

Entrepreneurs to challenge assumptions about starting out on your own

By Brock Weir

Everyone has at least one great idea, but putting it into action on your own can be a daunting prospect.

But, local entrepreneurs are set to challenge some of the assumptions surrounding starting out on your own next week at the Aurora Public Library.

On Thursday, April 6, the Aurora Public Library (APL) will host its third Entrepreneurs In Residence session, put together in partnership with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and StartUp York, and featuring four local entrepreneurs.

First up with his talk "Only a Sith Deals in Absolutes" is restaurant owner and bartender Robin Goodfellow, a Toronto native with a stake in three popular city eateries.

"He is revolutionizing the whole bartending and service industry and taking it to a new level," says APL's Cindy Shaver. "He went to school, did his university and post-grad, but was doing bartending on the side. He decided he was not looking for his academic journey to transfer into his career, but utilizing some of those foundations he has become a successful entrepreneur in a completely different area."

Peter Kaufman, founder of the Aurora-based Buddy's Kitchen, brings along his experience of turning an idea of "gourmet food for dogs" into a wildly popular success story with his talk, "The Elite Build Resumes, Entrepreneurs Build Legacies."

Steve Falk of Aurora's Prime Data will share his experience of bucking the trend "focusing on 'The Value of Analog in a Digital World'", while Executive Coach and Career Strategist Sandy Johnson will explain "Why a great Career Path isn't a Straight Line."

"She will speak about how you can discover and rediscover yourself," says APL's Reccia Mandelcorn. "The perception is you are always going to go on this one specific path, but you can break it and discover something new about yourself."

Adds Ms. Shaver: "That is true nowadays more so than ever before in whatever it is you do. Some of us could stay in a career for 30-plus years, but what they say now is you're likely to have two, three or more than four careers, and you're going to be changing. Her perspective is actually very crucial to let people know this is okay, sort of normal, and how to manoeuvre through those waters."

An entrepreneur herself with the magazine *Hola York Region*, which she started last year with husband Chole Vargas, Ms. Shaver says one of the primary challenges needing to be challenged in the world of entrepreneurship is that you need "tons of capital" to start a business or break out on your own. But, she says she believes there are ways to go about achieving your dreams and embarking down your path without having to necessarily take a lot of risks.

"Everyone has those feelings that, 'this is it' and 'I can't do this anymore,' and it is a matter of getting beyond that and continuing on. The possibilities are endless. You just have to take a chance."

Adds Ms. Mandelcorn: "I think the big takeaway is going to be the sense of adventure and the knowledge that somebody else has been able to do it. Every entrepreneur who has spoken has come not only with a story of success, but of overcoming failure and sometimes multiple failures. It is very inspiring to know that these are real people and real human beings who have gone through challenges, made it, and are still going through challenges. I think it is empowering."

With each entrepreneur in residence coming at the evening from different angles and with their own unique experiences, organizers believe it is going to be an "eclectic and energizing" evening.

Entrepreneurs In Residence takes place Thursday, April 6, from 7 - 8.30 p.m. in the Library Living Room.