

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **NEW “SOCIAL VENTURE CHALLENGE” LAUNCHES IN THE SQUAMISH-LILLOOET / SEA TO SKY REGION**

Whistler, BC – The Centre for Sustainability is launching the Social Venture Challenge (SVC), a new program to support entrepreneurs in the Squamish-Lillooet / Sea to Sky region to develop new business initiatives that have community benefits.

The SVC will encourage, support and grow new social ventures in the region through capacity building, mentorship, and raising awareness. “We have such an innovative and entrepreneurial culture in the region, and everyone wants to do good for our community. So this is a chance to come up with new ways of doing both – growing business opportunities as well as providing benefit for our community,” said Cheeying Ho, the Centre’s Executive Director. The Centre is issuing a call for applications for businesses, non-profits and individuals to participate in the SVC. Successful applicants will be supported through a three month mentorship and learning program to develop their business concept. Participants will have opportunities to fine tune their business model and pitch before presenting at a community pitch event in front of a panel of judges. The winner will receive a \$3,000 cash prize, as well as financial strategy advice, courtesy of Squamish Savings.

As part of the launch of the SVC, the Centre is hosting a learning event, *Social Ventures: Doing Good through Business*, on May 8<sup>th</sup> at the Squamish Lit’wat Cultural Centre. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn more about social ventures with David Cameron, Manager of Innovation at **The Next Big Thing** and co-founder of **SFU Radius Ventures**. David van Seters, founder of **SPUD** and President of Sustainability ventures will talk about the collaborative economy as a model for entrepreneurship. Inspirational case studies and a number of tools – including raising capital, accelerators and financing resources – will also be presented.

The call for applicants for the SVC is open now until May 29<sup>th</sup> 2015. Eligible applicants include: future entrepreneurs, individuals considering starting a social venture, existing businesses and non-profits.

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.

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.

*Creating the future* **today.**

whistlercentre.ca

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For more information about the Whistler Centre for Sustainability, go to [www.whistlercentre.ca](http://www.whistlercentre.ca) or send an email to [info@whistlercentre.ca](mailto:info@whistlercentre.ca)

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**About the Whistler Centre for Sustainability**

The Whistler Centre for Sustainability is a mission driven, enterprising non-profit organization. Our vision for the future is a sustainable future, livable world and sustainable, vibrant communities. We work with and support local governments with sustainable community planning and implementation. [www.whistlercentre.ca](http://www.whistlercentre.ca)

**About LEAN**

LEAN is a network of entrepreneurs and social enterprises working collaboratively to support and grow a more sustainable local economy in the region through mentorship, capacity building, new business-to-business networks and partnerships, among other strategies. [www.whistlercentre.ca/thought-leadership-and-innovation/lean/](http://www.whistlercentre.ca/thought-leadership-and-innovation/lean/)