

## Business Women's Network launched in York Region

By Angela Gismondi

A group of local business women came together to learn, share and collaborate as the Business Women's Network of York Region (BWNRYR) held its official launch gala.

The networking event, which included guest speakers and hors d'oeuvres, was held last Wednesday at Oakview Terrace in Richmond Hill.

Elizabeth Johnston, president and co-founder of BWNRYR, explained the group was created by a group of entrepreneurs to support local business women. Johnston, along with co-founders Karin Theron and Candice Fletcher, created the organization to assist business women to connect through networking.

"I want to give women more opportunities to work together since we do not appear to hang out on the golf courses as much," said Johnston in her address at the launch. "I would like to promote the Business Women's Network of York Region as a collaborating effort - helping, not competing, idea exchanging, working together for mutual success and growing both professionally as well as personally. I have chosen the catchphrase 'in cahoots' to represent what I want to do."

The BWNRYR is targeting women who would like to meet like-minded business women, make new social and business contacts, learn business development tools and stay current on local issues. Johnston has spoken to many business women and understands that they want a women-only meeting with flexible times, no strict start times and a 'Coles notes' version of growth tools to fit their busy schedules.

"Sometimes women get pushed into business, it wasn't the plan but because of circumstances beyond your control, you need to rethink the nine to five job and working for someone else," said Johnston. "Those whose path wasn't set to do a business degree and then open a business need to be brought into the circle of understanding the 'ins and outs' of running a business. We would like to create opportunity for the education of young female entrepreneurs and assist them to grow professionally, create a program where current members sponsor new memberships for underprivileged business women with the plan to build up and help others."

The market needs the services of an organization that provides a system where people can utilize each other's expertise and where they can turn for assistance, Johnston explained.

"By sharing experiences, information, ideas, challenges and most importantly successes, the BWNRYR will address pressure points in business that women need help with and keep them informed of activities that are pertinent to running and operating a small business," said Johnston. "The market is for both successful and struggling business women, those who want to share their successes and those who would like to learn from others. We wanted to provide a system where people can utilize each other's expertise and be in cahoots with each other."

Johnston also said that helping others can have a huge impact on your own company.

"The Business Women's Network York Region would like to help take business women to the next level in business, whatever that means to each member as an individual," Johnston stated. "Be in business for yourself, not by yourself. Set high standards for yourself and inspire others to reach those standards, bring a friend or two on the journey to bridge the gap between home and work while developing business partnerships."

The BWNRYR has three events coming up - lunch at Pheasant Run Golf Club in East Gwillimbury on Tuesday, May 27 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., breakfast at the Kingbridge Centre in King City on Tuesday, June 24 from 8 to 9:30 a.m. and a cocktail party at the Treefrog Offices in Newmarket on Thursday, July 24 from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

For more information, or to sign up for a membership visit [info@bwnyr.com](mailto:info@bwnyr.com).