

rise

Asset Development

Supporting business growth. Investing in people.

Annual Report
2013 - 2014

From the Chair of the Board



At Rise, we believe in raising the bar every year to ensure our services reach as many people as possible. As you read this annual report, we hope it will remind you of our recent successes and energize you for the future as you envision our mission.

One of Rise's successes of the past year was recruiting Jodi Butt's as our Executive Director. Jodi came to Rise with vast experiences in law, healthcare and government and is taking Rise well beyond the proof-of-concept stage to a major and established innovator in the world of micro-finance and mentorship. Thus, our many other success are reported in this annual report.

For those of you who have tirelessly committed time and energy, I thank you. We continue to push initiatives forward and it's my goal to continue building upon the work underway. In the past year we've more than doubled our client base and the size of our loan fund with over \$300,000 disbursed. There has been continued support and innovation with increased lending activity in our offices in Ottawa and, I'm happy to say, we've now expanded our services to London, Ontario.

As we look to the year ahead, we'll continue to focus on major, and unique, impact and expanding what's possible in the world of social enterprise. If we're to experience more success and growth, entrepreneurship and innovation must be our focus, not just our clients'. We're fortunate to have resources to turn our clients' desires for financial independence into a reality.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Golden,
Chair of the Board

From the Executive Director



I was very excited to join Rise earlier this year. What could be better than helping entrepreneurs with a history of mental health and addictions challenges build and sustain new businesses, thereby improving quality of life for themselves and for many others and providing much needed social equity to our marketplaces? Rise entrepreneurs are resilient, innovative and determined – and it’s been a privilege to work with them in realizing their ambitions.

Since 2009, Rise has provided loans to support entrepreneurs launch and grow almost seventy businesses, with more than half of those loans having been disbursed during this fiscal year. In addition, Rise has trained more than 100 people providing them with small business skills valuable both in workplace and business environments. As the reach of the Rise mission grows, our default rate remains at an exceptionally competitive rate of 7%. This track record, together with our dedicated volunteers, strong partnerships and a highly skilled team, provide a solid foundation for continued rapid growth.

Rise would not be able to help men and women with a history of mental health and addictions challenges succeed without the support of our many volunteers and partners. I have been especially inspired by the calibre and commitment of our mentors and Investment Committee members. These dedicated, knowledgeable individuals work with entrepreneurs at the early stages of their businesses. They provide valuable advice, cultivate confidence, and become strong advocates for the entrepreneurs’ businesses and success. We express enormous thanks to our community partners, Causeway Work Centre and the Ivey Centre for Health Innovation, who help us connect with those who need and stand to benefit from Rise’s services by sharing their know-how and enthusiasm with us. The commitment of our corporate and government funders is also very impressive and without them, none of this could have been possible now or in the future.

Together with our superb Board of Directors, I thank all of our volunteers, funders and other partners for helping Rise to create programs that help men and women with a history of mental health and addictions challenges succeed and provide a model for others. I also thank the talented and dedicated employees at Rise for helping to turn business dreams into reality every day. Most importantly, I thank and congratulate all of the Rise entrepreneurs who have made the life-changing decision to dare to create their own businesses.

Sincerely,

Jodi Butts,
Executive Director

From the Chair of the Investment Committee



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Rise attracts clients with diverse ambitions, but most impressive is the perseverance they demonstrate each and every day as they move forward to realize their dreams. As they prepare for the next step in their business careers they also embrace a learning journey; we act as a vital support system on that path. The Investment Committee is one element in this support system that ensures we open doors when we can, while balancing the risks to Rise.

With outstanding staff and supporters, Rise endeavors to help our clients as they grow into business and community leaders. Each time I sit down to lead a meeting I am astounded by the quality of individuals we attract as volunteers. As another year winds down, I look back with pride at the year's accomplishments and marvel at the community we continue to build.

Like many of you, I am a proud Rotman alumnus and am delighted to see the university come together to build an entity that could change the face of entrepreneurship in this province. I have long believed in the importance of developing the talents of young leaders and enjoy the contributions we can make in the lives of others. As a small business owner, I understand the plight of our clients and am proud to represent an accessible support system outside traditional lending avenues.

What makes this community particularly special is the camaraderie we witness among our clients who act as invaluable supports to each other. This empathic connection coupled with our programs gives me great hope for the future of our organization and the positive impact we can make.

My colleagues and I on the Investment Committee look forward to another year of great accomplishments, both among our clients and continuing to improve the effectiveness of our efforts to support them.

Sincerely,

David R. Smith,
Chair of the Investment Committee

Rise Board of Directors

Dr. Brian Golden, Chairman

Sandra Rotman, Vice Chair

Rod Lohin, Treasurer

John Trainor, Secretary

Lorne Zon, Director

Bob McGuire, Director

Rise Team

Jodi Butts, Executive Director

Sally Wilkie, Program Manager

Ari Cohen, Loan & Outreach Officer

Geff Stutman, Program Expansion Support Associate

Barb Williams, Peer Supported Lending Program Manager

Mary Ross, Youth Small Business Training Program Manager

Rise Ottawa:

Don Palmer, Executive Director, Causeway Work Centre

Douglas Pawson, Social Business & Programs Manager, Causeway Work Centre

Andrew Riddick, Outreach & Loan Officer

Rise London:

Dr. Anne Snowdon, Academic Chair, Ivey International Centre for Health Innovation

Lori Turik, Executive Director, Ivey International Centre for Health Innovation

Sherri Preszcator, Mentorship Program Manager, Loan & Outreach Officer

Rise Investment Committee

David Smith, Chairman

Jean Barrett

Moez Bawania

Kathleen Coulson

Lothar Fritsch

Frank Hall

Susan Henry

Jay W. Lee

Bernard Lewis

Leslie Lewis

Drew Marshall

Salima Rawji

John Wong

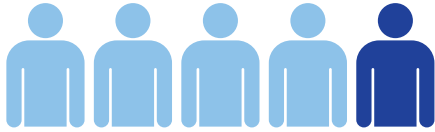
Entrepreneurial Achievement

Who is a Rise Client?

They have obstacles...

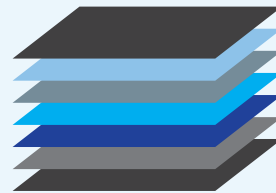
ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

ANNUALLY,
1 IN 5



PEOPLE IN CANADA EXPERIENCE A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM OR ILLNESS

MENTAL HEALTH SPECTRUM




- ANXIETY
- DEPRESSION
- BI-POLAR
- ANOREXIA
- ADHD
- ALCOHOLISM
- ETC.

65% OF CLIENTS ARE ON A FORM OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

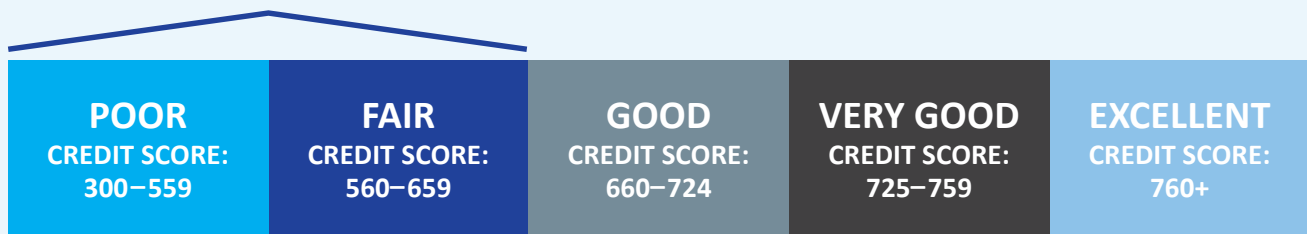


- ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM
- ONTARIO WORKS
- EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

 = 5% OF CLIENTS

NO ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL FINANCING

RISE CLIENT CREDIT SCORES ARE
USUALLY IN THIS RANGE



CANADIAN CREDIT SCORE SPECTRUM

Who is a Rise Client?

...they are resilient, creative and successful

ALL ARE ENTREPRENEURS

CRAFTSPERSON



CHOOSE TO PRACTICE THEIR CRAFTS INDEPENDENTLY.

FREEDOM FIGHTER



MOTIVATED BY INDEPENDENCE. THEY DO NOT WANT TO GROW AN EMPIRE – JUST A BUSINESS THAT WORKS.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER



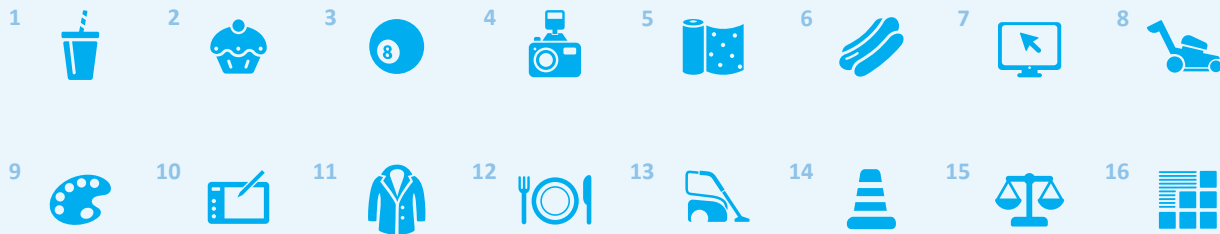
MOTIVATED BY GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT, VIEW ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS BEING ABOUT ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE.

PROFESSIONAL



HAVING ACHIEVED TRAINING AND EXPERTISE IN A PROFESSION, THEY WANT TO PRACTICE AS AN INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT.

THE DIVERSITY OF RISE CLIENT BUSINESSES



1. FRESH JUICE BUSINESS 2. BAKER 3. SPORTS EQUIPMENT MAKER 4. PHOTOGRAPHER 5. TEXTILE DESIGNER
6. HOT DOG VENDOR 7. ONLINE MARKETER 8. LANDSCAPING 9. VARIOUS KINDS OF ARTIST 10. GRAPHIC DESIGNER
11. VINTAGE CLOTHING RETAILER 12. RESTAURANT 13. CLEANING SERVICE 14. CONSTRUCTION
15. LEGAL AND ACCOUNTING SERVICES 16. ARTISANAL TILE MAKER

THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL!



RISE HAS ONLY A **7%** DEFAULT RATE

Dr. Paul Garfinkel Awards

We are so pleased to announce the winners of the Dr. Paul E. Garfinkel Awards in recognition of two entrepreneurs' outstanding business accomplishments. **Tommy Ye**, owner and operator of Toronto Skyline, and **Naomi Muise**, former owner and operator of Celeeaknak, were this year's recipients. In recognition of their exceptional entrepreneurial achievement, each winner received a grant of \$1000 to support their businesses.

Tommy Ye graduated from the Youth Small Business Program with great enthusiasm. His mentor and youth coach, Geff Stutman, helped him stay motivated and gain insight into transforming an idea into a business: "Tommy is a highly motivated, ambitious individual who runs a unique, open-concept performance venue called Toronto Skyline," says Stutman. "His idea focuses on developing a fresh alternative for local musicians and artists to reach fans under the age of 19." His business offers musicians, artists, students and others a venue to publically showcase their talent and reach out to fans in an all-age, friendly setting. "Rise helped uplift my spirit and made me feel confident," says Ye. "Without confidence, there would be no entrepreneurship to begin with."

Naomi Muise was a client of the individual lending program at Rise Ottawa. She recently sold her business, paid off her Rise loan and continues to work and volunteer with Rise. Her gluten-free bakery, Celeeaknak, delivered fresh items to several natural health retailers in the Ottawa region, and appeals to those who wish to enjoy gluten-free options without having to sacrifice good taste. "Before I opened my business, I felt like I was nobody important," says Muise. "Today, I feel like I feed something to thousands of people who could not have it otherwise. I improve the quality of life for many people and that makes me feel like somebody." According to Naomi's mentor, Ross Kouhi, she deals with problems head-on, thinks about the future and ensures her day-to-day efforts are efficient and effective. Her attention to detail has positioned CeleeakNak for on-going success. "I've sought to be a sounding board as she laboured over the progress and challenges of running her business over the past several months," says Kouhli. "In Naomi, I've seen someone very dedicated to delivering a quality product, and to meet a well-defined customer need."

This annual event acknowledges the leadership and inspiring contributions of Dr. Paul E. Garfinkel, through his role as founding President and CEO of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Dr. Garfinkel is also recognized for his leading role in the advocacy for psychiatric science and reducing the stigma associated with mental health challenges and addictions.

Due to various societal influences and stigma, traditional means of business start-up are not offered to those who perhaps have the most drive to become financially independent. The Garfinkel Awards are part of a strategy to raise awareness surrounding this issue.

We'd also like to thank CTV and radio personality, Seamus O'Regan and Patrick Dion of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Dr. Paul Garfinkel himself for attending the event.

Congratulations to this year's award recipients. We look forward to seeing their careers create more exciting opportunities in the future.



Our 2013 Dr. Paul E Garfinkel Awards for Entrepreneurial Achievement WINNERS!
That's Jodi Butts (Rise Executive Director), Dr. Garfinkel himself, Brian Golden (Rise Chair), Seamus O'Regan,
WINNER Naomi Muise (CeleeakNak), WINNER Tommy Ye (Skyline), Sally Wilkie (Rise Program Manager) &
Patrick Dion (Mental Health Commission of Canada)



Dr. Garfinkel and Naomi Muise



Andrew Riddick (Rise Ottawa) and Naomi Muise

“I can’t thank Rise enough for believing in me and my business. Rise not only helped me put together a viable business plan, but I was able to access my first business loan to take [my business] to the next level.”

“The program solidified my knowledge and helped me organize the various aspects of ‘putting it all together.’”

“We are also provided with a mentor who is there as a cheerleader when needed and also to share knowledge and insight to assist us in being successful. Most of all, they are a friend who is willing to listen when I’m having one of those weeks.”

“I am forever grateful for Rise. Without their assistance, I would not be as successful as I am today.”

“The Rise program helped me fine-tune my idea and understand how it could fit into a competitive marketplace.”

“The experience of having to overcome barriers on my journey has made me incredibly strong and tenacious. I don't just want to run my own business. I need to run my own business to help manage my symptoms and prove society wrong, again.”

“The program has helped me to envision a successful road ahead.”

“The Rise program has helped me develop a thriving, creative business doing what I love: helping brands and businesses attract new customers online. The initial funding helped me get my agency off the ground and the mentoring allowed me to zero in on goals and ride through obstacles.”

Program Excellence

How Can Rise Help?

DIFFERENT OPTIONS

LENDING



INDIVIDUAL LENDING PROGRAM FOR STARTING & GROWING A BUSINESS; EVENT LENDING PROGRAM FOR SHOWCASING WARES AT AN EVENT

TRAINING



YOUTH SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAM; SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PEER SUPPORTED LENDING

MENTORSHIP



MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR BETTER CLIENT POSITIONING AND LONG-TERM SUCCESS

INDIVIDUAL LENDING

AVERAGE INITIAL LOAN SIZE: **\$3,000**

BIGGEST LOAN: \$10,000

SMALLEST LOAN: \$200

TERM OF UP TO 5 YEARS

EVENT LENDING

MAXIMUM LOAN SIZE: **\$1,500** TO BE REPAYED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EVENT

10 stacks of \$100 = \$1,000

ALL OUR LOANS ARE LOW INTEREST!

PRIME +0.5% **FOR EXAMPLE: \$3,000 LOAN + 3 YEAR TERM + 3.5% INTEREST RATE = MONTHLY PAYMENTS OF \$88**



YOUTH SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING

- 1 THIS IS A **FREE** COURSE WHERE PARTICIPANTS AGED 16-29 DEVELOP ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS, GAIN PRACTICAL TOOLS AND CONFIDENCE, WHILE CONVERTING THEIR BUSINESS IDEA INTO A VIABLE CUSTOMER-CENTRIC BUSINESS PLAN.
- 2 THE CURRICULUM CONSISTS OF CREATIVE AND INTERACTIVE LEARNING SESSIONS USING THE ROTMAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT'S BUSINESS DESIGN™ APPROACH TAUGHT BY ALUMNI AND INDUSTRY EXPERTS.
- 3 ALL GRADUATES RECEIVE A **\$500** START-UP GRANT AND ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR LOW INTEREST RISE FINANCING.
- 4 COURSE CONSISTS OF **22, 2-HOUR** CLASSROOM SESSIONS
- 5 **51%** OF PARTICIPANTS HAVE GRADUATED WITH A VIABLE BUSINESS PLAN.

SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PEER SUPPORTED LENDING

- 1 ENTREPRENEURS WORK IN A GROUP OF 2-6 TO BUILD BUSINESS PLANS AND ACCESS LOW INTEREST FINANCING TO GROW THEIR RESPECTIVE BUSINESSES, ALL WITH THE SUPPORT OF A TEAM OF LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE. EACH INDIVIDUAL GRADUATE RECEIVES THEIR CHOICE OF EITHER A \$200 START-UP GRANT OR REFURBISHED LAPTOP COMPUTER.
- 2 COURSE CONSISTS OF **9, 3.5-HOUR** CLASSROOM SESSIONS
- 3 **87%** OF PARTICIPANTS HAVE GRADUATED WITH A VIABLE ACTION PLAN; **100%** WOULD RECOMMEND THIS PROGRAM TO A FRIEND IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

MENTORSHIP



STRONG MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT HELPS BETTER POSITION CLIENTS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS. ONCE CREDIT HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO A CLIENT, RISE MATCHES THAT CLIENT UP WITH A MENTOR FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

- FOR THE ENTREPRENEUR:**
- GAIN VALUABLE BUSINESS ADVICE
 - LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF A SEASONED PROFESSIONAL
 - ENHANCE YOUR BUSINESS NETWORK
 - GAIN CONFIDENCE FROM HAVING SOMEONE IN YOUR CORNER

- FOR THE MENTOR:**
- CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR COMMUNITY
 - GAIN THE PERSONAL SATISFACTION OF KNOWING YOU'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE WHILE BUILDING YOUR ADVISORY SKILLS

Loan Fund

Doubles in size with low default rate

We are thrilled with the performance of the loan portfolio and client growth. Since last fiscal year end (FYE) our loan portfolio has grown 170%, from \$111,500 to \$303,000, while our number of lending clients has increased by 123%, from 31 to 69. All the loan growth was achieved while Rise maintained its commercially competitive 7% default rate.

The average loan amount for the FYE was \$5,037, which is above the \$4,390 average loan size since Rise's inception.

"I believe there are several reasons for the loan portfolio growth," says Sally Wilkie, Program Manager. "All of us at Rise spend a lot of time doing outreach into the community, not only in Toronto but in other parts of Ontario. There is now a greater awareness about Rise and we are starting to get repeat referrals from various agencies. As well, the training programs that we deliver are a source of lending clients. In particular, the Peer Supported Lending Program has added to our loan clients. Finally, we had a couple of large loans, at or near our maximum, that were approved this year."

With increased lending activity in Ottawa and London, coupled with the upcoming expansion of the Youth Small Business Program to London and Ottawa, we expected to see a continuing of loan portfolio growth in the coming year.

"The Ottawa office has been operating for just over two years," says Wilkie. "They had a small number of clients in the first year but now the number of loan clients is increasing. The London office is still in the early stages. They've had a number of loan applications and should have their first loan client in the next month or two. Both Ottawa and London will be delivering two sessions of the Youth Small Business Program starting in September. We expect an increase in lending clients from that program."

"I love what I do now. I figure I can't go wrong following what I am good at, my passion and strength."

- Rise Client

"The feeling of telling someone they got approved for a loan is without a doubt the greatest feeling I've ever had professionally. Clients come in and can get a loan for \$2,000 and they are more grateful and more committed to the process than anyone I've ever seen."

- Ari Cohen, Rise Loan & Outreach Officer



Sally Wilkie,
Program Manager



Ari Cohen,
Toronto Loan & Outreach Officer

Rise Ottawa

Increased lending activity

Rise celebrated its expansion to Ottawa only a few years ago, in collaboration with Causeway Work Centre (Causeway), a community economic development organization that empowers and supports people who are in the process of overcoming disabilities and other challenges.

To date, 11 Rise Ottawa loans have been granted (with six in the past fiscal year alone), some of which are in the funding phase. The stand-out story at Rise Ottawa has been Naomi Muise's gluten-free bakery which she sold last year.

Rise Ottawa has built on Causeway's strong community network, providing Ottawa-based entrepreneurs with mentors from the local business community and business school alumni.

"Our lending activity with Rise allows us to work with clients who are interested in starting a business," says Douglas Pawson, Causeway's Social Business and Program Manager. "We are able to work with entrepreneurs through all different phases of the business plan and prepare them for the investment committee."

"The search for meaningful employment is one of life's greatest challenges: no one should be held back from experiencing its many rewards."

- Causeway Foundation



Douglas Pawson, Social Business & Program Manager, Causeway and Don Palmer, Executive Director, Causeway

Youth Small Business Program

Our best year yet

During the this past fiscal year, the Youth Small Business Program (YSBP) completed two cohorts with graduation rates of 58% and 60%, respectively, for a blended graduation rate of 59%, which exceeds the 48% blended graduation rate for all four completed cohorts since program inception.

Rise has exceeded Ministry targets for student graduation and for continued student support since inception.

The rising tide of expansion!

With a grant from the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Trade, Rise will be rolling out its YSBP to four new Ontario communities!

"With the business plan and the skills that I developed at Rise, I'm able to take my business forward and build it into a reality."

- Youth Small Business Program Client

powered by: **Rotman**
designworks  Ontario Ready.Set.Work.



Peer Supported Lending Program

Targeting a population with untapped potential

In the past fiscal year Rise successfully graduated two Peer Supported Lending Program (PSL) cohorts. These mark our 2nd and 3rd graduating cohorts since launching the Program in Spring 2013. PSL is a very important program for Rise and more importantly to the participants involved, who are often more marginalized than our Individual Lending Program clients and require additional support.

Rise is very pleased with the results of our 2nd and 3rd cohorts, with graduation rates of 64% and 75%.

"My classmates were overall nice and engaging. They had great ideas on how to move forward as entrepreneurs. My teachers were all very available and kept the communication and troubleshooting consistent with positive feedback."

- Peer Supported Lending Program Client

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank The John Howard Society of Toronto (John Howard). We have had many clients from John Howard complete the PSL program, bringing them many steps closer to starting their own businesses. It has been a pleasure to work with John Howard and we look forward to continuing a long and productive relationship.



Rise London

Mission and vision expands to London

Last October, Rise London launched in partnership with the Ivey International Centre for Health Innovation at the Richard Ivey School of Business, Western University. Local community leaders, educational leaders, philanthropist and dignitaries attended the launch, which featured a “marketplace” in which Rise clients and local London micro-loan clients showcased and sold their wares.

“Meaningful employment is an important pillar in a person’s well-being and identity. However, people with mental health or addiction issues often face barriers to the traditional job market. This program improves the lives of this population, empowering them to become successful entrepreneurs through access to financing and business mentorship from the local business community and our business school alumni.”

- Dr. Anne Snowdon, Chair of the Ivey International Centre for Health Innovation



Regional partner & community collaborators



Don Seymour, Jodi Butts, Sandra Rotman, Hon Deb Matthews, Dr. Anne Snowdon & Dean Bob Kennedy



Mentorship

Rise mentorship showcase during Global Entrepreneurship Week

This past year, as part of the Canadian Mentor Challenge at Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), Rise was fortunate to showcase its latest mentorship training curriculum.

Global Entrepreneurship Week is the world's largest celebration of innovators and job creators, who launch the start-ups that bring ideas to life, drive economic growth and expand human well-being.

During one week each November, GEW inspires people through local, national and global activities designed to help them explore their potential as self-starters and innovators.

Rise received many accolades and really helpful suggestions at our mentor showcase. Current and prospective mentors attended; Lorne Zon, a member of our Board and former CMHA Executive Director, was there; and it was amazing to be joined by mentorship thought leaders from Futurepreneur Canada and Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council.

Mentorship Portal in the works for Rise

The positive evidence surrounding the impact of mentors on the success of an entrepreneur and their business is unequivocal. This data is in turn confirmed by the feedback we routinely receive from both mentors and entrepreneurs. Because we know mentoring is so key to our entrepreneur's success, we offer training to our mentors to optimize the experience for both the mentor and the entrepreneur.

Our curriculum borrows from the best available general coaching resources and combines these with training uniquely focused on anti-stigma as well as why self-employment is so important as an option to those with mental health or addictions histories. The Rise mentor training modules were developed in collaboration with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in order to dispel myths and stereotypes that mentors may carry with them.

With funding from Citi Foundation, Rise is currently developing a web portal for mentorship training so that we can continue to grow this important program.





Fuelled by Volunteers
& Community Collaboration

Mentorship

A thank you message to our mentors

Much like the old Chinese proverb says, “If you would like to know the road ahead, ask someone who has traveled it,” our mentors take their experience and help clients develop their own unique road map.

The potential of mentoring to transform lives is limitless. Having someone to talk to who has been through the challenges of starting or growing a business is often what Rise clients are looking for. A mentor not only shows clients that success is possible, but encourages, supports and inspires them on their journey.

We’d like to take this opportunity to thank all of our mentors for their selfless commitments, effort and contributions. Rise mentors have made a huge difference in the lives of Rise entrepreneurs, helping to build the confidence needed to succeed.

Thank you for your time and commitment.

Thank

Investment Committee

More than a dragon’s den

In the past year we have seen an increasing number of clients attain small loans. The Investment Committee has taken the time to go beyond traditional lending metrics to really understand clients and their respective businesses merits and risks, and in the process, has increased the financial independence of Rise clients, while balancing the risks to Rise.

Some have referred to the Investment Committee as Rise’s version of the Dragon’s Den, but the clients who benefit from the Investment Committee’s expertise do not have the same opportunities as Dragon’s Den participants. Rise clients have had to deal with adversity in the truest sense of the word, which in many ways, has prepared them for the resilience needed in a life of entrepreneurship.

Thank you, Committee members, for the time, talent, and expertise that you have given to Rise. The Investment Committee has helped to grow our mission of investing in people. Thank you for sharing your expertise and ideas with us. We appreciate your investment in the community and your willingness to participate in this process.

Investment Committee members

Jean Barrett	Susan Henry	Salima Rawji
Moez Bawania	Jay W. Lee	David Smith
Kathleen Coulson	Bernard Lewis	John Wong
Lothar Fritsch	Leslie Lewis	
Frank Hall	Drew Marshall	

Referral Agencies

A thank you message to agencies who refer entrepreneurs to Rise

Thank you to our wonderful network of client-referring agencies. We strongly acknowledge your support in helping people with mental health and addictions challenges overcome financial and other barriers in order to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions. On behalf of Rise Asset Development, we wish to express our sincere appreciation.

“Rise Asset Development has played a supportive role in our youth training programs wherein they have hosted free workshops for us about their programs and about economic literacy for entrepreneurship and self-sustainability. Our relationship allows Rise to reach more people in need of Rise’s services and to better support its entrepreneurs.”

- Vernon J. Vautour, Biz Coach Services Inc. President and Founder

“We have had numerous clients successfully complete the [Peer Supported Lending] program and come many steps closer to starting their own businesses. All of the feedback from clients who have completed the Rise program has been positive. Even when clients are not eligible for the program, Rise has provided excellent support to guide them toward achieving their self-employment goals.”

- Angela Lee, John Howard Society of Toronto

“Dealing with any type of loan application can be extremely intimidating, and especially so when there are often other personal difficulties that a client is also trying to cope with. I have heard repeatedly that the front line at Rise makes the first step in approach very comfortable, and any client who has received a loan from Rise has also gained extreme confidence in moving forward with their businesses and their lives.”

- Robin Stilwell, business advisor for the OSEB Program in Whitby, run by Essential Communications

“Our commitment and confidence is based on Rise’s track record to date, its collaborative and supportive approach to engagement and its unwavering commitment to identifying new effective ways of supporting business growth by investing in people.”

- Dawna Kinnunen, Yes You Can Employment Consulting (Sault Ste. Marie)



Recognition

Impact: A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario

Rise hosts launch of province-wide program

Rise was delighted to host the kick-off of this Ontario social enterprise strategy last September at the Rotman School of Management. It's an initiative designed to help social enterprises grow, create jobs and attract new investment.

"Impact - A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario" is the province's road map to become the number one jurisdiction in North America for businesses that have a positive social, cultural or environmental impact and generate revenue.

The strategy builds on previous action taken by the government to develop and grow the sector, including the creation of an office for social enterprise that partners with the private, not-for-profit and public sectors to coordinate and expand tools available to social entrepreneurs.

Rise was one of only 15 social enterprises featured in this initiative's marketing material. As well, Jodi Butts spoke at the event, which also featured Dr. Eric Hoskins (then Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment and current Minister of Health and Long Term Care).

"I'm delighted that the Ontario government recognizes the impact of social enterprises," says Jodi Butts, Executive Director, Rise Asset Development. "A concerted strategy will encourage organizations like Rise Asset Development to continue to put forward innovative solutions to social challenges."



Dr. Eric Hoskins, then Minister of Economic Development, Trade & Employment, speaking at the event

Sandra Rotman on the Business News Network

Promoting Rise on Bell Let's Talk Day

Sandra Rotman promoted Rise on the Business News Network (BNN) this past year during Bell Let's Talk Day, a wide-reaching, multi-year program designed to break the silence surrounding mental illness and support mental health initiatives all across Canada.

During her appearance, she told BNN reported Amber Kanwar how the idea of Rise came to her:

“After having spent time at CAMH as an outpatient...I realized that there were many people with mental [health] issues who could add a lot to society. We're losing a lot of talent and energy. I realized that if we could give them some confidence to start their own business, if they wish to start their own business, give them a small loan and give them support by mentoring, that we could do something wonderful for society and these individuals.”

Being familiar with the business community and involved in a wide range of charitable ventures, Rotman was able to use her network to find the people she needed to help spearhead Rise Asset Development into a success.

The rest, they say, is history!



Watch the video here:

<http://www.bnn.ca/Video/player.aspx?vid=335387>

Movie-goers Get a Taste of Rise

Promotional video hits Cineplex theatres across the country

Thanks to Ellis Jacobs, President and CEO of Cineplex Inc., Rise was fortunate to have its 30-second promotional video air in Cineplex theatres across Canada (excluding Quebec and New Brunswick) from January 31 to February 27 of this year.

Our primary goal was to raise awareness for Rise and its services. Our secondary goal was to increase the demand for Rise services in Ontario and potentially across Canada.

During the time-frame that the promotional video ran, Rise received 17 new client inquiries. It's estimated that over half of those were from people who had viewed the promotional video.

In order to adapt to Cineplex guidelines, we successfully created a 30-second abridged version of Rise's general promotional video. As an added benefit, the abridged version served as a more useful promotional tool to use for certain social media activities.

Posting the video on Facebook resulted in 230 views, 13 likes and 1 new client inquiry. During the time-frame that the promotional video ran, our Facebook profile went from 712 likes to 728 likes.

On Twitter, 5 people who didn't know about Rise tweeted about us after seeing the promotional video in theatres. Rise went from 723 followers to 775 followers during the airing of the video.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity of our promotional video airing in theatres and are very pleased with the results from both a social media 'buzz' and new client inquiry point-of-view. These results are even more remarkable considering a large percentage of our prospective client population may not have the discretionary income needed to go to the movies.

Thanks to the help of supporting organizations and Bridgeable Research and Design, our mission is reaching new audiences through Cineplex Pre-Shows, an affordable and impactful way to advertise on the big screen.



Please see the abridged 30-second video here:
<https://vimeo.com/84795811>

Awards & Social Media

University of Toronto Innovation Award

This past year, Rise was presented with U of T's Excellence Through Innovation Award (ETIA) for its Youth Small Business Program which uses a curriculum based on Rotman Business Design.

The ETIA recognizes, amongst other things, innovation and significant contributions towards promoting equity and diversity, and fostering community connection through innovative services. Award recipients were honoured at a reception from the university president's home last October.

We are proud to be recognized for demonstrating the ability to bring innovation to the marketplace in order to better serve our clients.

Social Finance Innovation "People's Choice" Award

In 2013, Rise won the Social Finance Innovator Award for Most Promising Collaboration in Canada, as presented by SocialFinance.ca. The Social Finance Innovator Award is an annual people's choice award presented to trailblazing innovators in the Canadian social finance landscape based on a theme selected by SocialFinance.ca. Rise is a two time nominee.

We'd like to thank all of our clients, staff and supporters who helped make this possible.



Rise Gets Social

Social media networking is part of the modern marketing mix, helping us develop a loyal community of prospects and partners. In the future, we want to raise our presence on each of the "big three" social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Google+) and perhaps a YouTube channel to boot.

Since we joined Facebook in 2011, we've attained 750 "likes" with a user rating of 5.0 out of a potential 5.0 stars. Marketing insights show our most engaged users are 25-34 years of age and Toronto residents.

We use the Facebook page as a point of contact to promote our entrepreneurs' businesses and accomplishments, updating the community on new activities and opportunities.

Understanding that some of our clients who have gone on to start successful companies have found Rise through Facebook, it's important that we capitalize on the social media opportunity to raise awareness.

Our Twitter feed has been especially active, showing approximately 2,888 tweets, 130 photos and 891 followers to date.

It takes time to develop an online presence, but with the right strategy we can attract new clients, community partners and volunteers alike, establishing new ways of communicating and networking with our audience. We look forward to providing you with more value-added information.

Join the conversation and help us spread the word!

Our Partners



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it means being productive. Participating in society. Paying taxes. I like that...I mean, you took a little for when you needed it, but you want to give back when you can.” “I want to live a healthy life. My goal is to be mentally, emotionally and spiritually healthy.” “If you’re sick, even for a year, your finances change drastically.” “I have no clue what’s gonna happen, and that’s a fear and excitement at the same time.” “Yes, the payments can sometimes be challenging, but that is all a part of business. I am doing my best and hope to continue to do that.” “Everyone has something.” “Deciding that I wanted to get back out there, I completed a business plan to become the photographer that I always wanted to be.” “I felt I could fast track my business results with the funding. People believed in me and my ability to become independent of government support and run a successful business.” “Rise will help us achieve a better future.” “The program has helped me to envision a successful road ahead.” “I feel like Rise believes in my work, that’s pretty amazing, you know?” “My definition of success is anything that allows you to pay your bills.” “Because I was treated so well, it motivated me to pay it back faster” “It’s a different language, and I didn’t know it. So I had to learn it.” “I create my home in a very artistic way just to reflect the beauty of me, because it’s rarely seen.” “I want to live