



2023/2024

SMART start

YEAR END
PROGRAM



SMARTstart

setting your business up for success

About SMARTstart Program



Who is the program designed for?

Businesses in their first five years or entrepreneurs who have an idea but have not yet started a business.



What support is provided for participants?

A 50 to 60-hour program offered over 8 months consisting of:

- Online training – through GoForth Institute.
- Workshops – twice per month facilitated by local experts.
- Mentorship – established business owners from the community paired with each entrepreneur



The SMARTStart program features a combination of in person workshops and online business training.

Topics include:

- Marketing
- Business Legal Affairs
- Commercial Business Insurance
- Effective Networking
- Business Planning
- Bookkeeping
- Accounting & Payroll and MORE!



Total:

23 local entrepreneurs were involved: **12 Entrepreneurs and 11 Mentors**

26 local businesses involved from guest speakers to workshops & event venues and caterers.

\$24,500 given back to local businesses in The Lakeland

MEET OUR MENTORS



ROXANNE PASHNIAK
INSPIRING PASHION CONSULTING

Roxanne is a seasoned entrepreneur and business executive, highlighting a rich career spanning over 25 years throughout various industries. She passionately guides and mentors aspiring entrepreneurs, leaders, managers, and professionals, empowering them to surpass their goals and overcome obstacles and thrive through adversity. Roxanne champions personal and professional growth as the cornerstone of success, dedicating her career to fostering the success of others.



NATALIE COOZE
CM CLEANING LTD.

Hi I'm Natalie, founder of CM Cleaning Ltd. Since establishing my cleaning business in 2010, my vision has been to expand nationally, offering a distinguished cleaning service tailored to our clients' needs.

Recently, I joined the SMARTstart program as a mentor, where I've gained renewed confidence and inspiration to pursue my entrepreneurial ambitions. This opportunity not only fuels my passion but also allows me to support others as they embark on their own entrepreneurial journey, bringing joy and inspiration to their endeavors.



JP STASSEN
LAKELAND CO-OP

JP is a dynamic figure in the Lakeland and believes in giving back. His passion for community is shown in his contributions to various committees where he sits as a director, including the Bonnyville and District Chamber of Commerce and the Cold Lake Economic Development Activity Committee. As the General Manager of Lakeland Co-op, JP takes pride in his role and values the chance to contribute to and support the community where he resides. Having relocated to the area in 2019, JP has quickly become an active participant in local affairs, serving as a business partner, advocate, and community supporter and SMARTstart Mentor. With over 28 years of diverse experience across various business sectors, JP brings a wealth of knowledge to the his positions.



BOB BUCKLE
BURGER KING

With a wealth of experience spanning over 37 years, Bob's journey includes four terms as a City Councilor and leadership roles on numerous Boards & Committees. His background in Law Enforcement with the RCMP and ownership of various business enterprises, from Robins Donut and McDonald's franchises to Original Joes's Restaurant and Bar, showcases his diverse expertise. Currently Bob owns several Burger King franchises and is involved in Commercial Real Estate Developments. A dedicated Chamber member, Bob has served on the Board of Directors since 2003. This is Bob's second year as a SMARTstart Mentor.

MEET OUR MENTORS



BEN FADEYIW

BUDGET BLINDS & FAD'S VINTAGE

Ben is the father of 2 amazing kids and a husband of 33 years to his beautiful wife Leila. Ben has a strong entrepreneurial spirit and currently operates two businesses in the City of Cold Lake, Budget Blinds, a franchise window covering business opened in 2009, and Fads Vintage, a local antique shop he was proud to launch in 2022. Ben believes in plugging into his community and has volunteered with many organizations over the years such as with the Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce as a director and president, as well as with Community Futures Lakeland as the Vice Chair. Ben is currently in the municipal world and serves as a Councillor for the MD of Bonnyville. In his free time, Ben loves to Paint By Number. This is Ben's second year as a SMARTstart Mentor.



PAM LENIUK

LAKE CITY INSURANCE

Pam has been in the Lakeland community since 2001. She moved to Cold Lake from Regina to take a position with a local insurance brokerage. Pam is experienced in all aspects of insurance from personal lines, farm, commercial, bonding, oil and gas and specialty lines of business. Pam has successfully managed the brokerage where she has worked for 10 years which included 3 offices and 20 some staff. When the office sold in 2019, pam took the leap to open her own brokerage and launched Lake City Insurance. Since then, Pam has been working at building her business. One of Pam's core values in her office is continuing education. She has successfully completed various courses including her CAIB Insurance designation in 2001 with Honours. In her spare time, she enjoys golfing, yard work, reading and spending time with family.



MIKE KILBURN

KILBURN CONTROLS

Residing in the Cold Lake region, Mike has worked in the Oil and Gas industry for over 20 years with the last 15 years being focused on the commissioning and start-up of new energy and mining projects. These experiences have allowed Mike to become a certified Project Management Professional. Growing up in team environments has allowed Mike the insight and knowledge to build strong teams, mentor new people, and adapt and pivot during stressful times. Mike aims to be an inspirational leader and use his strong personal work ethic to inspire action and confidence in peers. He continuously strives to be respected as a credible voice in decision-making, defining new business opportunities, and developing value-added relationships. This is Mike's second year as a SMARTstart Mentor.

The Name says it all! Turning an idea into a monetary move and making it a reality with guidance from the pros!

MEET OUR MENTORS



JOEL DECHAIINE
COLLISION TOWING

Joel is a highly regarded member of the Cold Lake community, known for his unwavering commitment to business, family, and youth sports. As the owner of a thriving second-generation family business specializing in collision repair and towing, Joel has established a reputation for providing exceptional service and exceeding customer expectations. Beyond his professional pursuits, Joel dedicates his time and expertise to coaching youth sports in Cold Lake. From hockey to baseball and skiing, he passionately mentors young athletes, instilling in them valuable skills, sportsmanship, and a love for physical activity. Joel's volunteer impact can also be seen in the business community as he currently sits as a Director for Community Futures Lakeland. Joel is a positive role model and mentor for aspiring athletes and local entrepreneurs.



SHERRI BUCKLE

FABUTAN/HUSH LASH STUDIO, THE CHOPPED LEAF

Sherri has a diverse background in entrepreneurship, executive leadership, small business ownership, and banking. Coming from an entrepreneurial family, Sherri developed a passion for business and innovation from a young age. With over 15 years of experience as an Executive Director, Sherri has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills and a keen business acumen. Her ability to inspire and motivate teams has been instrumental in achieving significant milestones and surpassing targets. This is Sherri's second year contributing as a Mentor in the SMARTstart Entrepreneur Program.



SMARTstart helps guide, support and inform new business owners on the important areas to focus on for success.



You cannot put a value on mentorship. The SMARTstart program provides all the tools needed to set new entrepreneurs up for success.



MEET OUR MENTORS



RAY COWELL

WICKED WATERSPORT RENTALS INC.

A diversified and accomplished professional, Ray is a 25-year veteran of The Royal Canadian Air Force and is currently the owner/operator of Wicked Watersport Rentals Inc. which provides safe, fun and exciting water sport rentals on Cold Lake. Ray is also the CEO of The Property Consulting Group Inc. who provides ethical and transparent property management and consulting services to owner investors, and provides diverse and affordable rentals for tenants from Cold Lake to Edmonton, Alberta. Ray's vast contributions to the Lakeland can be seen where, he has been awarded Citizen of the Year (2003), Business of the Year (2023) and as he is currently a Director with the Cold Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce as well as a Director with the Economic Development Advisory Committee. This is Ray's second year as a SMARTstart Mentor.



AMY PILAT

WINE KNOWS

My name is Amy Pilat, I am a mother of 2 beautiful girls. Originally from Edmonton, my husband Andrew and I now call the Lakeland area our home. I have worked as a wine consultant for various agencies in Alberta for many years and during that time I was lucky enough to travel to different wine areas around the world to witness firsthand the art of winemaking and increase my knowledge. My interests, knowledge, & love for the art of wine have inspired me to start this venture of "in the home and private wine tastings". I have come to call "Wine Knows." I hope to infuse each person I meet in a small or large way with the same passion I have for wine, by introducing them to new and unique wines and varietals. I truly believe that wine needs a laid-back approach, and that each person has their own set of taste buds and my job is to find a wine they can honestly enjoy. This is Amy's second year as a SMARTstart Mentor.



You cannot put a value on mentorship. The SMARTstart program provides all the tools needed to set new entrepreneurs up for success.



If you learn one thing from the SMARTstart program to grow your business, it's worth it!



MEET OUR ENTREPRENEURS



RENAUD THYS
LA CHASSE BREWING

Renaud is an experienced fighter pilot in the RCAF, with deep roots in Belgium, where he was born. Aside from his military career, Renaud is passionate about beer, its history and culture, and is developing a business idea to bring the historical Trappist traditional ales to his adoptive community. Interested in new sustainable technologies, Renaud is looking to develop a small-scale brewery that would use solar energy and other processes to deliver a net-zero, low waste local beer production. His project, “La Chasse... Brewing” merges the Fighter Pilot traditions and work ethic, the old-world Trappist recipes of Belgium, and Northern Alberta’s abundant solar energy to deliver a truly unique production method and a selection of authentic ales to our local community and visiting guests.



MICHELE HOOVER
MICHELE HOOVER COACHING

Michele has combined her passion for people and lifelong learning to create Michele Hoover Coaching, where she helps women who struggle with people pleasing and anxious attachment styles to see their innate worthiness and unleash their potential. She believes that a rising tide raises all boats, so as we heal ourselves we can become a beacon for others. With more than 25 years of experience in customer service across industries, including restaurants, airlines, and education, Michele brings a wealth of adaptability and solution-focused expertise to her role as a Life Coach. She enjoys working in conjunction with corporate businesses to train managers in leadership, communication and conflict resolution.

As a director of the Bonnyville Chamber of Commerce, Michele is passionate about advocating for and connecting businesses with the people and resources they need to thrive, leveraging her skills in communication and relationship building.



SARAH COOKNELL
LILY + LAVENDER PHOTO

Sarah is the inspirational wedding and lifestyle photographer at Lily + Lavender Photo, based in Cold Lake. Her fun and interactive approach to photo taking aims to capture authentic moments of love, connection and laughter shared between families and couples. Sarah brings her passion to entrepreneurship where she excels at collaborating and partnering with other local vendors to offer full intimate wedding services (including venue, DJ, officiant, photography, refreshments, and more!). Additionally, when she isn’t behind the camera, she is painting and creating art - now available for purchase.



The value of SMARTstart really starts with community connection, networking and ends with knowledge

MEET OUR ENTREPRENEURS



CAITLYN BUSH

BUSH-ELS OF FUN - PET CARE SERVICES

Caitlyn is a passionate animal lover and the owner of Bush-els of Fun - Pet Care Services. She provides all aspects of her pet care in a humane and fear-free manner using ONLY Positive Reinforcement. She prides herself on providing the highest degree of service in her overnight care & training. After 13 years, Caitlyn left her other passion of Marketing & Influencing behind to jump head first into her business and focus on it full time. Joining the SMARTstart program has given her the confidence to make this bold, strategic and very necessary move.



KYLIE MANSON

UNDERGROUND BARRE

I'm Kylie, the owner of Underground Barre Fitness studio in Bonnyville. I've been a fitness instructor for 4 years, and a fitness enthusiast for much, much longer! In 2023, I had the opportunity to turn my hobby into my career and purchase Underground Barre. My goal at UGB is to provide fitness classes for everybody and EVERY BODY. I am passionate about not only helping women achieve their fitness goals, but also realizing that the body they show up with is perfect just the way it is. I'm not here to change your body, I'm here to change the way you feel about your body! When I'm not at the studio, you can usually find me at my day job as a dental assistant or carting my kids around to their MANY sports and activities.



AMANDA KNUDSLIE

BOTANICAL BLOOMS INC.

Amanda is a vibrant new entrepreneur in the Lakeland with a passion to immerse herself in the world of plants. Her new business is Botanical Blooms Inc. that will operate as a premium, year-round greenhouse, specializing in high quality beautiful house plants. Botanical Blooms will also be hosting workshops on fun topics such as learning how to plant and build your own terrariums. Amanda is a strategic thinker who loves to take on new challenges. Her ability to build strong relationships with customers, partners and the community will serve her business well. Aside from her exciting business, Amanda resides in Cold Lake and loves to hang out with her husband and two wonderful boys.



KATHRYN VASSEUR

APIDAE COMPASSION CARE

Kathryn is the owner and operator of Apidae Compassion Care which started in Bonnyville in 2022 and has since expanded to other communities within the North Zone. She started her healthcare journey over 6 years ago as a Rehabilitation Assistant with a strong passion for helping individuals recover and regain their independence. In addition to running a Home Care agency, Kathryn is actively involved on the Integrating Health and Community Service Board, a volunteer driver for the Bonnyville Handi-Bus, and has recently completed the Palliative Care Training for volunteers.

MEET OUR ENTREPRENEURS



ASHLEY TEMPLETON

THE CASUAL CANOE BOURBON & CRAFT KITCHEN

Ashley is one of the dynamic forces guiding The Casual Canoe Bourbon & Craft Kitchen towards smooth sailing. She expertly navigates the course of business administrative tasks, people skills training, and charting their marketing portfolio. She's made waves at media powerhouses like Rogers, SJM, Bell Media representing publications from "Food in Canada" to "Weddingbells" where she had the opportunity to work closely with food processors, distributors and restaurateurs all over Canada. Her everlasting quest for knowledge is apparent, as she's recently completed the Restaurant Owner certificate program at IAP Career College adding to her impressive list of certifications and diplomas. Did we mention that Ashley's achievements have made ripples beyond our shores? She was nominated for Avenue Magazine's prestigious Top 40 under 40 award in Calgary.



DARU PRETORIUS

GOLDEN THREAD CONSULTING

Daru is the visionary entrepreneur behind Golden Thread Consulting, a premier business management and personal development consulting agency. With a mission to empower both individuals and businesses to achieve their highest potential, Daru offers a comprehensive suite of solutions tailored to address diverse challenges in today's dynamic marketplace. With over a decade of experience garnered from his tenure at the third-largest supply chain company globally, Daru brings a wealth of practical knowledge and insights to his consultancy practice. Armed with a Master's degree in Business Management, he combines academic rigor with real-world acumen to deliver tangible results for his clients.



PAULA GARDIPY

IDEA STAGE –
WINE TASTING WITH GOURMET CHOCOLATES

Paula is in the Idea Stage of her wine event business that will offer a heavenly experience for guests while also making a positive impact in her community. She believes in the power of giving back and plans to contribute a portion of the proceeds from her events towards supporting local charities and initiatives. By attending events, guests not only indulge in the exquisite pairings of decadent chocolates and wines but will also contribute to the betterment of our community. Paula's mission is to create memorable experiences that delight the senses and create positive change in the lives of others.

Armed with extensive experience in sales, business operations, management and customer service, Paula is well positioned to launch her new business. Her strategic mindset, wealth of experience and community minded energy create a sense of anticipation for her future projects and events.

It has been great coming to the realization that I am on the right track with my business, thanks to what SMARTstart has taught me. It has also been eye opening having SMARTstart show me what I still have to learn.



MEET OUR ENTREPRENEURS



JHACRYS ALBISO

GAB STORE

Jhacrys is the owner of GAB Store, the cutest new convenience store in Bonnyville. She brings a wealth of experience and education to her new endeavor. Equipped with two bachelors' degrees and having just completed the SMARTstart Entrepreneur program, Jacrys has set herself up for success. Her vast work experience in the food chain and retail industry will serve her well in her business pursuits. With an eye to future expansion, Jhacrys looks forward to her business success where she would love to be in a position to give back to her community, through volunteering and sponsorship opportunities.

When Jhacrys is not busy working on her business, she also dabbles in project management where she enjoys planning entertainment events and bringing new artists with exciting concerts to the Lakeland.



MADELAINE LONGWORTH

HEAL & GROW WITH GRIT COUNSELLING

If there was ever someone well suited to their business it would be Madelaine Longworth. Having a dream to provide empathetic and tailored care, Madelaine launched her new counselling business, Heal & Grow With Grit Counselling. As a new Entrepreneur in the SMARTstart program Madelaine has taken her business from an Idea into a fully formed service that focuses on trauma, addiction, grief and loss. Madelaine's kindness, bravery and ability to understand real world problems allows her to offer the highest degree of care and support to her clients. Her tenacity and thirst for knowledge will serve her as she develops strategies for new programs and services for Heal & Grow With Grit to offer. In the near future, Madelaine will surely succeed as she expands her business to include workshops to individuals and groups.

SMARTstart has been so valuable to me by providing the fundamentals of business ownership, resources and guidance with members of the community.

SMARTstart has given me the tools and confidence to feel comfortable running my business. I feel like I ACTUALLY know what I am doing now!

SMARTstart has been so valuable to me by providing the fundamentals of business ownership, resources and guidance with members of the community.





WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING



The SMARTstart program builds the foundation for success!



What an excellent program! As a Mentor, I had the opportunity to share my knowledge but also to learn from and be inspired by the entrepreneurs. Well done SMARTstart!



SMARTstart has been so valuable to me by providing the fundamentals of business ownership, resources and guidance with members of the community.



The SMARTstart workshops gave me access to amazing professionals who helped me grow my business and learn what I was missing. Thank you!



SMARTstart provides essential business training but more importantly, a supportive business community. The networking events were so great in connecting the Mentors and Entrepreneurs. I have learned so much!

THANK YOU SPONSORS



Title Sponsors:



Entrepreneur and Workshop Sponsors:



Town of Bonnyville
"It's Multi-Natural"



Program Partners:

