

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guelph's first women's leadership conference will celebrate International Women's Day *Speaker lineup includes Linda Lundström, Dr. Ginger Grant and local business leaders*

February 9 (Guelph, ON) – Innovation Guelph is gearing up to host Guelph's first women's leadership conference on March 8 and 9, 2016, at the Delta Guelph Hotel & Conference Centre. ***Ignite. Empower. Innovate. Women Leading in the New Economy*** is the organization's fourth annual celebration of International Women's Day in collaboration with other Guelph-based business and women's organizations.

The conference is **comprised of a dinner event, followed by a full day conference schedule** with keynote speakers, and local business leaders facilitating leadership and creative skills development sessions.

"All of our previous International Women's Day events have created a ripple effect in the community – people come away inspired, motivated, and excited to contribute to positive social change in our region," said Kristel Manes, Director Innovation Guelph and The Rhyze Project, and Chair of the Partners for International Women's Day collective. "This conference provides **a forum for Guelph's female business leaders, entrepreneurs and the community at large to spend the day connecting** so new ideas and new partnerships can form. I can't wait to see what happens in Guelph as a result of this conference."

The conference begins on **March 8 with an evening dinner and networking event featuring Dr. Ginger Grant**, a Professor of Creativity at Sheridan College, innovation strategist and organizational designer who helps people identify their passions and unique purpose.

On **March 9, keynote speaker Linda Lundström will teach attendees to look at their lives with a new perspective** as she shares her journey to become a Canadian fashion icon, designer, and member of the Order of Ontario.

Additional sessions and speakers include:

- **Writing from the Inside Out**, with Anne Day, Founder, Company of Women;
- **Doing Good and Making Money**, with Erin Doherty, Business Sustainability Strategist and Innovation Guelph Mentor;
- **The Art of Negotiation**, with Cherolyn Knapp, Partner, Nelson-Watson LLP;
- **Design for Business Dashboard**, with Melanie Lang, Director, Centre for Business and Social Entrepreneurship (CBaSE), College of Business & Economics, University of Guelph; and
- **Thinking on Your Feet**, with Jay Reid, Founder, The Making Box.

Following the sessions, attendees will come together to assemble "kits for confidence" for young girls in Guelph and Wellington County as an end-of-day activity.

Conference tickets are \$175 for the full two-day conference, or \$75 for the evening dinner event. Complete conference details, including tickets, session descriptions and a schedule are available online at InnovationGuelph.ca.

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About Innovation Guelph

[Innovation Guelph](#) helps ideas start, grow, and thrive by cultivating entrepreneurs, developing powerful partnerships, and supporting innovative initiatives that transform the way we do things in business and in our community. We help companies, entrepreneurs and youth to explore and solve business challenges through our hands-on approach to business coaching. We're committed to helping businesses succeed. We also work with The City of Guelph, the region, local organizations, and community groups to strengthen community projects that will improve the quality of life in Guelph. Innovation Guelph is a member of the [Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs](#) (ONE).

About The Rhyze Project

Formerly the Women's Economic Advancement Project, The Rhyze Project is a collaborative project led by Innovation Guelph that cultivates women's entrepreneurial spirit in Guelph and Wellington County. The Rhyze Project has received funding through Status of Women Canada and the Ontario Trillium Foundation to research, design and develop pilot programs focused on business education, mentorship and the development of financial resources for women entrepreneurs. The Rhyze Award (previously The Ignite Award) is the first such program to emerge from the project.

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