

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First Social Venture Challenge Program Participants Selected

Whistler, BC – The Centre for Sustainability announces the nine Social Venture Challenge (SVC) participants selected for the program. The SVC was created to encourage, support and grow social ventures in Whistler, Pemberton, Squamish and Lillooet by providing capacity building, mentorship, and business development learning opportunities to non-profit organizations, businesses and entrepreneurs to develop their business concept. A social venture is an organization (business or non-profit) that uses business strategies to create community impact (social and/or environmental benefit).

The Centre received a total of 16 applications from all four communities, which was a great response. “We were thrilled to have received so much interest in this program. The diversity and creativity of the social venture ideas is very inspiring, which is testament to the creativity and innovation that lives in this region” said Cheeying Ho, the Centre’s Executive Director. “Due to the amount of interest in the program, we have decided to expand the Social Venture Program from six to nine participants.”

Social entrepreneurs will be supported through a three month program of coaching, mentoring and learning valued at approximately \$1,200 to develop their social venture business concept. They will then pitch their social venture idea at a Dragon’s Den style community event in September. A panel of judges will select a winner who will receive a \$3,000 cash prize, as well as financial strategy advice, courtesy of Squamish Savings.

Successful applicants participating in the Social Venture Challenge are:

AWARE - ecoActive Whistler

To provide conference groups with opportunities to get into nature through participation in hands-on environmental restoration and improvement projects.

Change of Pace – Men’s Centre

To create a Men’s Resource and Activity Centre in Squamish to provide a safe place for men to have access to the resources needed for the emotional, physical, and mental growth.

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Green Moustache - Eat to Beat

To provide organic produce, meals and juices at cost to people living with cancer and who want to focus on diet to help beat disease.

Lillooet Food Hub

To create new markets for local food producers by connecting producers and consumers by capitalizing on economies of scale.

Mountain ObjectMakers Cooperative

To develop and grow a cooperative that will provide affordable studio space for artists, and expand artistic careers.

Nutrition Education for children

To educate children about healthy eating and body image through proper nutrition choices and eating disorder prevention.

Positive Paddle (Lambrecht Surfboards)

To teach First Nation youth and teens to build and sell wooden stand up paddle boards.

The Freed Food Society

To develop and grow a program of upcycling edible foods that would otherwise be discarded into canned products.

Whistler Ski Heaven

To upcycle used skis into one-of-a-kind furniture and art.

The SVC is generously supported by Squamish Savings and Community Futures Howe Sound. The SVC is a new program of the Centre's LEAN (Local Economy Action Network) initiative, which aims to create a stronger shared-value based local economy through collaboration and collective action.

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For more information about the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, go to www.whistlercentre.ca or send an email to info@whistlercentre.ca

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About the Whistler Centre for Sustainability

The Centre for Sustainability is an enterprising non-profit organization that supports organizations in Whistler to further their success and help move the community toward greater sustainability. Outside of Whistler, the Centre assists communities in the Corridor and across BC and Western Canada with sustainability planning and implementation.

www.whistlercentre.ca

About Local Economy Action Network (LEAN)

LEAN is a network of entrepreneurs and social enterprises working collaboratively to support and grow a more sustainable local economy in the Sea to Sky region through mentorship, capacity building, new business-to-business networks and partnerships, among other strategies.

www.whistlercentre.ca/thought-leadership-and-innovation/lean

About Social Venture Challenge (SVC)

The Social Venture Challenge (SVC) is an opportunity for social entrepreneurs in Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton, and Lillooet to encourage, support and grow new social ventures in the region through capacity building, mentorship, and raising awareness. SVC seeks to support entrepreneurs with the development of their social ventures business idea/concept.

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