









NOVEMBER 19, 2021 11AM — 2PM MARRIOTT ON THE FALLS







@GNCC\_WIN #WIBA2021



The Scotiabank Women Initiative™ is a program that aims to break down barriers to increase economic opportunity for women to be successful now, and in the future through our three pillars:



## UNBIASED ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND TAILORED SOLUTIONS

Providing equal access and tailored solutions to financing for women-led businesses, as well as ESG-focused services.



#### BESPOKE SPECIALIZED EDUCATION

Delivering resources, tools and workshops aimed to advance women's careers and elevate skills, financial confidence, and technical expertise.



## HOLISTIC ADVISORY SERVICES AND MENTORSHIP

Offering inclusive, women-centric advice that connects women with like-minded peers, tailored development opportunities, and expert mentors.

#### Participant incentives

- · Free to join
- · Access to our client newsletter
- · Invitations to attend events (at no cost to you!)
- Exclusive offers from our partners
- Network and connect with like-minded women entrepreneurs
- Hear success stories from leading women experts in your field

#### How do you join?

Reach out to your Small Business Advisor/ Relationship Manager.

Subscribe with your email on the link below so we can provide you with all of our participant incentives!

https://swi.scotiabank.com/smb/subscribe

Enjoy the benefits of being a valued participant of The Scotiabank Women Initiative.

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## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



## **Royal Bank**



















































## 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL 1 WIBA

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS | AGENDA

#### **Welcome Messages**

Sarah Pritula, Emcee

Mishka Balsom, CEO, Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

Julie Rorison, Outgoing Chair and Grace Eldajani, Interim Chair, Women in Niagara Council

#### Welcome from Co-Title Sponsor

Holly Abbott, Associate Vice President, Corporate Customer Support, Canadian Tire Financial Services

#### Lunch

presented by Walker Industries Holdings

## Welcome from Co-Title Sponsor

Bill George, Vice President, Commercial Financial Services, RBC

## **Young Professional Award**

presented by Hatch

#### **Emerging Business Award**

presented by Niagara Economic Development

## Science & Technology Award

presented by DDL & Co.

#### **Health Care Hero Award**

presented by Verge Insurance Group

## **Innovations in Hospitality & Tourism Award**

presented by Destination Niagara Falls

## **Excellence in Non-Profit Award**

presented by Essentials Cremation & Burial Services Inc.

### **Cultural Arts Award**

presented by Brock University Faculty of Social Sciences

## **Business That Gives Back Award**

presented by Niagara Community Foundation

## **Community Impact Award**

presented by Niagara College

## **Entrepreneurship Award**

presented by Innovate Niagara

## **Corporate Leadership Award**

presented by Ridley College

## **Lifetime Achievement Award**

presented by MNP

## **Closing Remarks**

# 2021 WIBA

WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS | EMCEE

## Sarah Pritula ♥ @Sarah Pritula Director, Community Crew

At the age of 10, Sarah Pritula knew her purpose in life was to serve others and to run her own business, and being the director of Community Crew allows her to do just that. Sarah is a dynamic, self-motivated, and team-oriented leader with extensive experience in fundraising and not-for-profit management. Sarah earned the 2008 Big Sister of the Year Award from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara and Canada, and was a finalist in last year's Women in Business Awards.





WIN Mission: To foster the growth and success of women in business in Niagara.

**WIN Purpose:** To provide strategic and tactical direction to support the Council's mission and strategic priorities. Responsibilities include identifying issues relevant to women in Niagara and providing strategic guidance to address these challenges and opportunities.

#### **WIN Priorities:**

#### Expand Our Collaboration

We will strengthen existing partnerships while establishing new community partnerships designed to optimize expertise and resources, and collaborate with community partners to develop and align our shared voice on issues affecting women in business in Niagara.

#### To Be A Business Resource And Advocate For Women

We will proactively provide professional information and resources to women to stimulate business growth and opportunities, provide valuable learning opportunities and linkages for women to connect for resource and knowledge sharing, an d continue to advocate for issues that directly impact women.

#### Inspiring leadership

We will use our assets as a catalyst for inspiring leadership in the business women community, and celebrate the professional achievements of women.

#### **Keep up to Date:**

- in Join our LinkedIn group: linkedin.com/groups/7421732/profile
- Join our mailing list by emailing info@gncc.ca

## Young Professional Award



#### Natasha DiCienzo

in II NatashaDiCienzoWealthAdvisor

Wealth Advisor, Scotia Wealth Management

Natasha is proud to operate a wealth advisory business in St. Catharines that is devoted to enhancing the financial standing of small business owners and family-owned businesses in Niagara. Natasha started her Wealth Advisory business in 2018 under the umbrella of ScotiaMcLeod, where she continues to grow and operate today.

Natasha entered the wealth management industry in 2016 when she was accepted into the highly competitive 2-year rotational Wealth Management Associate Program (WMAP) with Scotia Wealth

Management. This gave her exposure to many business lines including private banking, trust and estate, life insurance, credit and investments. In the first year of her business, Natasha was recognized as a "Growth Club" advisor by achieving more than four new high net worth accounts in a single year.

Natasha is a Commissioner for the Niagara Parks Commission, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee and is a board and investment committee member for Niagara Community Foundation. She is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), holds both her Canadian Securities License and Life Insurance License, and is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Level 3 candidate. Natasha completed Level 1 and Level 2 of the CFA Program, having achieved exam results in the top 10th percentile of the CFA program.



## Alyshia lafrate © lilchicklifts Head Strength & Conditioning Coach, Vitasana Health + Fitness Ltd.

Health, fitness and wellness is Alyshia's passion. It's also very important to her to help people make the right changes in their lives. Simply working out isn't enough to create lasting change and Alyshia wants her clients to feel empowered to change their lives.

When Alyshia started her business in 2014, she was training family and a few friends out of her basement. Her first goal was to grow from five clients to 20 clients within the year and she hit that target within two months. She knew she needed to set her sights higher, so she focused on building relationships with one-on-one clients, as well as establishing a presence in the athletic space with sports teams.

Fast forward to August 2019 when her basement gym was bursting, and Alyshia moved her fitness studio to St. Paul Street downtown St. Catharines. Within her first year of opening the studio at 62 St. Paul Street, her sales target surpassed her 6-figure goal. She now has over 40 one-on-one clients and four youth sports teams that train with her on a regular basis. She hit her three year "brick and mortar" financial goals within the first year of being open downtown.



## Young Professional Award I FINALISTS

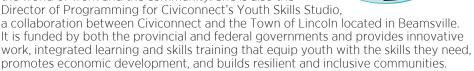


#### Kailene Jackson III

Co-Founder & Executive Director, CIVICONNECT and Director of Programming. **CIVICONNECT Youth Skills Studio** 

Kailene Jackson is a community-minded leader dedicated to educating, empowering and uplifting others, specifically youth and small businesses, through social innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Kailene is the co-founder and Executive Director of Civiconnect, a non-profit social enterprise launched in 2018 focused on empowering youth and preparing them to effectively participate in the world of work and the community. She is also the



Over the past three years, Kailene has been pivotal in increasing Civiconnect's funding, which now has an operating budget of over \$3 million with 12 full time professional staff providing over 135 youth with work-integrated learning opportunities.

## Alexandra Lacivita in f alexandralacivita Co-Owner, The Village Boutique

Alexandra opened The Village Boutique in Ridgeway in 2018 along with her mother. Alexandra was 24 years old and had planned on becoming a nurse. but after undergoing treatment for cancer, she decided she didn't want to be in the health field. Instead, she started working in a little boutique in town where she fell in love with retail, working with customers and playing with the products.

That summer, Alexandra saw a building for sale on the main drag in Ridgeway, and right away she knew she could create something amazing there. That fall. she opened The Village Boutique - and she hasn't looked back since.

In 2020, The Village Boutique started selling online and has moved 98% of their product into their online store. The business grew during COVID and Alexandra and her mother are excited to be opening a new store in March 2022. They have started to book the clothing and accessories for this new location and will be diving into new products and lines that this expansion enables them to carry. Two stores will be a lot more work — but Alexandra is dedicated to it and very excited to be opening up in a whole new market.



## Young Professional Award **FINALISTS**



## Jordan Riley in General Manager, Central Auto Niagara

Jordan was born and raised in the Niagara Region, she grew up in Fonthill and later moved to St. Catharines. She began her career in the automotive business at her family's General Motors and Saturn dealerships, working in both sales and service roles. In addition to experiencing frontline retail automotive operations from the ground up, she analyzed both sales and service processes to uncover opportunities to increase efficiency and profitability across all departments.

She earned a BBA in Automotive Marketing & Management at Northwood University in Michigan, and while continuing to work at multiple automotive dealerships. she completed her MBA at Richard Ivey School of Business in 2017 through the Executive stream.

In 2016, Jordan assumed responsibility for managing the family automotive business. Central Auto Niagara in Fonthill. As General Manager, Jordan has full responsibility for both the long-term strategic planning and day-to-day operations of the business.

## Thalia Semplonius III **Project Manager**, Niagara Workforce Planning Board

Thalia is originally from Waterloo, Ontario but has been living in the Niagara region since 2011. She holds an MA and PhD in Developmental Psychology from Brock University, where she focused on learning statistical and research methods in order to address new and innovative research questions. She now brings her considerable breadth and depth of knowledge to the Niagara Workforce Planning Board as a Project Manager.

One of Thalia's most significant project accomplishments over the past year was managing an Ontario Labour Market Partnership project focused on sustainable employment in the retail sector. The project was a partnership with Literacy Link Niagara, the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, and Niagara Workforce Planning Board. This project connected with retail employers, job seekers looking to work in retail, and service providers to gain on-theground insight to the state of retail in Niagara. The project deliverables included a comprehensive report on the retail sector prior to the pandemic, a series of briefing notes and infographics outlining trends in retail, reports sharing insights from the workforce and employers, highlights of business support resources, and the sharing of local training opportunities for individuals wanting to work in retail.



## Emerging Business Award



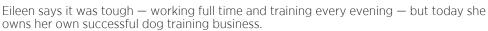
#### **Eileen Gibson**

f Eileen Gibson Sullivan

## Owner, Scotty's Dog Walking/Training

Eileen's passion for dogs all started when she was three years old, when she got her first puppy: Kim, a Labrador retriever. Her parents knew then that there was a strong bond between Eileen and her canine companions; her parents would always say, "if you can't find Eileen then find the nearest dog. She will be there".

After moving from Scotland to Canada, Eileen decided that she wanted to pursue her passion and make it her business. Eileen and her dog Morgan enrolled in a dog training school where she quickly developed new skills; she enjoyed the program so much she followed through with the master dog training course.



Eileen is looking forward to having her dogs return to homes and hospitals to give joy to others through the Therapeutic Paws of Canada.

## **Donna Martens**

in f Donna Martens

## President, Pure Non-Scents Ltd.

Donna Martens is Niagara born and raised. She is the President and Co-founder of Pure Non-Scents Limited, a new and exciting hair and skin care company with a 10-product line, formulated from scratch without questionable ingredients and free of fragrance and harmful toxic chemicals.

Donna's journey to entrepreneurship started when she developed a sensitivity to scents and fragrances. Her inability to find suitable hair and skincare was the catalyst to creating the Pure Non-Scents Ltd. line of products.



With the assistance of her husband, they have created a new brand from scratch that addresses clean living, healthy fragrance free and unscented hair and skincare. This plant-based 10-product line of luxurious, biodegradable, vegan hair and skincare is devoid of harsh chemicals and is the perfect product for those dealing with multiple chemical sensitivities.

By investing in staff and expanding their reach through digital marketing, Pure Non-Scents has substantially increased their website's conversion rates. Satisfied shoppers come back time and time again, resulting in a returning customer rate almost double the industry average. While growing their business, Donna has also kept in mind sustainability and the environment — they now offer a zero-waste refill station at their warehouse for many of their products.

## **Emerging Business Award FINALISTS**



#### Kristin Messina

in f kristin.messina.3 @ fullmessi

### Founder, Brand Management, Creative + Marketing Director, Chaos Simplified

Kristin is a Brand Strategist and Creative Director working in the marketing and advertising industry. with over 21 years combined formal training and professional experience.

Seeing and being part of the shifts from traditional marketing to digital has allowed her to understand the trends and anticipate industry changes, enabling her to aid her clients not only in the development of assets and creative strategies, but to develop the confidence required to go to market within the ever

evolving digital world. Kristin's goal is to help her clients simplify the chaos and carve out their space.



She is also committed to volunteering; she was a World Vision Child Ambassador from 2016 to 2019, and supports and advocates for Community Crew in Niagara. She also helped develop and co-chair the FANA foundation, focusing on fundraisers for local charities such as Big Brothers Big Sisters Niagara. Kristen also participated in the WIN/WIN peer mentoring group in 2021.

## Science & Technology Award **FINALISTS**



#### Agnieszka Krzywinska ¥ redknives 13 President, Adjective Noun Studios Inc.

Agnieszka Krzywinska, or better known as Agusia, works for A-Game Studios as a Junior Software Developer and teaches an introductory programming class at Brock University.

As part of the inaugural cohort, Agusia graduated with honours from Brock University and Niagara College's joint game development program in the spring of 2020. During her graduating year, at the age of 22, Agusia started a company with two other colleagues called Adjective Noun Studios. It is a mobile game company that focuses on bringing high-quality games to mobile platforms — without microtransactions, ads, loot boxes, or subscriptions.



Over the past two years, Agusia has been a panelist for workshops on various topics such as women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), programming, and entrepreneurship.

## Science & Technology Award FINALISTS



## Heidi Levitzky 🛅 💿 heidilevitzky Course Instructor, Post-Graduate Studies. **Niagara College**

Heidi Levitzky uses compassion, optimism and her strong environmental background to mentor and educate future environmental managers.

Originally from Mississauga, she has been a resident of Niagara since 2008. She moved to pursue post-graduate studies in Environmental Management and Assessment at Niagara College.

Heidi is now a Public Relations Coordinator for the Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association, as well as an Instructor at Niagara College.



She has also led Women in STEM seminars regarding biodiversity in the Niagara Region. Heidi believes it's all about working together and with others in the community to invest in the stewardship of our shared environment.



With over 10 years of experience in diversity education and design, Bex has developed digital materials and brand strategies that are compassionate, accessible and inclusive. She also teaches businesses about the benefits of incorporating inclusive best practices into their culture and workflow without sacrificing beautiful design.

Globally, one in four people have difficulty accessing digital content the way it is traditionally designed and built. McKnight Inclusive Design was one of the first in

Ontario to focus on closing this gap by prioritizing accessible design, and the first agency to use inclusive design principles as a catalyst for social change.

From a structural standpoint, Bex strongly believes that equity begins at home and intentionally employs and seeks out expertise from people from traditionally marginalized groups (BIPOC, LQBTQ+, and the disabled community) in order to amplify their voices.

Bex designs with empathy, whether it's systems, processes or content, because the most meaningful world is one we can all access equally.



## Science & Technology Award FINALISTS



## Kelly Murray In Project Manager, ASI Group Ltd.

Kelly Murray earned her B.Sc (Honours) specializing in Marine Biology from the University of Guelph. She began working at ASI Group Ltd. in 1998 and her experience spans over 23 years in the ecological industry. Kelly's experience includes ecological testing, the development of zebra and guagga mussel monitoring and control protocols and installations. Kelly has focused on developing specialized testing protocols and experimental studies for emerging technologies and research and development projects for mussel control systems that have focused on refining old technologies and implementing new technologies in industrial settings to reduce the ecological impacts of mussel control protocols.



Currently she is the Project Manager for Mussel Monitoring & Research Services within the Mussel Management Group. Kelly has been involved with developing mussel monitoring protocols that have formed the basis for the standards currently used within the industry today.

She is currently consulting with a major power authority in Manitoba to help them develop and implement their monitoring protocols for the new introduction of zebra mussels into their waterways and to train staff to analyze their own samples and interpret their data.

### Sabine Steinbrecher III II learninglibrary CEO, Founder and Chief Hiveologist, Learning Library Inc. and Hiveologie

Sabine Steinbrecher, CTDP, is one of the original e-learning entrepreneurs and a leading education strategy and solution provider with over 20 years experience in education management and delivery for professional learning in North America. She is the founder and CEO of Learning Library Inc. and has been an award-winning. dynamic leader in education management and publishing solutions utilizing web based technology since 1998.



Her latest initiative, Hiveologie, is launching this year with all the benefits of the LLI team, its software and experience. Hiveologie is debuting by delivering enhanced products directly to real estate and insurance agents and brokers.

## Science & Technology Award



Alissa van Overbeeke 🛅 🖬 al.vanoverbeeke Operations Manager, ASI Group Ltd.

Alissa has been with ASI Group Ltd. for almost 15 years. Hired part-time as a university student, she joined the team full time after completing her degree as a remote-operated vehicle (ROV) Pilot and Engineer in Training. After nearly 10 years of field work, she was promoted to Maintenance Manager was subsequently named the Operations Manager for ASI Group's four offices.

During her time as a field technician, she designed, developed, fabricated, and integrated new technology to conduct remote underwater inspections of critical infrastructure worldwide. Alissa has played key roles in hundreds of inspection projects from project inception to delivering her client their final report.



Being a woman in engineering is a challenge. She graduated as only one of 13 women out of a class of over 150 students. As she ventured into the marine industry, the representation of women was even less. Alissa says it hasn't deterred her, as she has fought for the education and the knowledge she has gleaned, knowing that she is excelling within her field.

## **Health Care Hero**

| FINALISTS



Melissa Gagnon f 🖾 empower.communication Speech-Language Pathologist, Empower Communication Services

Melissa has been working as a Speech-Language Pathologist for 10 years following the completion of her undergraduate program in Health Science at the University of Western Ontario and her Masters in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Toronto.

Her passion for supporting families and children is evident in her work. Melissa started a small private practice in the Niagara Region to help support children of all ages and abilities in the areas of speech, language, and literacy. Her mission is to empower parents

to support their children and to help children to reach their goals. Her passion for helping parents drove her to create a variety of resources that families can access during the pandemic. She recognized that many families did not have access to information that would help them seek out support if needed. She responded to this gap by developing workshops to educate parents in the areas of speech, language, and literacy, as well as online parent programs that families could use in order to learn research based language strategies.



## **Health Care Hero**

## FINALISTS



#### Nicole Johnson @ coley\_johnson Senior Occupational Therapist, Hotel Dieu **Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre**

Nicole is a Senior Occupational Therapist in the Augmentative and Alternative (AAC) Clinic at Hotel Dieu Shaver Health and Rehabilitation Centre and was instrumental in developing the AAC Clinic for people who cannot speak or handwrite. Nicole has been a registered occupational therapist for 15 years, won the Forty Under 40 award, is a graduate of Leadership Niagara, and is currently pursuing her MBA with a specialty in Innovation at the University of Fredericton.

Nicole is passionate about giving back to the people of Niagara. She is a strong advocate for people with disabilities.

whether it is facilitating the building of an accessible natural playground, helping people navigate the complex healthcare system, training adults with Down Syndrome through adaptive CrossFit, improving spiritual health through the ministry of reading at St. Julia Church or developing an app to give people who cannot talk or move the ability to communicate.

Nicole has led a multidisciplinary team in developing a smartphone communication app for people with ALS who lack movement and speech. This app was chosen 100% of the time by people with ALS as being more effective than its paper-based equivalent.



## Innovations in Hospitality & Tourism **I FINALISTS**

Presented by:



**Danuela Freel ¥** 4pointtravel **(?)** dannuelafreel Senior Travel Expert and Owner,

**Four Point Travel** 

Danuela has been in the travel industry since 1990. first as a Travel Agent and then in 2007 as an owner.

Since the pandemic, almost everything has changed: travel restrictions have made it more difficult to travel. She has focused on keeping her clients up date on the travel restrictions and monitor where it is safe to travel.

While navigating the unprecedented COVID-19 situation Danuela has become much closer to each of her customers, particularly the new ones. She has taken the time to educate herself on each travel request and give her clients honest advice



Danuela has always enjoyed giving back to our community and has volunteered on school parent councils and the board of Club Heidelberg. She has managed local hockey and soccer teams, served as a member of WHEO business group for 13 years, and organized and supported many different fundraisers. She is committed to youth sport sponsorship, providing mentorship through co-op placements, and supporting charities and volunteering.

# Innovations in Hospitality & Tourism | FINALISTS

Presented by:

DESTINATION
NIAGARA FALLS

**Ann Marie Nitsopoulos** 

in Ann Marie Nitso O Ann\_marie\_nitso

**Owner/Operator Old Stone Inn Boutique Hotel** 

Ann Marie Nitsopoulos is a Canadian born innkeeper, mother, sister, volunteer and brand ambassador for the cities within the Region of Niagara. Ann Marie is a co-partner in the Old Stone Inn Boutique Hotel located in Niagara Falls, which is uniquely positioned as the only designated historic property in Niagara Falls serving in the accommodations, food & beverage sector.

Prior to devoting her full-time attention to management, marketing and operations of the Old Stone Inn Boutique Hotel, Ann Marie served as Marketing Director for the Heart of Niagara Hotels Group.

While re-establishing and launching the revitalized brand of the Old Stone Inn Boutique Hotel, Ann Marie has immersed herself into the fabric of tourism within Niagara; she serves on many tourism boards in various capacities to increase Niagara's brand both locally and throughout the world.

Ann Marie brings her warmth, humour and genuine care to her commitments, her staff, her clients, and everyone she engages with. She enjoys sharing the spirit of Shop Local.

## Janice Thomson President & CEO, Niagara Falls Tourism

Janice Thomson was appointed as President and CEO of Niagara Falls Tourism in May of 2019, following an 18 year career as Executive Director and President of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau.

Janice also served as Chair of the Niagara Parks Commission for eight years, was Chair of the Tourism Partnership of Niagara and a Board member for the TO2015 Pan and ParaPan Am Games Organizing Committee.

Honoured as Niagara-on-the-Lake's Citizen of the Year in 2016, Janice is an active member of the community, currently serving in a voluntary role as President of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Niagara Foundation, an entity founded in 1962 to protect the unique heritage and architectural character of the community, and as Chair of CAA Niagara, an organization with 140,000 members throughout the Niagara Region.

By working every day since mid March 2020, Janice is focused on market recovery from the public health crisis of COVID-19 and the resulting far-reaching impacts on social and economic sectors. She has gained expertise and knowledge on the programs, restrictions and protocols that have impacted post-COVID business.



## **Excellence in Non-Profit FINALISTS**



#### Margaret Lockhart **¥** BethServices Director, Human Resources. **Bethesda Community Services Inc**

Margaret started with Bethesda as a frontline support worker in one of their group homes, supporting adults with a developmental disability. She moved into a generalist human resources role early in her career, and her focus now is on health and safety. labour/employee Relations, WSIB and disability management.

Through her efforts, Bethesda's human resources department has been awarded with the 2020 Silver Canadian HR Team of the year award, 2021 Canadian HR Team of the Year-Excellence Award, 2020 Canada Safest Employer-Excellence Award, Canadian Reporter Magazine 2021 Innovate HR Team and the 2021 Career Directory's Best Employers for Recent Graduates.

Margaret believes that if you empower people, they will work to their potential.



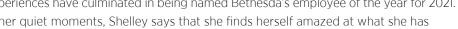
#### Shelley Mercer **y** BethServices **Director of Adult Services. Bethesda Community Services Inc**

For Shelley, it has been a true blessing to have been a part of Bethesda for the past 36 years. She says the opportunities, personal and professional growth. relationships formed, and memories of laughter and tears are too countless to share.

Shelley has worn many hats through her years at Bethesda. She began as a direct support worker in 1985 while also earning her health and social welfare. certification through Niagara College. She also served as a family home provider when her children were young and day program support worker before returning to the love of her life: residential support.

Shelley has enjoyed being the Director of Adult Services for the past 13 years; her experiences have culminated in being named Bethesda's employee of the year for 2021.

In her guiet moments, Shelley says that she finds herself amazed at what she has achieved in her career and is guietly and proud of herself.



## 

Cheer on the finalists and post your pictures of the 2021 Women in Business Awards! Tag @GNCC WIN on \* Twitter or @womeninniagara on @ Instagram and use the hashtag #WIBA2021.

## Excellence in Non-Profit



# Ashley Waters in aswaters ashley.craigwaters of diybalancedlife Relationship Manager, Scouts Canada

Ashley has worked for Scouts Canada as Relationship Manager for the past 11 years. Over the last 18 months, Scouts Canada was needed more than ever before for providing youth the opportunity to learn and connect with peers in a safe way. Ashley is a member of the core team that enabled Scouts Canada to pivot to virtual programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

within their own social safety zone.

Ashley is always conscientious of the impact something may have on her volunteers, which is critical in keeping continuous programming in place for youth. She developed the concept of Scouting Adventure Boxes to ensure that those who were not comfortable returning to in-person scouting would have the means to feel like a member and complete challenges at their own pace and

Ashley is also a founding member of NEXTNiagara and served on the Niagara Connects Council to build action plans for transformative socio-economic change. She has always wanted to effect change in her community for the better, to be a voice for those that feel voiceless and unheard, and to champion causes she feels strongly for, such as education, healthcare and affordable housing.

## Elisabeth Zimmermann Executive Director, YWCA Niagara Region

Elisabeth has worked for over 25 years in the nonprofit human services sector. For the last 15 years she has served as Executive Director of the YWCA Niagara Region, a non-profit organization working with homeless women and their families to provide emergency shelter, transitional supported housing, ongoing support services and advocacy.

Her deep understanding of the importance of addressing the issues of poverty, and the need for quality support systems to minimize the longterm impact of systemic inequalities, has positioned the YWCA Niagara Region as a leader in addressing

barriers with a women's-focused lens among community and government agencies.

Elisabeth is a member of the Niagara Health Board of Trustees; Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Task Force; Non-Profit Council for Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce (GNCC); and Government Advisory Council for GNCC. In 2014, Elisabeth won the Women in Business Award for her community spirit.

A feminist at heart, Elisabeth believes that equity needs to be more than just a word in a mission statement.



## **Cultural Arts Award FINALISTS**

Presented by:



## Diana McAdorey F Diana.Capredoni Managing Director, Chorus Niagara

Diana has managed 12 Chorus Niagara seasons and was instrumental in Chorus Niagara's move to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in 2015. During those seasons, she has organized over 60 major events including professional concerts with orchestra and soloists, community events, a flash mob (with over 54.7 million views on YouTube) and has collaborated with other arts organizations on performances including the Orpheus Choir of Toronto. the Bach Elgar Choir of Hamilton, McMaster University. Brock University, Redeemer College, and others.



Since taking on the role of Managing Director, Chorus Niagara subscriptions have more than doubled, its budget increased by 70%, and staff expanded from four to 10. Chorus Niagara has evolved into the premier choral arts organization in the Niagara region, and their performance venue has evolved from schools, churches, and public spaces to selling out the 770-seat FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre's Partridge Hall.



As The Foster Festival's Founding Executive Director, Emily brings a wealth of experience to her new role as the Festival's Artistic Producer.

The Foster Festival was founded in 2015 and produced its inaugural 9-week summer season in 2016 at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre in downtown St. Catharines, Under Emily's leadership. The Foster Festival has welcomed over 40,000 visitors, employed 76 actors, 80 production team members, and 18 emerging arts workers since its inaugural season.



Each year, The Foster Festival partners with the Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre to offer over 150 hours of free arts enrichment programming to youth in our community. Furthermore, 150 complimentary tickets are distributed to members of the community who may not be able to attend otherwise due to financial or social barriers.

The Foster Festival has developed a mentorship program in partnership with the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine & Performing Arts Department of Dramatic Arts, specifically for next generation arts workers to give them professional experience before graduating from their post-secondary program.

# Business That Gives Back Award | FINALISTS



## **CAA Niagara y** caaniagara **o** caa\_niagara

Founded in 1911 as the St. Catharines Automobile Club with just 16 members, CAA Niagara has grown to more than 140,000 members with five Niagara locations; St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Thorold and Grimsby. A not-for-profit membership organization, CAA Niagara, provides emergency road services, travel, insurance and member rewards.

member rewards.

CAA Niagara has supported non-profit organizations over the past three years with a financial contribution, as well as a branded



roadside vehicle and other marketing and employee focused initiatives. CAA's Community Boost program has donated to The Kristen French Child Advocacy Centre, Distress Centre Niagara, FORT (Foundation of Resources for Teens), Food4Kids, Hospice Niagara, and Gillian's Place. CAA employees are very passionate about Niagara and fundraising for organizations including the Period Promise and Community Care Day of Caring by donating home kits for those who are starting over and need supplies with donations. All these outstanding organizations help the women and girls of the Niagara Region and CAA is proud to support them on an ongoing basis.

## **Hatch I I I** HATCHglobal

Hatch has been part of the Niagara region for almost 100 years. Whatever their clients



envision, Hatch engineers can design and build. With over six decades of business and technical experience in the mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors, they understand the challenges for businesses are changing rapidly.

Hatch challenges the status quo and creates positive change for its employees, the clients they serve, and the communities in which they live, work, and play. Hatch is passionately committed to the pursuit of a better world through positive change.

Hatch is committed to gender diversity within the organization and was named one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers 2021 by Media Corp. Hatch recognizes that achieving their diversity goals takes a village — and engagement with community organizations is key to helping to achieve those goals. This process has proven successful with many local organizations that are helping achieve gender diversity.

Hatch staff actively participates in local charities. The company has matched over \$20,000 in staff fundraising in 2021 alone. Hatch's employees also individually participate in community activities, raising money for various charities.

#### **Business That Gives Back** Award **FINALISTS**



## Little Chief & Co. II littlechief.dog ¥ littlechiefdog (⊙) littlechief.dog

Jennifer McKenna opened Little Chief & Co. pet store with her husband Michael three years ago in downtown St. Catharines. Having the store downtown was their dream location and they are passionate about being part of the downtown revitalization process. Jennifer has enthusiastically rolled up her sleeves as she continues efforts to build and beautify the downtown core.

Little Chief &Co. was the first Living Wage Pet Retailer in Canada. In these times, the benefits of raising workers' wages to ensure their economic security has never been clearer or more urgent.



The owners of Little Chief & Co. both advocate for and donate to the Kristen French Advocacy Centre; \$5 from every piece of Little Chief & Co. human clothing purchased is donated to the organization. The work done through the Kristen French Advocacy Centre is near and dear to their hearts, as Jennifer was a schoolmate and shared the same rowing crew as Kristen. They will forever advocate for her and the incredible work being done in her name.

## Matter of Black Matter of Black





## **Matter of Black**

Matter of Black was founded in June 2020 with a mission to amplify Black voices, Black history and Black businesses in the Niagara region. As a group of concerned, compassionate citizens they decided to revitalize the Emancipation Day picnic that some of their members had celebrated since childhood on the first Sunday in August in Lakeside Park.

Matter of Black aims to bring back annual Emancipation Day celebrations and education to the heart of St. Catharines and Niagara. They value the creation of a safe, welcoming space for Niagara's Black community to discuss a multitude of challenges the community faces. They proudly offer opportunities to come together through workshops and panels that promote anti-racism practices and active allyship.

This initiative was founded by Mutsa Charamba, Erica Williams, Erika Smith, Jaida Steenhuis, and Natasha Bell.

## 

Tag @GNCC\_WIN on y Twitter or @womeninniagara on @ Instagram and use the hashtag **#WIBA2021**. We're looking forward to seeing your pictures!

Visit gncc.ca/wiba to see our Social Wall — you might be on it!

## Community Impact Award **FINALISTS**



Lisa Hall in fagentlisahall @ lisahallagent Owner and President. **Lisa Hall Insurance and Financial Services Inc** 

Lisa has spent the last 20 years focused on empowering others to reach their most significant potential. Born in Vancouver and transplanted to Niagara as a girl, Lisa has happily established herself in the community and enjoys all that Niagara offers. A graduate of Notre Dame College School and Brock University, she grew a successful insurance and financial services business serving the Niagara region and beyond.

Lisa is passionate about child welfare, and much of her volunteer work has been child-centred. Lisa has held various challenging and fulfilling roles working with children and youth, from in-school volunteering to managing a Niagara Junior Varsity football team.

Lisa believes that we can all make a difference in the lives of others simply by offering compassion and empathy.

There is nothing more fulfilling to her than the opportunity to mentor, whether that be a young person, an employee, a colleague or fellow entrepreneur. She benefits from developing her leadership and management qualities but can pass on her experiences. to hopefully help others on their own paths.

#### Kristen Marischuk © kcurrie823 Social Worker & Owner, Counselling by Kristen

Kristen has been working in the field of social work since obtaining her Bachelor's degree from Niagara University in 2005. Her initial draw to become a social worker came from personal experience - after being adopted as an infant, she learned that individuals, families and children all need support from time to time.

Since opening her practice in December 2020. Kristen has supported individuals going through periods of distress, trauma or managing their mental health. To further enhance her skills, in 2021 Kristen. became a Certified Trauma and Resilience Practitioner

through Starr Commonwealth and has expanded her practice to help those struggling with past trauma.

Kristin believes that mentorship is a strong component of creating a community filled with pride. She's had the opportunity to provide mentorship to undergraduate students in the field of social work over the past 16 years, and she says she has learned as much about herself and her practice from her students as much as the students have learned from her.



## Community Impact Award FINALISTS



Maria Mavridis Ff anchorniagara (9) anchorniagara

**Event Producer. Anchor Niagara** 

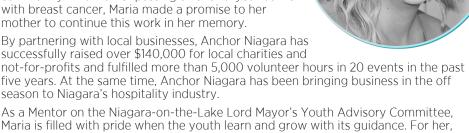
Anchor Niagara was created on the promise to continue raising funds and awareness for community charities, foundations, and not-for-profits in Niagara.

Maria's parents taught her to give back to the community where she lives, in any way she can. Maria grew up watching her mother put together events that raised awareness and funds for the community. Prior to her passing after a 10-year battle with breast cancer, Maria made a promise to her mother to continue this work in her memory.



five years. At the same time, Anchor Niagara has been bringing business in the off season to Niagara's hospitality industry.

As a Mentor on the Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee. Maria is filled with pride when the youth learn and grow with its guidance. For her, mentorship plays a big role in the planning and execution of a successful fundraiser.



## **Entrepreneurship Award I FINALISTS**

Presented by:



### Kelly Braun in @ kbraunkraun Owner, CHRO, Kraun Electric

Kelly Braun is an owner and the chief human resources officer (CHRO) of Kraun Electric, a fullservice electrical contracting business with its head office in St. Catharines. Kelly and her family started Kraun in 1996 with just eight employees. Twenty-five years later, Kraun Electric has offices in St. Catharines and Hamilton, employs over 100 people and has grown to include large-scale. multi-million-dollar jobs.

A few of Kraun Electric's most significant projects include the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Peace Bridge, IKO's flagship manufacturing facility, and Nora Frances Henderson high school.

As an owner, she holds her own in the traditionally male-dominated construction industry. Kelly's favourite part of her job is helping people feel supported by being a resource to ask questions, voice concerns, and find solutions.



## Entrepreneurship Award



Allison Kares in f allisonkares

allisonkares

## Studio Director & Studio Owner, Movement Unlimited Inc.

Movement has been a part of Alison's life since her early teens. Her first experience helping others to move began in her mother's living room, teaching a group of friends with a Jane Fonda 33 1/3 LP as her guide. Movement grew into a career from that first little spark.

She began her movement career as a group fitness instructor and personal trainer in the early 1990s. In 2000, she was introduced to the Pilates method and fell in love. It spoke to her body on a completely different level than all the fitness programs that she was experienced in, and Allison couldn't wait to share that with others.

In 2012, Alison created Movement Unlimited Inc. and has been the sole owner and studio director of this business since November 2012.



## Susan Knighton in Earth Angel Landscaping & Property Maintenance

Susan created Earth Angel Landscaping in April 2012 from scratch, while working full-time for another company. She bought an old, used Ford truck, a lawn mower and a broom, and worked through the evenings and weekends looking for clientele for her new property maintenance company.

During her first year, Susan did all the work by herself, but along the way she has found employees to help her. After 10 years of running the company, and at the age of 68, she still enjoys working alongside her employees, laying sod, replacing old lawns, establishing gardens, and removing bushes and trees.

bushes and trees.

Over the last decade, Susan has established many good relationships with her elderly customers, and has provided many students each year with a good job. Susan says she is truly blessed to be able to continue in this line of work.

## Read the Women in Niagara Hackathon Report

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women's employment and business across the country – including here in Niagara. WIN Council hosted a hackathon to focus on solutions and get women back to work, school, and leadership.

Read the full report: gncc.ca/hackathon



## Corporate Leadership Award **I FINALISTS**



Christine Dekker III Y christinedekk f Christine Deruvte Dekker Ochristine.dekker

#### Small Business Advisor. **Meridian Credit Union**

Christine helps mentor and train new Meridian Small Business Advisors in her region, and is currently working with two new advisors and one returning from a two-year leave. She sits on the new Business Insights committee to provide feedback on process & policy change and new policies being considered for implementation within Meridian Business Banking.

With so much uncertainty in today's business environment, Christine has ensured she is present and

out to when they are not sure where to turn for their business banking questions.

available for her business members so that they have someone dependable to reach Christine loves working for Meridian and shares its strong commitment to our community. She loves getting to know her business members and their passions and dreams. She feels very fortunate to work in the same cities where she grew up and now lives, and enjoys supporting businesses in South Niagara — primarily Welland,

#### **Tracy Feor** opulensphotography Manufacturing Area Manager. General Motors of Canada

Port Colborne and Wainfleet

Tracy is a visionary manufacturing leader with over 20 years experience at the forefront of complex teams and manufacturing systems. She currently leads the team at General Motors in St. Catharines consisting of 250 unionized hourly and salaried employees. She continuously strives to improve business metrics increasing safety, engagement. quality improvements and responsiveness metrics. Her leadership goal is always focused on ensuring profitability of GM's Canadian operations in today's global economy.



In 2014, Tracy chaired the Women's Council for General Motors Canada, and had the significant role of launching the council from 2014-2016 while providing leadership guidance to women across the organization.

As the only female Area Manager and one of 17% of the females working in the St. Catharines plant, her goal is to continue to showcase women, through proven results, as being an important part of achieving business goals and profitability in manufacturing.

Tracy wants to be a role model for women who are interested in manufacturing and to ensure women have a strong voice in the field.

# Corporate Leadership Award | FINALISTS



## Sara Holmes © sarahmes000 Senior Small Business Specialist, Meridian Credit Union

Sara is a Commercial and Small Business banking professional with 24 years of progressive experience with Meridian Credit Union, providing sound financial advice to small and mid-market companies by sourcing and underwriting new deals for various industries.

For the last 7 years, she has been working in a coaching, mentoring, underwriting, and a little bit of "everything roles" in the Corporate Small Business area of Meridian. She provides insight on deal structure, deal acquisition, various project initiatives, new product and promotion launches (including the Chamber Affinity Program), along with mentoring the small business sales team.

Anyone in a leadership role can attest to the fact that the last 18 months have truly required skills at leading in challenging times. Being in the banking industry presents its own challenges in managing business members' cashflow deficiencies and access to working capital. During this time, Sara led a team who managed, processed and funded almost 5,000 Government Canada Emergency Bank Accounts (CEBA) loans. Managing this group to get the funds into members hands when they needed it most was paramount to the continuation of operation for many of these businesses.

## Lisa Vinc Lisa Vinc lisavinc33 Program Director, Bell Media Radio

Lisa is the Program Director for MOVE 105.7, Niagara's top local radio station. After starting with the company as Promotions Director, Lisa grew into the Program Director role through her dedication to the local community, strong brand partnerships and commitment to bringing entertainment to the Niagara region.

Lisa thrives on building her brand locally, developing key events and connecting with her local listeners.

Lisa has worked directly with the Niagara Children's Centre as a member of the Help Kids Shine committee, helping raise crucial dollars for children in Niagara. She has also helped to co-lead the annual Great Holiday Food Drive, amplifying the need for food and cash donations around the holiday season in support of Community Care.

Lisa is a certified Communications and Advertising Professional through the Institute of Communication Agencies. Since starting with Bell Media, she has held the #1 female 25–54 radio station position in the market for eight straight years.







# Lifetime Achievement Award | RECIPIENT





## Carolyne Watts & GM

## Plant Manager, St. Catharines Powertrain, General Motors

On February 1, 2011, Carolyne Watts was named Plant Manager, of General Motors St. Catharines Operations. Prior to this position, Carolyne was President of CAMI Automotive Inc. She has a continuing commitment to environmental preservation and safety awareness and has been guided by these principles throughout her career.

Carolyne received her bachelor's degree in industrial administration from the Kettering Institute (formerly the General Motors Institute) in 1986. Upon completion of her studies, Carolyne was assigned to the Ste Therese Assembly Plant in Quebec. She further obtained a masters degree in business administration from Concordia University in 1992.

During her time in Canada she advanced through several manufacturing positions at both the Ste Therese Assembly Plant and the St. Catharines Powertrain Plant. She has managed six General Motors plants during her career in both the United States and Canada.

In 2010, Carolyne was recognized by Automotive News as one of the Top 100 Leading Women in the North American automotive industry.

Carolyne currently sits on the Board of Governors at Niagara College, a role she has held since 2011. She is a native of Shawinigan, Quebec and is fluent in both of Canada's official languages. Carolyne currently resides in St. Catharines.

Carolyne is a fitting illustration of the courage and leadership it took to be GM's first female plant manager in St. Catharines. This coupled with her commitment to getting more women working in STEM makes her a worthy recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, and we are proud that Carolyn has accepted her nomination.

Lancaster Brooks & Welch LLP has proudly served Niagara's business community for over 139 years. Next year marks 140 years and the start of a new Firm.

We are delighted to announce that Chown Cairns LLP are joining Lancaster Brooks & Welch LLP, to become:

