

## Young local entrepreneurs get business boost from Region, Province



Summer jobs are often a rite of passage for young Canadians, but spending the season getting your own businesses off the ground can be an altogether more daunting task.

Enter the York Small Business Enterprise Centre, which has helped provide micro-grants through the Summer Company and Summer Company Plus Programs.

The grant program, two of which were received by Aurora entrepreneurs, were celebrated last week by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, who announced additional funding of \$59,600 to the York Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC).

"Our government is committed to driving economic growth and creating good paying jobs in York Region," said Gallagher Murphy. "With increased funding for YSBEC, we are expanding opportunities for entrepreneurs through the Starter Company Plus program to grow their businesses and for students to gain hands-on business experience through the Summer Company program."

The YSBEC already receives base funding from the Province, including \$227,500 in the 2024 budget. This new funding brings the total up to \$287,100.

This funding will allow the YSBEC to continue to provide business consultations, workshops and seminars, mentorship and training services, and the grant programs. When it comes to the Summer Company initiative, the new funding has allowed for the creation of two further \$3,000 Summer Company grants and five \$5,000 grants under the Starter Company Plus initiative.

"Small businesses are the backbone of York Region's thriving economy, making up almost 90 per cent of all local companies across our nine cities and towns," said York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson. "This additional funding will help new entrepreneurs and small businesses succeed, create more local jobs and contribute to our economically vibrant communities."

The Starter Company Plus program, delivered through the province's Small Business Enterprise Centres, provides entrepreneurs aged 18 and up with one-on-one support, access to workshops, seminars or networking events and grants up to \$5,000 to help start or expand a business. Over the past five years, Starter Company Plus has supported over 5,500 companies resulting in the creation of more than 6,300 jobs across Ontario. This new investment will increase total funding for the program to \$6.5 million per year.

The Summer Company program provides students between the ages of 15 and 29 with at least 12 hours of business training, one-on-one mentoring and grants up to \$3,000 to start a full-time business. Over the past five years, the program, delivered through

Small Business Enterprise Centres, has helped launch over 1,700 businesses across Ontario.

**By Brock Weir**