

BUSINESS: Aurora Heat
LOCATION: Fort Smith, Northwest Territories
OWNER: Brenda Dragon
WEBSITE: auroraheat.ca

Brenda Dragon's parents raised a large family of healthy outdoor kids dressed in wild furs from their trapline; despite temperatures below -40, they were never cold. When Brenda became a mother, turning to wild fur was a natural answer. In 2015, Brenda created Aurora Heat, the result of a dream where natural fur was the first choice for warmth, replacing single use products, fast fashion, and synthetic/petroleum-based materials. Out of a deep respect and gratitude to the Land and to the beaver, Aurora Heat uses all parts of their pelts and leaves nothing to waste. It is no surprise that their company's motto is "Live in Harmony with Nature." Thebacha Business Development Services, the Community Futures office in Fort Smith, supported Aurora Heat through counselling, referrals, and advice, and also the use of their Resource Centre, offering access to a computer, printer, and internet service to launch Aurora Heat forward to warm success.

BUSINESS: Corvina Design
LOCATION: Cultus Lake, British Columbia
OWNER: Raven Wolden
WEBSITE: etsy.com/ca/shop/CorvinaDesign

Raven Wolden of Corvina Design is an artist, graphic designer, and an Indigenous youth entrepreneur from Sts'ailes First Nation, who started Corvina Design and her second business Get Smashed Piñatas in 2018 in Cultus Lake, British Columbia. From a very young age, she showed an interest in the arts and aspired to be an artist. Her major influences were her mother (Betty Ann Pennier – First Nations Clothing Designer), and father (Rory Wolden – Artist and Graphic Designer), as well as her late uncle (George Pennier – First Nations Artist and Carver). She has won numerous awards throughout her school years including the District 33 Art Scholarship and Sardis Secondary Gr. 12 Art Award. Raven creates and designs ornaments, some of which reflect Indigenous culture, while also creating designs for clients. With the help of Stó:lō Community Futures in British Columbia, Raven was able to purchase a laser printer/cutter to help expand her business by increasing efficiency to create more unique and higher quality products to sell locally and globally, while located in S'ólh Téméxw, the Stó:lō Traditional Territory in British Columbia.



BUSINESS: Uasau Soap
LOCATION: Iqaluit, Nunavut
OWNER: Bernice Clarke
WEBSITE: uasausoap.com

Located on the coast of the Arctic Ocean in Nunavut, Uasau Soap draws its inspiration from prehistoric Inuit tradition and the Nuna. In Inuktitut, Nuna means everything found on the land and in the sea: water, ice, animals, plants, rocks – even the spirits and memories of our ancestors. Uasau crafts each product from local ingredients, harvested through sustainable and traditional practices. Bowhead whale oil, for example, comes from local community hunts in Nunavut, where the entire community comes together to cooperate in a life-sustaining effort passed down for countless generations. Inuit are known for their resourcefulness and not wasting any part of an animal, and Uasau Soap follows suit.

Bernice Clarke began making soaps in 2012 to alleviate her dry skin resulting from the Arctic air. By 2014, Uasau was incorporated and now, Bernice has sold her soap, body butters, and skin care remedies all over the world. Baffin Business Development Corporation, the Community Futures office in Iqaluit, has supported Uasau and watched the Inuit women-owned-and-operated company grow into a thriving and recognized business in Nunavut and the rest of Canada.

BUSINESS: Coombs Country Candy
LOCATION: Port Alberni, British Columbia
OWNER: Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot
WEBSITE: coombscandy.com

Coombs Country Candy began 45 years ago, when founder Murray Lawlor started his practice in the art of chocolate and sweets creations. Originally from Niagara Falls, Murray honed his culinary candy skills over the years by practicing and perfecting his recipes when he owned and operated businesses across Canada and in the United States. Once Murray had a taste of the island lifestyle, he decided it was time to set down permanent roots in Port Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, an area he loved to explore and whose strong sense of community always made him feel welcome. There he stayed, growing the business into a staple of the Alberni Valley for 26 years until 2020 when he and his wife Lenore decided it was time to retire. Today, the store is run as a social enterprise by Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot, who re-invest part of the store's profits back into the community. With Murray's blessing, the new owners continue to use his time-honoured recipes and product line, and added online sales so that even more people can enjoy his legacy.

BUSINESS: Miss Vickie's Chips
LOCATION: New Lowell, Ontario
OWNER: Vickie Kerr
WEBSITE: missvickies.com

In 1987, Vickie Kerr wanted to make a healthier snack for her four young children, which led her to adapt her mother's potato chip recipe using the potatoes her husband, Bill, grew on their farm in New Lowell, Ontario. She left the skins on, sliced and hand-stirred them one small batch at a time. Eventually her potato chips became so popular that she was not able to keep up with the demand from her small kitchen on the farm. After being rejected by multiple banks, Vickie approached the Community Futures office in Collingwood, Ontario, The Centre for Business, and a loan was approved for \$50,000. By 1989, Miss Vickie's Chips repaid their loan; at that time, their sales were \$3.8 million, the company had 200 employees, and several plants across Canada. In 1993, Vickie had an offer from a multi-national company she could not refuse; Hostess Potato Chips (now owned by PepsiCo) purchased Miss Vickie's Chips and the premium kettle cooked chips continue to line store shelves in an ever-increasing variety of flavours.



BUSINESS: Three Farmers
LOCATION: Saskatoon, Regina and Keeler, Saskatchewan
OWNERS: Natasha, Elysia & Dan Vandenhurk, Ron Emde & Colin Rosengren
WEBSITE: threefarmers.ca

As Canada's largest brand and manufacturer of whole roasted pulse-based snacks, Three Farmers has been named one of Canada's fastest growing companies in *Canadian Business: Growth 500* two years in a row and aspires to nourish the world and make a positive and meaningful impact on the way we snack, ingredients we use, and the connections they create with their growers and customers.

Established in 2007, Three Farmers' portfolio consists of Whole Roasted Chickpeas, Peas, Lentils, and Fava Beans, all high in plant protein (10-14g per serving), fibre, and vitamins like iron, potassium, and calcium, while being allergen free, gluten free, and free of any artificial ingredients. Additionally, they are pioneers of a unique and ancient oil known as Camelina. Three Farmers is founded and operated by two sisters (Natasha & Elysia Vandenhurk) and three farmers (Dan Vandenhurk, Ron Emde and Colin Rosengren) from Midale, Saskatchewan, who believe that everyone should have wholesome food to eat with an understanding of where it comes from, and how it's made. Community Futures funding was used to build the Three Farmers' manufacturing facility in rural Saskatchewan and for the purchase of proprietary roasting ovens, aiding in expansion.

Success Stories





BUSINESS: Miels d'Anicet
LOCATION: Ferme-Neuve, Upper Laurentians, Québec
OWNERS: Anicet Desrochers and Anne-Virginie Schmidt
WEBSITE: mielsdanicet.com

Self-described “fools raving about honey,” Anicet Desrochers and Anne-Virginie Schmidt co-own Miels d'Anicet, a 1000-beehive apiary nestled in sinuous valleys of wooded hills, prairies, lakes and rivers. An inherited passion for beekeeping developed in 1978, and came to fruition in 2000. The company has worked in partnership with the SADC of Antoine-Labelle through the Youth Strategy, Support for Small Businesses, Structuring Technical Assistance and, most recently, the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund [RRRF] programs. With this support, a deep love for the bee, and a desire to discover the full potential of honey, Miels d'Anicet offers to their customers a boutique filled with a variety of honeys, soaps, and body and face care products, as well as a seasonal canteen featuring cuisine flavoured with honey, and guided farm tours.

BUSINESS: Smoking Gun Coffee Roasters
LOCATION: Chilliwack, British Columbia
OWNER: Brandon Lithun
WEBSITE: smokingguncoffee.com

Brandon Lithun first began roasting coffee beans in his home garage, and in 2015, he began wholesaling his product to local businesses and coffee enthusiasts around Chilliwack, British Columbia, quickly cultivating a local culture around coffee. When the COVID-19 restrictions made it harder for Brandon to reach his customers, he opened up a contactless curbside café in his neighborhood that allowed him to stay connected with his community and continue delivering a product people craved. Brandon's coffee beans are ethically sourced from a co-op in the Honduras Comayagua Region. Each coffee bean sold has a positive impact in the region, as the co-op's profits go towards building new hospitals and schools within their community. Support from Community Futures provided Brandon with strategic advisory assistance, specialist support for marketing, and a loan for a new coffee roaster to increase his capacity 4 times per hour. With their help, he was able to grow his dream into Smoking Gun Coffee Roasters, one of downtown Chilliwack's most loved cafés and new businesses.

BUSINESS: Jane & Sue Chocolate
LOCATION: Stanley Bridge, Prince Edward Island
OWNERS: Jane Woodley and Susan Humby
WEBSITE: janeandsuechocolate.com

Sisters Jane Woodley and Susan Humby co-own Jane & Sue Chocolate where they create hand crafted, fine artisan chocolates and confections using premium, sustainably produced and thoughtfully sourced chocolate, as well as local and organic ingredients whenever possible. Jane and Susan started their business in the Spring of 2018 as a retirement project, but their business expanded quickly; they soon reached out to CBDC Central PEI for their first loan in April of 2019 to help with business expansion. They continue to partner together through the Consultant Advisory Services Program, with various business loans, and by attending entrepreneurial events. Jane & Sue Chocolate has grown from selling at weekend Farmers' Markets to the opening of a brick-and-mortar store whose display cases are filled with an eye-pleasing array of delicious works of art.

BUSINESS: North Shore Fly Shop
LOCATION: Balmoral, New Brunswick
OWNER: Terry Landry
WEBSITE: northshoreflyshop.ca

Since the age of 13, Terry Landry has been inspired to tie his own fishing flies. With business counselling, consultant advisory services, and a business loan provided through CBDC Restigouche, Terry is able to share his passion and hobby with the entire world through social platforms and with an online store. Terry is proud to tie a special salmon fly called “Picture Province,” created by the late Warren Duncan (1948-2007), and proclaimed to be a New Brunswick official symbol on July 22, 1993. The colours used within this fly were carefully chosen to represent various aspects of New Brunswick: the gold tinsel symbolizes the economic and cultural importance of salmon; the green floss honours the New Brunswick fiddlehead; the Red Goose fiber shows the connection to Canada; the cranberry red is the official colour of New Brunswick; the lemon-yellow hackle is the background colour of the New Brunswick flag; the black bear hair on the wing is relevant to the prevalence of the black bear in New Brunswick.

BUSINESS: Doc Walker
LOCATION: Westbourne, Manitoba
OWNERS: Chris Thorsteinson and Dave Wasyliw
WEBSITE: docwalker.ca

Since forming in the town of Westbourne, Manitoba in the early 1990s, country band Doc Walker has earned a Juno Award (7 Nominations), 14 CCMA Awards (42 Nominations), 21 Top 10 Canadian country radio singles, eight #1 CMT videos, and millions of streams. The band has also performed in every province and territory in Canada, and shared stages with everyone from Bon Jovi to Eric Church.

Doc Walker's creative team, singer/guitarists Chris Thorsteinson and Dave Wasyliw, first reached out to their local Community Futures office, CF Heartland in Portage la Prairie, in 1997 to fund

the production of their debut album, “Good Day to Ride.” Since then, they have produced an additional 8 albums, and recently released their latest single, “She Wants What She Wants,” that features their trademark harmony, a heart-swelling chorus, and a modern spin on traditional instrumentation.



BUSINESS: Shivani's Kitchen
LOCATION: Windsor, Nova Scotia
OWNER: Shivani Dhamija
WEBSITE: shivaniskitchen.ca

Shivani Dhamija immigrated from India to Nova Scotia ten years ago; while working at different positions waiting for her dream career in Public Relations, she started an Indian meal delivery service for those missing Indian home-cooked foods. When others wanted the cooking skills she possessed, she began offering cooking classes and attending Farmers' Markets. That followed with the launch of a line of spices, the opening of a restaurant, and the launch of a line of sauces. Her success saw her products launched in Sobeys, and the set-up of a food production plant to meet demand. CBDC came onto the scene, providing loans for Shivani to invest in equipment which would allow her to increase production and enter the wholesale world in a serious fashion. Today, over 150 major food stores, restaurants, cafés, and other outlets buy her spice blends and sauces. Shivani is also the recipient of the prestigious DEAM award for supporting diversity and inclusivity in her company.

BUSINESS: Iron Berry
LOCATION: Whitbourne, Newfoundland and Labrador
OWNERS: Marek and Anetta Krol
WEBSITE: ironberry.ca

In February of 2017, Marek and Anetta Krol acquired the necessary assets to begin the operation of Iron Berry, a Canadian Controlled Private Corporation [CCPC] that manufactures nutraceutical powders made from natural Newfoundland and Labrador berries such as blueberry, cranberry, and sea buckthorn and other nutritionally rich foods such as chia seeds and flax seeds. Using these powders, Iron Berry also produces derivative products such as chia and berry mixes, infused

maple syrups, and ultimate bites. CBDC Trinity Conception in Newfoundland and Labrador assisted Iron Berry in various aspects of funding from 2018 with start-up assistance, in 2019 with marketing development through the Consultant Advisory Service, in 2020 with expansion assistance, and in 2021 with assistance to purchase equipment. The best of man and the best of nature come together at Iron Berry, with processes and technology that are at the very leading edge of innovative manufacturing and human technical and scientific capability, combined with the best ingredients nature has to offer.

BUSINESS: The Salt Apothecary
LOCATION: Salmon Arm, British Columbia
OWNER: Kate Bischke
WEBSITE: shuswapfloatandwellness.ca

“Wonder is the Salt of the Earth.” A dubbed self melier (what one is to salt as a sommelier is to wine), Kate Bischke established Shuswap Float & Wellness Centre in 2018. After continued success, in 2022, she created a retail section within the wellness centre, The Salt Apothecary, that offers salt products to promote physical health, body care, nutrition, and mental relaxation. Through Community Futures and specifically their IDEA and Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Programs, Kate received Regional Relief and Recovery Funding [RRRF], mentorship, financial training, disability support services, accessibility supports, supports for business coaching, social media training, and initial aide in developing a business plan. “The Community Futures Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program gave me so many techniques to grow.... The people that I worked with, they never belittled me for it... They empowered me... This program was a lifeline that I never even knew existed.” ~ Kate Bischke

BUSINESS: Real Treat
LOCATION: Cochrane, Alberta
OWNER: Jacqueline Day
WEBSITE: realtreat.ca

Real Treat, based in Cochrane, Alberta, was founded by Jacqueline Day in 2014 out of a love for cookies and concern for the impact of herbicides and pesticides on ecosystems and our health. Before Real Treat, organic snacks and treats had a reputation for being, well... decidedly not delicious. So, Jacqueline set off to create two lines of cookies that are decadent while made with clean ingredients. The result is Canada's only butter-based organic cookies, a selection of swoon-worthy treats that always satisfy a craving. Support from Community Futures enabled Real Treat to scale to meet demand from grocery and specialty retail, with expanded production space and equipment. This increased capacity positioned Real Treat to expand its reach across Canada and into the US where they now supply more than 500 retailers.

Success Stories