

Strengthening and inspiring youth to start a business

by Ruby Arsenault

The 8th annual West Prince Young Entrepreneurs Forum was held at Mill River Experience in March. It was hosted by CBDC West Prince Ventures and coordinated by Michelle Penwarden. The theme of the day was *Strength in youth: inspire youth to start a business*.

Maxine Rennie, Executive Director of CBDC West Prince Ventures Ltd., began the day by explaining the role of the organization, which includes inspiring people to start or expand a business. She also thanked the sponsors for their support: SkillsPEI, Innovation PEI, CBDC, and the Rural Action Centre in Alberton.

Savvy Savanah Simon was the first presenter. Savvy is an accomplished entrepreneur and motivational speaker. She was named as one of the top 40 female change makers in Canada by *Canadian Living* magazine. She is passionate about keeping her Indigenous roots alive, and created a clothing line designed to teach people about the Mi'kmaq language.



Savvy Savanah Simon

"I was raised in a one-parent household and went through many difficulties in my life," says Savvy, who lived on a reserve just outside Moncton, New Brunswick. "My mentor was my grandmother. My mother wanted me to work for the government so I would have security. I attended college and studied marketing, but deep in my soul I knew I was not putting my gifts to use, and I wanted to be an entrepreneur.

"I felt I could motivate others, so I began to volunteer as a motivational speaker at local schools. Once I got going, windows seem to open for me. I danced at the 2010 Olympics, performed with Bryan Adams, and I even worked for Dolly Parton at her theme park, Dollywood."

Savvy is also a representative for dōTERRA essential oils. "I want to help heal people with Mother Earth medicines. This company has the fastest growing team in Atlantic Canada right now. We are always looking for more people to join us in sales and as healers and leaders.

"Being an entrepreneur takes a lot of hard work, long hours and late nights. You have to be 100 percent committed, and it can be scary but so rewarding when you are fulfilling your dreams. I want to inspire others and to share my culture. Remember to keep believing in yourself, and to be an eagle not a seagull, which means being a leader, not a follower."

For more information, visit www.savvyUnLtd.com and @savvyUnLtd on Twitter and Instagram.



The panel offered many words of advice and encouragement

Jeff Noye, Owner/Operator, **Valley Pearl Oysters**, Tyne Valley

Jeff Noye says his career began as a volunteer. He was a teacher for seven years but always felt there was something missing in his work. Jeff loves harvesting oysters, working on the water, and shucking oysters, so he began as a volunteer organizer for the Tyne Valley Oyster Festival and Rock the Boat Concert.

"I realized what I wanted to do, so I resigned from teaching and became an entrepreneur. If I won the lottery, I would continue to do what I am doing, because I love what I do."

His business, Valley Pearl Oysters, harvests, processes, and provides catering services for his fresh oysters. Jeff now also provides tours of the processing plant, and an experience tonging oysters which ends at the oyster bar. He still organizes the oyster festival and concert and promotes oyster shucking.

For more information, call 902-439-1716. Visit www.valleypearloysters.com



Jeff Noye

Sarah Richards, Owner/Operator, **Embracing Beauty**, Bloomfield

"I always knew I wanted to be a hairdresser," says **Sarah Richards**. "After working in the industry for 10 years, I purchased an established business.

"I am a hands-on person and I love the work. I really have a passion for the industry and I enjoy connecting with people and building my brand.

"The biggest challenge as a business owner can be juggling home life and work hours." However, the young mother of four children admits she would continue to operate her salon even if she won the lottery.

"Don't be afraid to ask for help, and access local programs. I am great at doing hair but I took a very helpful program from CBDC to learn how to do my own bookkeeping."

For more information, call 902-853-4902.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/Embracing-Beauty-1763377280638334



Sarah Richards

Wayne Linkletter, Owner, **Linkletter's Welding Ltd.**, Central Bedeque

"My father was an entrepreneur, but I really didn't know what I wanted to do," says **Wayne Linkletter**. "When I quit university after two years, I went to work for my Dad, and I learned that I love dealing with people, hearing about projects they need to have built, and then creating them. I enjoy being creative and enjoy the challenge when someone says it can't be done."

Wayne says if you don't like what you are doing, change it. "I love what I do. I enjoy solving problems and working towards creating great products for great people. However, the biggest challenge we face in our business is finding enough welding fabrication trades people."

For more information, call 902-887-2522. Visit www.linklettermfg.com



Moyna Matheson, Owner/Operator, **Samuel's Coffee House**, Summerside, and a seasonal location in Cavendish

"I always knew what I truly wanted to do but I didn't take the leap into entrepreneurship until I was half way through my work life," says **Moyna Matheson**.

"I gained a lot of excellent knowledge from my past work experience, and one day I just asked myself: what do I want to do for myself and my community?"

"Today, I love what I do. I don't only sell coffee. I sell an experience of enjoying the products in a positive environment. Being an entrepreneur doesn't come without challenges, but I embrace them and enjoy solving them along the way."

For more information, call 902-724-2300.

Visit www.samuelcoffeehouse.ca



Programs & supports available for entrepreneurs

- **CBDC Youth Loan**: for entrepreneurs 18 to 34: www.cbdc.ca/en/programs/cbdc-youth-loan
- **CBDC West Prince Ventures**: mentorship, support & consulting services: www.cbdc.ca

- **SkillsPEI-Self Employ PEI program**: www.skillspei.com/programs-for-job-seekers/self-employ-pei
- **Innovation PEI**: www.innovationpei.com
- For an extensive list of resources, visit www.employmentjourney.com/resources-to-start-maintain-a-small-business/



To learn about your full rights and obligations under the **Employment Standards Act**, contact PEI Employment Standards at 1-800-333-4362. Visit www.peiemploymentstandards.com



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