ENTREPRENEURIAL PARTICIPANTS - GROUP ONE:

PATRICIA COGNETTA

Pasqualina's Restaurant is the realization of Patricia Cognetta's business dream based on a lifetime spent working in food service. Her first experience working in a restaurant was at her grandparents’ establishment, Cognetta's, and later, with her mother at Cornell's. She will carry on the family legacy with the opening of Pasqualina's Restaurant.

Ms. Cognetta applied to the SEED Program to secure funding for start-up expenses. She had sought traditional funding for the establishment of the restaurant, but had not qualified. As a participant in the SEED Program, Ms. Cognetta was able to enhance her vast restaurant knowledge with the business training.

Pasqualina’s Restaurant is a full-service restaurant located in the Northside neighborhood of Schenectady, in the original location of Cognetta’s Restaurant. The restaurant will feature classic Italian menu selections made from family recipes and serve dinner six nights a week.

PATRICIA GREENWOOD

Patricia’s Room is a vintage shop that was established by Patricia Greenwood in 1996. It has since been operated as a vendor tenant in other antique and vintage co-operatives and as an online business. As a tenant, Ms. Greenwood has been at the mercy of the building operators and lost what was a very lucrative new location in Troy when the building went into foreclosure. Since then, Patricia’s Room has had difficulty re-establishing itself in the market and as a result, is focusing on building a dedicated location for the business.

Through the SEED Program, Ms. Greenwood participated in business training in an effort to be better prepared as a business owner. Through the training, she developed a business plan and financial projections for her business. Without the SEED Program, Ms. Greenwood would be unable to secure traditional financing for the business expansion.

Patricia’s Room is now a retail storefront specializing in vintage merchandise particularly furniture, jewelry, art, lighting, pocketbooks and textiles. The new location of the business is in the heart of downtown Schenectady. In addition to the retail location, the business conducts online business via the website and online retailers such as Ebay.com, Bonanza.com, and Etzy.com.

LOUIS JOSEPH

Eco-logical Building Performance Inc. is a spray-foam insulation and home energy audit contracting firm located in Albany. Since the business was established, principal and founder Louis Joseph has been focusing on the accreditations and certifications necessary for the business to be successful and competitive in its market.

Mr. Joseph had invested all of his personal resources into the start-up expenses of the business and was in need of some financing to purchase additional equipment, marketing and working capital for the business. With limited personal resources and available collateral, Mr. Joseph would not qualify for a traditional business loan and thus he entered the SEED program.

His dedication to establishing appropriate business accreditations and certifications has positioned the company for strong future growth and success.
TYRONE NEWSOME

Baby Malcolm’s Concierge is a transportation and concierge business that has been operating in Albany since 2008. Established by Tyrone Newsome, the company has grown from a single taxi to four taxis since its inception. As a result of student loans and lack of collateral, traditional financing is not an option to fund the expansion of the business at this time.

Mr. Newsome joined the SEED Program for both the funding potential of the program and the professional development aspects. The growth of Baby Malcolm’s Concierge is the passion of Mr. Newsome; he is dedicated and driven to ensure that the business grows successfully and is an organization of which he can be proud.

JOHN ROBINSON

Over the past two years, John Robinson has traveled around the country speaking about overcoming the life obstacles that his physical disability has presented. As a young adult and high school student, he had never met anyone his own height or anyone experiencing physical disabilities.

The goal with his business venture, Our Ability, is to create a web portal for young people to visit, read and interact with successful people with disabilities in the education and business world. There are many great stories to share, numerous mentors who wish to share their stories and thousands of people with disabilities looking for hope. He believes the site will grow into a resource tool, video share website and eventually, a Wiki supporting individuals with physical disabilities in their pursuit of education and employment.

Mr. Robinson entered the SEED Program to attain the financing necessary to fund the start-up costs associated with the business, training and mentorship. Our Ability sells video production on a pay-per-video basis, as well as mentoring and consulting services on an hourly basis. Mr. Robinson is dedicated to the long-term success of Our Ability and the potentially positive impact the company will have on people with disabilities.

JOHN WELCOME

The opening of Hoag’s Corners Restaurant is the lifelong dream of principals John and Star Welcome. In 2010, the Welcomes purchased the property and began renovating the historic building. Towards the completion of the renovation, the Welcomes had depleted their personal resources and available credit, stalling the project and the opening of the business. The Welcomes were unable to access the additional financing necessary to open the restaurant.

In April of 2011, Mr. Welcome applied for the SEED Program and has been an active participant. During the course of the program, he attended all of the business classes, updated his business plan and financial projections and proceeded with preparations for the restaurant. The SEED financing literally meant the difference between successfully opening the business and bankruptcy for the principals.

Once open, Hoag’s Corners Restaurant will offer a variety of pizza, and Italian specialties in a family-friendly setting. The restaurant will serve lunch and dinner seven days a week, and offer delivery services within 12 miles of the location in the evenings.

KERRI-ANN WILSON

Heaven on Earth Beauty Salon is an existing, successful salon in Albany, specializing in hair care services for African-American and ethnic women. Operating in a small location with the principal owner and one other stylist, the business was limited in profit potential and needed to expand into a new location for long-term viability. Although the existing business is successful and profitable, its finances were limited by the existing location to fund a potential expansion. The lack of equity infusion and available collateral precluded Ms. Wilson from attaining traditional financing for the expansion.

Ms. Wilson entered the SEED Program to gain critical business skills and financing for business growth. The expansion of Heaven on Earth Beauty Salon includes moving to a more visible location with enhanced parking, and shop renovations including the installation of six styling stations, five shampoo stations and eight drying stations. The new location of the business will have an expanded retail display area, product offerings and a more welcoming reception/waiting area for clients.
ENTREPRENEURIAL PARTICIPANTS - GROUP TWO:

ROSEMARIE COLEMAN

The existence and expansion of Orchids is the lifelong dream of the principal, Rosemarie Coleman. Ms. Coleman applied for the SEED program to secure funding for the growth and relocation of her existing restaurant. The new site will give her the opportunity to expand and add additional services such as catering, a dining hall/banquet facility, and a breakfast menu.

With the funding through the SEED program, Ms. Coleman will be able to successfully broaden her business. The proceeds of the loan will be utilized to secure a liquor license, purchase initial inventories and equipment, market her business, and make minor renovations to move locations and develop her current business.

BRUCE EVANS

Blue Mantis Pest Control, LLC is a home-based business located in Rensselaer that provides residential and commercial extermination services in the greater Capital District. Principal Bruce Evan is certified as a pesticide technician by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). Mr. Evans has dreamt of opening his own business since he was 16 years old and initially pursued his pesticide licensing when he graduated from high school.

He used his personal resources to secure the pesticide technician certification from the NYSDEC and purchase initial business equipment and supplies. Mr. Evans does not have the equity or collateral to qualify for a traditional business loan so he decided to participate in the SEED program.

SANDRA ROBERTS

The Lark will be a classic café specializing in simple French cuisine with a Mediterranean flair and influence. The café will occupy the former location of the Old House Café on Lark Street in Albany, and is fully equipped to commence business operations. The café will be owned and operated by Sandra Roberts, who has dreamt of opening her own café for many years.

Ms. Roberts entered the SEED Program for assistance in attaining funding to open The Lark when it became apparent that she would not qualify for traditional commercial lending. Although Ms. Roberts is investing personal savings into the business, she does not have the collateral to secure a traditional loan.

Since entering the program, Ms. Roberts has traveled from Philadelphia on a weekly basis to participate in the classes and maintain her employment.

The menu at The Lark will feature a wide variety of soups, salads, sandwiches and crepes, as well as an extensive coffee and tea selection. The menu for the café was designed to minimize the limitations of the location while capitalizing on the café concept. Ms. Roberts brings 10 years of business consulting and catering experience, as well as the passion to see it through. She has been working on the business concept for more than two years and believes that now is the right time to proceed with the venture.

RICHARD THAYER

For Your CANvenience will be the permanent location of a bottle and can redemption center by Richard Thayer. As a participant in the SEED Program, Mr. Thayer has engaged in business training in an effort to be better prepared as a business owner. He has developed the necessary business plan and financial projections for the new business. Without the SEED Program, Mr. Thayer would be unable to secure traditional financing for the business expansion.

The goal of For Your CANvenience is to make returning deposit containers easy and quick. People are now returning containers to grocery stores or throwing the containers out.

In addition, offering a pick-up service to large, non-profit and corporate accounts is a new way of fundraising for businesses. Deposits can also be a great way to raise money for charitable organizations. Due to tough economic times, non-profit giving is down. For Your CANvenience’s services provides a quick and convenient source for submitting donations.