

Niagara Bullets

Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year award winners

Saturday, Feb 19, 8:06pm *By:Special to Bullet Media*

Recipients of the 17th annual Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards were announced at the Sheraton Fallsview Hotel & Conference Centre on Friday, February 18, 2011.

"This year's recipients are representative of the innovation, ingenuity and talent that we have in the Niagara Region," said Doug Frazer, Chair of the Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. "It is important that we recognize and applaud their successes in business since their entrepreneurial spirit has significantly contributed to Niagara's economic development".

The Recipients of the 2010 Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards are:

Emerging Entrepreneur Award
Jennifer Blakely
Alphabet Photography
Niagara Falls

Deriving photo letter art from the creative process of photographing objects and scenery that resemble letters of the English alphabet, Jennifer Blakely is the visionary behind Alphabet Photography. Before selling her unique product to customers, Jennifer created frames for family and friends as gifts who later suggested she should venture into business. Since 2006 Jennifer has seen tremendous success and growth in sales. Her photo art has been featured on Breakfast Television, CityLine and Stephen and Chris as well as in Chatelaine Magazine, the Toronto Star and countless more. She has also secured partnerships and distributors through major retail outlets including: Target, HomeSense, Home Outfitters and Walmart.

Established Enterprise Award
Shawn Barlow
Photech Environmental Solutions Inc.
St. Catharines

Beginning operations in 1997 Shawn Barlow has grown Photech Environmental Inc. from a two-man operations that was originally intended to service the hazardous wastes generated by dental offices to an aggressive industrial and household hazardous waste management company that offers complete environmental waste management services, including recycling, waste transport and disposal, training, consulting, site operations and software development throughout Canada and the Northern Eastern United States. Over the years, due to Shawn's relentless drive for success, Photech has experienced tremendous growth, provided dozens of jobs, stimulus for the local economy and a

cleaner industrial industry.

Family Enterprise Award
Stephen Parker
Flexo Products Limited
Niagara Falls

Flexo's business roots date back to 1918 when Stephen Parker's great grandfather started Flexo Cotton Products. In 1988, Stephen bought Flexo from his father Earl Parker to form Flexo Products Limited.

A family run business that has survived generations, Flexo has successfully adapted to industry changes, while growing in profits and employees.

Stephen has developed Flexo Products Limited into one of Canada's most complete sanitary supply companies through the manufacturing and distribution of industrial and commercial cleaning chemicals, cleaning equipment, paper products and supplies. Their continuous research and development has resulted in a long history of producing innovative "green" products.

Innovative Small Business Award
Anne Lennard-Otto
Distinctive Designs & Cabinetry Inc.
St. Catharines

Operating since 2002, Distinctive Designs is a full service cabinetry company. Anne Lennard-Otto has effectively combined her designs with incite to help clients consider projects in its entirety. Anne places a large emphasis on her philosophy toward customer service by working directly with a client to see their project through, creating beautiful designs that are effective, functional and unique.

Anne has expanded her business and carved out a niche in the industry by working with contractors in the building and development of sub divisions. Her approach to personal input and home customizations has provided a unique custom dynamic that contractors can use to set them apart from other builders in today's challenging economy.

International Trade Award
Grant Koppers
Koppers Fishing and Tackle Corp.
Niagara-on-the-Lake

The business that was launched in 2006 from a wood carving hobby has now grown into a booming international success. Grant Koppers pursuit to make the most life like and anatomically correct fishing lures on the market was the beginning of Koppers Fishing and Tackling Corp. Grant's success grew rapidly as did his realization that there was a need and potential for the creation of a better crankbait, resulting in the conception of his LIVETARGET brand of fishing lures. Grant demonstrates how a high quality product

can create a highly successful company.

Technological Innovation Award
Geoff Irvine
Chalk & Wire Learning Assessment Inc.
St. Catharines

After 20 years of teaching, Geoff Irvine decided to leave behind his teaching career to work on concepts and technologies that would aid in the learning process. In 2000 Geoff established Chalk & Wire Learning Assessment Inc., providing web-based tools that collect data about learning and learners such as databases, ePortfolios, surveys and forms. These tools collect live assessment data and supports mini-data and reports to help schools improve curriculum. Geoff's continuous innovation and ability to stay well ahead of the "needs curve", has helped grow his company from 4 clients in the USA in 2003 to more than 400 worldwide in 2010.

Tourism Enterprise Award
Kelly Daniels
Lyndesfarne Theatre
St. Catharines

Since the curtain's opened for its first performance in 2006 Lyndesfarne Theatre Projects has become a catalyst in connecting its community through theatre arts, live theatre education and outreach programming for St.Catharines and the Niagara Region. Kelly Daniels' vision of Lyndensfarne is one which has community at the heart of its programming and has been developed out of her belief that the arts will become an essential and integral part of the cultural and artistic landscape of the Niagara Region.

For the past four years, Lydensfarne's live theatre has been making an impression not just on audiences in the Niagara Region, but also abroad, welcoming audience members from Guelph, Milton, Stratford, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Michigan as well as various locales in New York.

The Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards also bestowed the following awards:

Gene Luczkiw Spirit of Enterprise Award
Cameron Dobbelstyn

Cameron Dobbelstyn is a grade 12 student at Sir Winston Churchill. Cameron has demonstrated the enterprising spirit through his involved with Scouts Canada, volunteering for a number of their initiatives, resulting in being awarded the prestigious Governor General of Canada's Chief Scouts Award. He has also volunteered with the Niagara Literacy Event, Football Niagara, and World Vision. This year he was selected as a Prefect for Sir Winston Churchill, choosing to be a "leader and ambassador" for the school, welcoming new students and raising awareness for issues, such as bullying. Cameron is very dedicated and focused on both his academics and community, proving to

be a valuable individual to his peers.

Gene Luczkiw Spirit of Enterprise Award
Aaron Bailey

As a grade 12 student at Saint Michael Catholic High School, Aaron Bailey personifies what it means to have the enterprising spirit. Through his involvement as co-chair with the Niagara Falls Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC), Aaron has volunteered over 800 hours advising city council on the needs of the city's youth and seeking to improve the local community's infrastructure such as the environmental cleanliness of Niagara for residents. His involvement with MYAC has also provided him with the opportunity to create Upload, a page in the Niagara Falls Review, written and maintained by students, allowing them to express their opinions. Aaron's involvement and dedication to his school and community, along with academic success, demonstrate this enterprising spirit.

Gene Luczkiw Spirit of Enterprise Award
Gaelle Groux

Gaelle Groux's enterprising spirit emerged when she began researching the genocide in Darfur as part of her involvement with the Model UN. After joining a local Amnesty International Group she began her own Amnesty Club called the Teens for Change Club at Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School, where she is a grade 12 student. Through this initiative the club has raised over \$4,000 for a variety of organizations that highlight issues ranging from education in third world countries to sexual abuse in Niagara. Gaelle is also an environmentalist, leading Sir Winston Churchill's Eco Club in addition to joining the Niagara Falls Nature Club and volunteering for the NPCA Water Festival. Gaelle's personal values and standards make her approach every task with honour and integrity, leading her peers by her example.

Niagara Original
Scott Riesebosch

In 1996, Scott Riesebosch developed the Child Reminder System for the school bus industry, an ingenious solution incorporating LED technology to keep children safe and reduce bussing company risk. Mr. Riesebosch incorporated CRS Electronics in 1998 and since then, the Company has branched out into LED lighting design and manufacturing to serve many customers in a variety of industries. Today, CRS has become the 'best-in-class' LED lighting solution provider with cost effective, safe and durable solutions for their clients' lighting needs. CRS is continually expanding its product range with industry leading design and engineering. CRS products are lead-free, mercury-free, arsenic-free and are recyclable.

Historical Hall of Fame Award
M.K. Rittenhouse (1884-1980)

Born in Vineland, Moses Kensley Rittenhouse continued his family's legacy in the area as the great great grandson of one of the first settlers in Twenty Valley and the son of a farmer and Mennonite minister.

Moving to Jordan Station, Moses' entrepreneurial spirit emerged, establishing M.K. Rittenhouse in 1914 after seeing a need for agricultural spraying equipment in the booming tender fruit region in Niagara. Despite fluctuations in the agricultural industry, Moses' persistence and ingenuity allowed his business to grow and see the first of many patents for spraying machines. Beyond his business, Moses made lasting contributions to his community and was instrumental in the establishment of Jordan Museum of the Twenty. Moses has left a lasting legacy as M.K. Rittenhouse remains in operation and continues to grow.

Community Contribution Award Sandra Murre

Community involvement is extremely important to Sandra Murre, incorporating it in every aspect of her life, including her business. Currently Sandra sits on the Niagara West YMCA's board and is a part of their Capital Campaign. Other current causes that Sandra is involved with include New Hope Church Niagara, the Niagara Community Foundation and Engineers without Borders, which brought her to Zambia last year. Sandra is the Founder and CEO of Jordan Engineering and has built her company around giving back, with the "Spirit of Generosity" included in their core values. Sandra not only contributes her time but also donates one third of her company's profits to the organizations she is affiliated with. For Sandra, volunteering is a rewarding experience because she is always learning from the people and organizations she's involved with. It is for this reason that Sandra's company also created and abides by the core value, "Empowerment integrated with Accountability", particularly when selecting organizations to partner with.

Lifetime Achievement Hall of Fame Award Tom Rankin

As president of Rankin Construction, Tom Rankin has made significant contributions to the development of the Niagara Region's infrastructure over the past 32 years. In addition to constructing bridges, roads and waterways, Tom has expanded his business to include handling radioactive waste and the building of renewable energy projects. Founded in 1978 by Tom Rankin and Dave Stephens under the original name Stephens and Rankin Construction, the company was renamed in 1991 as Rankin Construction after Stephens sold his shares. Tom's entrepreneurial spirit has allowed him to expand in his field and move his company in new directions by focusing on renewable energy projects. He exemplifies how combining vision, innovation and technology can not only grow a company, but a community.

Sponsors of the 2010 Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards are:

Title Sponsor
CIBC

Award Sponsors

Brock University - Faculty of Business, Durward Jones Barkwell & Co. LLP, Niagara College, Niagara Economic Development Corporation, Niagara Helicopters Ltd., Prime Way Group of Companies, Sullivan Mahoney Lawyers and Telus

Platinum Sponsor

Sun Media, The Standard – The Tribune – The Review

Gold Sponsors

Caters Design Group, Fagan Media Group, Gotcha Covered, Niagara AV Systems, Enterprise Canada and TV Cogeco

Silver Sponsors

Business Niagara Magazine, Minuteman Press, Niagara Regional Broadband Network, Sheryl Thornton Photographer and Women in Leadership and Business

Wine Sponsor

John Howard Cellars of Distinction

Alumni Supporters

Michelle Auger - Finesse Interior Design and Home Decor, Roy Cairns - Charlesway Corporation, Laurence & Steve Cohen - Salit Steel, A Division of Myer Salit Ltd., Dominic Girotti - Hy-Grade Precast Concrete, Doug Frazer – Frazer Holdings Ltd., Jim & Wendy Garrington – Shark Marine Technologies, Jonh LaPenna - LaPennaCo Super Centre, Ruedi Hafen – Niagara Helicopters Ltd., Dragan Matovic - Halex Ventures Inc., Rob Neill – Durward Jones Barkwell & Company LLP, Angelo Nitsopoulos - Heart of Niagara Hotels, Janie Palmer - J.P. Marketing and Event Planning, Andy Panko, Associated Brownfields Inc., John Howard - John Howard Cellars of Distinction, Dennis Parass - Handling Specialties, Anthony Rodway - Aero Safe Technologies Inc., Nancy Schappert – Niagara Inflatables & Games Inc., Margie Spence - Royal LePage Niagara Real Estate Centre, Glenn Stansfield - Fleet Canada Inc., Roy Timms - Timbo Design Build Contractors, Peter Vieveen - North American Traffic Inc., John & Norris Walker – Walker Industries Holdings Limited, Ed Werner - Brox Company Ltd.

Supporters

Artell Developments Inc., Bullet Media Niagara, Business Development Bank of Canada, Sandorligetfalvy.com, Upper Canada Consultants

About the Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

The Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards were established in 1994 to recognize the achievements, excellence and innovation of Niagara's entrepreneurs. The awards are supported by a committee of volunteers from Niagara's corporate, education and

economic development sectors. The men and women who have been recognized through these awards exemplify the true spirit of entrepreneurship. Through hard work, determination, creativity and resourcefulness, they have established new ventures or lead existing ones into renewed growth. Since 1994 the Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards program has recognized 686 entrepreneurs from the Niagara region and 226 entrepreneurs have received the prestige's Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The program continues to grow annually and garners extensive exposure within Niagara's business community and from the media.

To learn more about the Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year Awards, log on to www.niagaraentrepreneur.com