

Town has new Cultural Entrepreneurship Program



**Orangeville & Area
Cultural Entrepreneurship Program**

What's your craft?

In partnership with the Province of Ontario, the Orangeville & Area Small Business Enterprise Centre is now accepting applications to the Cultural Entrepreneurship Pilot Program. The program will cater to entrepreneurs running businesses within the arts and culture sector, including visual, cultural, performance, artisanal, media, heritage and culinary arts ventures. This pilot program will be available for a limited time.

Eligible participants may receive:

- mentorship with a local entrepreneur
- business training workshops
- coaching towards the development of a business plan
- grants up to \$5,000

Apply today! For more information, visit www.orangevillebusiness.ca or call 519-941-0440 Ext. 2270



The staff of the Orangeville and area Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) has announced a new program for assisting working artists with the business aspects of their lives.

The Cultural Entrepreneurship Program is a pilot program designed to assist with mentoring and consultation on business guidelines and plan development for new and expanding arts and culture based programs.

Like any new idea, this is a work in progress, except to say that the staff at the Small Business Enterprise Centre is already experienced in the matter of assisting and guiding entrepreneurs with establishing or expanding their businesses of all types.

In a recent interview at the SBEC offices with Ruth Phillips, Economic Development Manager, and Ellen Sinclair, SBEC Co-ordinator, the many aspects of the general functioning of the organization were discussed.

Ms. Phillips explained the basics. "We meet with new business entrepreneurs and existing business owners to help them as an information resource. They can come in and pick up information on commonly asked questions and problems that people struggle with.

"The staff here are prepared to answer a variety of business related questions."

They also assist in such matters as registering a new or re-registering an existing business, where they provide the computer link to the relevant government office or actually go through the process on a person's behalf.

Ms. Sinclair, however, is involved with the longer consultations and the more complicated specifics. As Ms. Phillips went on to explain, "Ellen does the one on one in depth consultations" these are confidential and mostly deal with a new start and change to existing businesses."

When asked about her qualifications for this work as advisor, Ms. Sinclair spoke about her 20 years' experience in "business development with federally funded organizations."

There are opportunities for young entrepreneurs as well through the SBEC. There are two programs. One is "Starter Company" for entrepreneurs aged 18 to 29 who can come in see if they qualify for the services of mentoring, business planning, training and, even,

small grants for assistance in set up of up to \$5,000.

“Starter Company is for those young entrepreneurs who are involved with their projects full time and not going back to school,” Ms. Sinclair explained. “Young people with new or existing business looking to expand.”

There has been real success with these young businesses owners developing new ventures here in food processing, retail, manufacturing, to name a few.

As Ms. Phillips remarked, “Small business drives the local economy and creates the greatest number of employment opportunities in Dufferin.”

For those younger entrepreneurs still going to high school, college or university, there is also assistance with their ambitions. “The Summer Company Program,” operates with a view to getting things “quick off the ground for the best success.”

Ms. Sinclair describes it as “a really exciting program” the students are so enthusiastic. There are even possible grants of up to \$3,000 to help the students purchase the materials, tools equipment and marketing support required to launch and support their venture throughout the summer.”

Such success stories have come with ideas connected to fitness, photography, maintenance of landscapes or homes, swimming lessons and craft making for sale items in the Farmers' Market.

Of course, with the experience of “entrepreneurship” throughout a summer, this is great experience for future business plans.

Over the course of a year, several workshops are offered by the SBEC for all business people at various venues across the community. Most of these are provided free of charge, although some carry a small fee. They deal with specifics usually, like tax issues, understanding business plans, and so forth. The workshops are presented primarily by (usually) local specialists who donate their time. Community mentors also donate some of their time to the SBEC to provide hours of consultation.

Otherwise, all the services at the SBEC are free of charge. The SBEC and its programs are funded by the Province, the Town of Orangeville and other locally based partners. As such, a new program was recently approved by Orangeville Council.

This brings us to the big news about the new initiative at the SBEC, that of extending their brand of assistance to the arts and culture community. The Cultural Entrepreneurship Pilot Project will run from January to June, for which the SBEC will provide business guidance, mentorship, business plan support for new and expanding arts based businesses. This includes visual, cultural, media, performance, culinary, artisan, textile, heritage (possibly creating new things from old). The program will be able to accommodate 25 people, to help them develop and appreciate the business aspect of being an artist.

As with other programs, a few participants may also qualify for grants up to \$5,000 to help them develop or expand their ventures.

“Our overriding goal is economical development. We want to cultivate and support local entrepreneurs...” Ms. Phillips said.

Entrepreneurs and artists interested in any of the above programs or services can contact the SBEC office at 5198-941-0440 ext 2286 or email sbec@orangeville.ca.