



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innovation Guelph launches crowdfunding campaign to build \$30,000 fund for women entrepreneurs

The Ignite Award will provide business mentorship and cash award to local business owners

March 11 (Guelph, ON) – Innovation Guelph and its partners announced *The Ignite Award* at the organization's annual International Women's Day event at River Run Centre last night. *The Ignite Award* program will build ongoing support and networks for women entrepreneurs in Guelph and Wellington County, supporting them at key stages of their development.

The Ignite Award is the first program to emerge from research completed on the Women's Economic Advancement (WEA) Project.

"The goal of *The Ignite Award* program is to create an opportunity that's currently missing in our region," says Tanya Darisi, social entrepreneur and founder of The O'Halloran Group, WEA Project partner. "This award will not only provide the critical funding that women entrepreneurs need to finance their businesses, but also the mentoring and business coaching they need to grow them long term."

In order to provide cash awards to local women entrepreneurs in September 2015, **Innovation Guelph has launched a [crowdfunding campaign](#) to build a \$30,000 seed fund and is seeking contributions** from supporters of women in business and women entrepreneurs.

"Anyone who lives or works in Guelph knows it's a hub of innovation, creativity and collaboration," says Kristel Manes, director, Innovation Guelph and the Women's Economic Advancement Project. "We want to harness that energy to grow the number of women-owned businesses in the region, and *The Ignite Award* into a self-sustaining program."

Contributions to the crowdfunding campaign can be made at <http://igg.me/at/igniteaward>.

Contributors will receive special *Ignite Award* recognition items to acknowledge their support.

The application period for *The Ignite Award* is open, and applications will be received until May 30, 2015. Complete information on the program – including an online application, eligibility requirements and details on the review process – are available at <http://www.innovationguelph.ca/ignite-award>.

Everyone who submits an application for *The Ignite Award* and meets the eligibility requirements will be invited to participate in mentoring opportunities, which may include peer mentoring circles, one-on-one mentoring, professional advice and business model coaching.

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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).

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