

Accelerate Business Recovery virtual hub will be resource to businesses in return

As businesses continue to re-find their feet in this new normal, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with York University and York's Schulich School of Business, are coming together to lend their expertise to help ensure success.

The Chamber recently announced the Accelerate Business Recovery Hub, a program sponsored by the Aurora-based Desjardins Insurance in partnership with York's programs, the Town, and the Government of Ontario.

Launched at acceleratebusinessrecovery.ca, it is designed to be an all-in-one self-serve website rich with content including instructional videos to help businesses as they emerge from the pandemic.

The instructional videos housed in the Knowledge Centre will be curated by York University [and] Schulich School of Business professors covering key areas of digital marketing, strategic planning, and financial planning, said Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. The short instructional videos in the Success Tips section were provided by local business leaders with hands-on, topic-specific suggestions. New videos will be added regularly to keep business owners engaged and learning. As part of the Hub, we engaged a business consultant who will be available to support local businesses facing challenges.

The consultant, Raffi Sethian, is billed as a serial entrepreneur who spent the first part of his career in accounting, investment banking and private equity.

He's also a mentor and coach supporting small businesses and start-ups, says the Chamber. Raffi has started and successfully exited three businesses and knows what it takes to be an entrepreneur.

Part of his mandate, they say, will be to hold monthly roundtable meetings with other consultants in a casual setting so businesses owners can drop in with their questions and have them answered right on the spot.

The richness of the hub doesn't stop there, said Ms. Ferri. Our partnership with York University's Schulich School of Business will allow us to offer 100 business owners free enrolment and a foundation certificate in business management. Designed and delivered by professors, this online program provides a solid foundation in running a business. The program is valued at \$2,000 and will be free to 100 business owners whose businesses have been impacted by COVID-19. We have committed a significant number of viable seats for women and BIPOC business owners.

The launch of the Accelerate Business Hub is just one initiative recently launched by the Chamber to support businesses in their COVID recovery. They are also distributing rapid testing kits free of charge to all Aurora businesses.

Keeping our businesses safe and open is a key part of our economic recovery, says Ms. Ferri.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter