but the Pardo sisters gave it a whole new meaning through Summer Company.

Natasha was the first to apply to the program when the family saw a Summer Company sign on the road, then Candace and Sabrina joined in too. Now they help each other run their respective businesses. Sabrina and sister Isabella helped Natasha administer **Natasha Solutions**, her first aid and swimmer certification business.

Candace added "umph" to her home-based music lessons business, **Candace Piano Magic**, by encouraging clients to invite friends and family for a giant jam session that often included Natasha, Sabrina, Isabella and brother Alex playing along and helping teach younger clients as well.

Sabrina's **Party Adventures** business grew out of a family practice of having play dates for each of their seven siblings that mushroomed into neighbourhood events. During the summer, Sabrina offered themed parties "without the frazzle"; her siblings pitched in with ideas and helped with the legwork.

Homeschooled until the end of Grade 12, all three sisters are now enrolled full-time in Athabasca University, which specializes in online distance education. All three are continuing their businesses.

"Our program provider gave us all so much support and information about everything from advertising to insurance," says Candace. "We can't thank them enough."

natashasolutions@outlook.com (<mailto:natashasolutions@outlook.com>)

[candacepianomagic.net/](http://www.candacepianomagic.net/) (<http://www.candacepianomagic.net/>)

[partyadventures.biz/](http://www.partyadventures.biz/) (<http://www.partyadventures.biz/>)

Samantha Luck, Sam Luck House and Cottage Portraits, Sault Ste. Marie



She paints houses. Really.

Working towards her Bachelor of Illustration degree at Sheridan College, 19-year-old Samantha Luck used to paint just for fun, until she realized – after some encouragement from family and friends – that she could turn her passion into a successful business.

Creating vivid, beautiful painted portraits of area homes for fun and gifting them to her neighbours, Samantha would attach a contact card to the mailbox, and quickly realized she was on to something from the delighted response to her paintings.

Narrowly missing the deadline to participate in the previous year's Summer Company program, time was on her side this year, and she enthusiastically pursued her niche business, **Sam Luck House and Cottage Portraits**, creating custom portraits of people's homes and cottages.

"People have a strong connection with their homes", says Samantha. "My business gives me so much pleasure because it's making other people happy, and that makes me happy," she says.

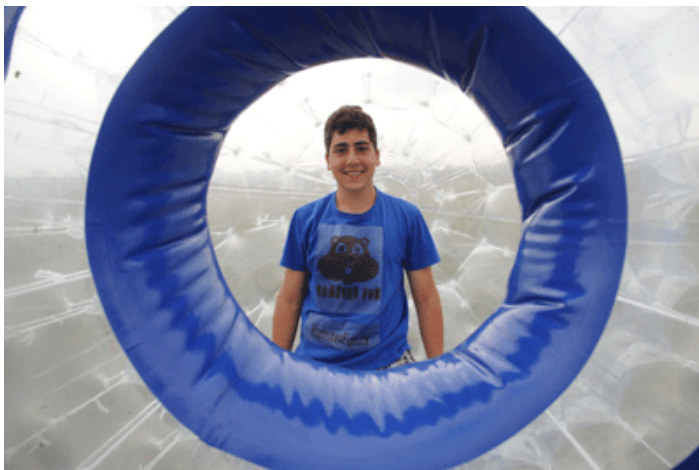
"The Summer Company experience taught me a lot about operating my own business, including how to create a business plan, advertise, and manage cash flow." And as a result: "I got even more clients than last year."

Having returned to college this fall, Samantha hopes to continue her business, confident in the realization that she can have an enjoyable, viable career as both an artist and an entrepreneur.

[samluckhouseart.com \(http://www.samluckhouseart.com/\)](http://www.samluckhouseart.com/)

[facebook.com/Sam-Luck-Home-and-Cottage-Portraits-741862142544684/ \(http://www.facebook.com/Sam-Luck-Home-and-Cottage-Portraits-741862142544684/\)](http://www.facebook.com/Sam-Luck-Home-and-Cottage-Portraits-741862142544684/)

Sari Abukhadra, Hamster Fun, Mississauga



Embrace the rat race

Most people get stressed out when they feel they're just running in circles and getting nowhere fast. Sari Abukhadra not only got them to embrace that feeling, but to pay for the experience too.

Through Summer Company, Sari started **Hamster Fun**, a recreational sport activity that lets people take a ride in a plastic transparent orb, also known as a zorb ball.

Marketing through Wagjag, Buytopia, and Groupon home pages, local newspaper ads and in over a dozen email newsletters allowed him to create buzz and generate significant sales.

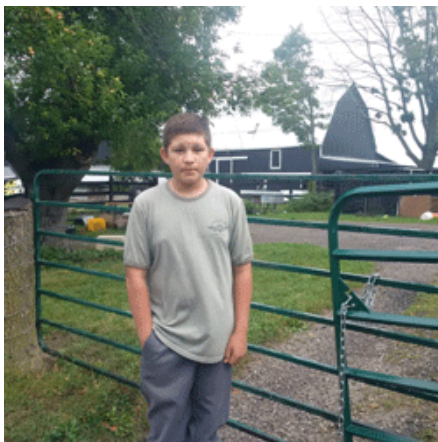
Success also created new challenges, like developing customer service skills and building relationships. There were also unexpected costs he had not allowed for in his business plan because of insurance requirements and government safety regulations with which Sari's business needed to comply.

The University of Toronto engineering student also had not expected to deal with the kind of demand his business generated, and eventually had to expand from four hours a day to ten or twelve hours a day because he had sold so many vouchers and had made a commitment to customers. By the end of the summer, he had generated the highest revenue and net profit of all the participants at his local program provider.

"The Summer Company program was amazing," says Sari, who plans to continue his business. "Through Summer Company I was able to be around motivated people and problem solvers who had faced some of the same problems I was facing."

hamsterfun.ca (<http://hamsterfun.ca/>)

Spencer Douglas-Hill, Right Hand Man Services, Hamilton



Handy around the farm

High school student Spencer Douglas-Hill grew up in a rural area and was well-acquainted with the long hours and hard work that are typical of life on a farm.

Spencer also had a keen sense of what type of jobs farm owners would want done, how long they would take, and how he would properly and successfully complete each task.

At just 15 years of age, Spencer decided to take a risk and start his own business providing farm hand services to Caledonia residents through his company, **Right Hand Man Services**. Giving true meaning to the phrase "right hand man", he focused on helping aged, disabled or otherwise in-need local farmers with a wide variety of work.

Spencer credits Summer Company for introducing him to the world of entrepreneurship. He maximized the experience, learning to network with clients, mentors and other students in the program to build his connections and improve his communication skills. He used his intuitive time management skills to schedule his clients accordingly, and paid close attention to the business's financials.

A cornerstone of his business success was the great relationships he built with the many farmers he helped in his community over the summer.

An entrepreneur at heart, Spencer says: "I plan to revamp my business plan and continue operating my company for many years to come!"

Tina Square, Tasty Creations, Cornwall



The force is with food

Young entrepreneur Tina Square dreamed of owning a business where she could combine her artistic flair with her love of healthy food to create a unique culinary experience for her clients.

With Summer Company's support, she launched **Tasty Creations**, creative food art that, as her marketing material says, "will get your tastes buds on high alert!"

Tina created stunning, healthy custom food orders using special fruit cuts and carving techniques. Her food artistry seems unbounded. Many of her creations are showcased on her company Facebook page, with themes ranging from highly intricate wedding centrepieces to a Star Wars "Death Star."

Summer Company's mentoring and training helped Tina learn and solidify the business skills needed to start, grow and sustain a successful business. Recently featured in Cornwall's Entrepreneurs in Action (an initiative to profile new small to medium-sized businesses), Tina had clear, well defined goals for her business.

"I want to provide food orders prepared in a reasonable time frame to meet the needs of different events, and our clients' cravings," says Tina, who is originally from the Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve.

And she believes in giving back, recently donating a percentage of sales to Beyond 21, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping developmentally challenged young adults in Cornwall and surrounding areas.

[facebook.com/tastycrations3](https://www.facebook.com/tastycrations3/) (<https://www.facebook.com/tastycrations3/>)

Waish Paypompee, Lake of the Woods Phone Repair, Kenora



Friending a business niche

Waish Paypompee originally planned to rely on old school word-of-mouth to advertise his high-tech repair business, **Lake of the Woods Phone Repair**, specializing in Apple products such as iPads, iPhones and iPods.

The Summer Company program helped him identify a better version of his original plan: marketing on social media. His Facebook page now has hundreds of likes, more than 10 company reviews, and customers posting about how happy they are with his service.

Self-taught by watching videos on YouTube and practising on his friends' and family's personal devices, Waish soaked up every Summer Company lesson he learned and applied this knowledge to his business. He also worked hard to find the right suppliers.

"I probably learned to price myself better through a combination of class instruction and experience," says Waish, a high school student

t originally from Naothkamegwaning First Nation Reserve who now lives in Kenora.

"Ordering was also challenge - I didn't know how much to order and how to order - but kind of through the experience of doing, I was able to get a better handle on it."

Through the social media version of "word-of-mouth," Waish's customer base has spread from Kenora to as far away as Winnipeg and Saskatchewan. He hopes to expand into fixing Samsung products as well. Not surprisingly, Waish plans to continue his business. In fact, he'll probably be an entrepreneur for life, always thinking of new business ideas and keen to learn anything he can about business!

[facebook.com/lotwphonerepair](https://www.facebook.com/lotwphonerepair/) (<https://www.facebook.com/lotwphonerepair/>)

Wyatt Brauer, Layton Designs, Belleville



Cleaning up the coach's corner

Drawing on a repertoire of skills – designer, inventor, and amateur athlete – **Layton Designs** founder and owner Wyatt Brauer entered the Summer Company program with an idea for an innovative product that fit a need in the sporting world.

After noticing that his hockey coaches always had stains on their jackets from wiping off marker from the dry erase boards *and* were fumbling for their practice notes, Wyatt invented the "Tensor Towel".

The Tensor Towel answered both problems. The comfortable armband gave coaches of all types a place to store their practice notes and game lineups for easy access *and* doubled as a dry board eraser with a quick swipe of the arm.

A student at Hill Academy, Wyatt credits his Summer Company mentor for coaching him through the challenges of the design and manufacturing process.

Applying the business skills he learned in Summer Company, he expanded his network of professional sports contacts, leading to valuable experience and sales.

"I would attribute my success to the contacts I made while I was in the program", says Wyatt. "Our guest speakers, my mentor, and other business professionals gave me the advice I needed to get my product ready for the market."

Wyatt plans on continuing to market the Tensor Towel and is determined to introduce new products to his line of sporting gear.

[laytondesigns.org/#the-kitchen](http://www.laytondesigns.org/#the-kitchen) (<http://www.laytondesigns.org/#the-kitchen>)

Yiyi Liang, ii's Kitchen, Markham



Hard work makes it easy

As a relative newcomer to Canada, York University student YiYi Liang never dreamed she would have the opportunity to open her own business here.

Starting with only an "unclear" idea that she wanted to sell food at an outdoor booth, she approached her local Summer Company program provider and ended up launching **ii's Kitchen**, selling homemade Chinese food at local farmers' markets.

Her delectable noodles, spring rolls and dumplings had eager locals lining up as she built a loyal customer base, and catering enquiries inspired her to consider how to diversify her business.

Unfamiliar with the Canadian market, she researched possible products, spent months scouting business locations, navigated civic and public health requirements for becoming a food vendor, and then worked at a commercial kitchen from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. each day preparing her food fresh, before taking it to market to begin selling at 8 a.m. Even when she lost all her paper noodle containers to heavy rains and winds at one street festival, she remained upbeat.

Successful entrepreneurs learn to persevere through myriad challenges, and YiYi's success reflects that. "All things are difficult before they are easy," says YiYi, who also won the Seneca First Place prize in the Markham Business Plan Competition.

She credits Summer Company for helping her gain business and life experience, as well as entrepreneurial skills and confidence. Her advice to other young entrepreneurs? "Overcome your doubts and go the distance."

Zaheem Riberdy, Kustom Kicks, Windsor



Fancy footwork

Like many teenagers, Zaheem Riberdy is obsessed with footwear. Unlike most of his peers, however, this 17-year-old entrepreneur and finalist in the Young Entrepreneurs, Make Your Pitch competition turned a hobby customizing sneakers and refurbishing old ones into a global business.

Through Summer Company, Zaheem launched **Kustom Kicks**, a company that sells fashionable, custom-made footwear and counts everyone from local retailers to UCLA's basketball team among its customers. Zaheem's custom sneakers have been featured internationally on U.S. and Japanese websites, and he has thousands of followers on social media.

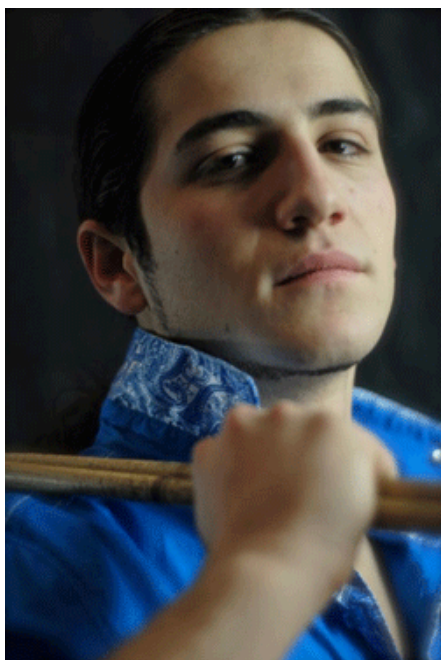
While his one-of-a-kind shoes have become a trendy fashion statement, he credits the Summer Company program for helping him build a marketing strategy that helped him reach influential people in the fashion industry.

He says the program also enabled him to purchase the tools he needed to create his unique, handcrafted shoes.

Zaheem plans to continue his business while he completes his last year of high school. He intends to pursue a post-secondary education with the goal of establishing a career in the fashion industry.

With his growing assortment of fancy "footwork" and the experience he got from the Summer Company program, that is a goal that seems to be a good fit.

Vadim Korolitsky, VProductions, Vaughan



Music to my ears

It's easy to get carried away with the excitement of a new enterprise and chasing sales, but even a business veteran like Vadim Korolitsky says it took some time to learn to temper enthusiasm with a more prudent approach to finding and securing customers.

Active in the entertainment industry since 2005, Vadim started *Vadim's Drum Method*, a live entertainment company, as a Summer Company participant in 2013.

Buoyed by the success of his Summer Company business, in 2014, Vadim took advantage of another Ontario youth entrepreneurship program, Starter Company. He launched **VProductions**, a company that specializes in audio visual productions for events. In 2015, he returned to the Summer Company program as a mentor.

Chief among the lessons he learned in Summer Company were managing his time more efficiently and making client deals official by getting a signed contract, rather than relying on a handshake or an informal exchange of emails.

He could be excused for reminding a few friends how skeptical they were about the program when he joined.

"They thought it sounded too good to be true, and they didn't believe it, even though they were trying to start their own businesses."

Now, of course, they should know better. After all, seeing is believing, even if you're not in the audio visual business.

[vproductions.ca/](http://www.vproductions.ca/) (<http://www.vproductions.ca/>)

Emma Halenko, Off the EJ, Toronto



Fashion industry, meet Emma Halenko

The 20-year-old activist was determined to combine her knowledge of design with her commitment to the environment.

In 2014, with the support of Summer Company program, Emma started **Off the EJ**, a business focused on creating eco-friendly jewelry from hand-selected salvaged goods.

The third-year University of Waterloo architecture student relied on her design background and skills to find inventive ways to recycle everything from old CD fragments to discarded license plates for her one-of-a-kind creations.

Her target demographic was predominantly young adult females who identified with the environmentally sustainable practice of turning discarded materials into unique, handcrafted accessories. Not to mention, a beautiful and interesting conversation piece.

Beyond marketing through social media, **Off the EJ** is vying to be a vendor at various artisan festivals in the Toronto area, with the ultimate aim of becoming the brand for individuals who want to create a style that represents their values.

The Summer Company alumni also plans on building a men's brand for young professionals looking to make a fashion statement that has a story behind it.

em-ha.tumblr.com/tagged/Off+the+EJ (<http://em-ha.tumblr.com/tagged/Off+the+EJ>)

[Instagram: off_the_ej](http://instagram.com/off_the_ej) (http://instagram.com/off_the_ej)

Summer Company program providers

The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure would like to thank all our program providers and mentors for your contribution to the success of the Summer Company 2015 program.

Nottawasaga Futures

Alliston

Greater Barrie Business Enterprise Centre

Barrie

YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Barrie

Small Business Centre

Belleville

Muskoka Small Business Centre
Bracebridge

Brampton Small Business Enterprise Centre
Brampton

Brantford-Brant Business Enterprise Resource Centre
Brantford

Leeds and Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre
Brockville

Caledon Small Business Enterprise Centre
Caledon

Waterloo Region Small Business Enterprise Centre
Cambridge

Chatham-Kent Business Enterprise Centre
Chatham

Business Advisory Centre Northumberland
Cobourg

South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre
Collingwood

Cornwall Business Enterprise Centre
Cornwall

Windsor-Essex Small Business Centre
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Guelph-Wellington Business Enterprise Centre
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Enterprise Temiskaming
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Hamilton Small Business Enterprise Centre
Hamilton

Prescott-Russell Entrepreneurship Centre
Hawkesbury

Northwest Business Centre
Kenora

KEDCO Small Business Development Centre
Kingston

Waterloo Region Small Business Centre
Kitchener

Kawartha Lakes Small Business & Enterprise Centre
Lindsay

Small Business Centre
London

Markham Small Business Centre
Markham

Mississauga Business Enterprise Centre
Mississauga

York Small Business Enterprise Centre
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Niagara Falls Small Business Enterprise Centre
Niagara Falls

The Business Centre — Nipissing Parry Sound Inc.
North Bay

Enterprise Toronto
North York

Halton Region Small Business Centre
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Renfrew

Richmond Hill Small Business Enterprise Centre
Richmond Hill

Prescott-Russell Entrepreneurship Centre
Rockland

Business Enterprise Centre of Sarnia-Lambton
Sarnia

Business Sault Ste. Marie
Sault Ste. Marie

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St. Catharines Enterprise Centre
St. Catharines

Elgin / St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre
St. Thomas

Stratford Perth Centre for Business
Stratford

Regional Business Centre
Sudbury

Thunder Bay & District Entrepreneur Centre
Thunder Bay

Business Enterprise Centre
Timmins

Enterprise Toronto
Toronto

JVS Toronto
Toronto

Ryerson University
Toronto

Toronto Business Development Centre (TBDC)
Toronto

Youth Employment Services (Yes)
Toronto

Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre
Vaughan

Waterloo Region Small Business Centre
Waterloo

Business Advisory Centre Durham
Whitby

Windsor-Essex Small Business Centre
Windsor

Woodstock & Area Small Business Enterprise Centre
Woodstock

Updated: June 26, 2018