



# BUILDING SUCCESS

aWe

ALBERTA WOMEN  
ENTREPRENEURS

ANNUAL REPORT  
APRIL 1, 2012 TO MARCH 31, 2013

[awebusiness.com](http://awebusiness.com)

# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

“Small- and medium-sized businesses are the engines of the Canadian economy, and our Government is proud to support women entrepreneurs with the resources they need for their businesses to remain highly competitive in the local and global marketplace.”

Honourable Lynne Yelich,  
Minister of State for Western  
Economic Diversification Canada



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# INVESTING IN WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES YIELDS POSITIVE RETURNS

**ALBERTA WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS (AWE) IS HELPING TO CREATE POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN, THEIR BUSINESSES AND OUR COMMUNITIES — AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD.**

“We’re doing something that is quite unique in the market,” says Tracey Scarlett, AWE’s Chief Executive Officer. “We are seeing tremendous value in investing not only in business start-ups, but also in our existing entrepreneurs looking to grow.” Publicly supported and funded since its launch in 1995, AWE is a not-for-profit organization providing tools and resources to help women across the province succeed in business. Since 1995, AWE has supported women in business with access to start-up and expansion capital, entrepreneur training and workshops, business advice, service provider referrals and partnerships, and mentorship opportunities.

“At AWE, we’ve really moved from doing simple transactional services, such as a loan or a workshop, to creating a community of support for women entrepreneurs,” says Scarlett. “Women business owners find a lot of support for starting a business, but not a lot of support exists for those who are trying to figure out how to become better — better operationally, better at managing their people, and better at entering new markets.”

AWE is helping to change that. In 2012-2013, AWE intensified many of its networking and training programs — helping women entrepreneurs in both start-up and existing businesses create jobs with economic impact. “In some programs, we have participating businesses that have already exceeded their growth target and doubled in size,” she notes.

Wherever Alberta’s women entrepreneurs want to take their businesses, AWE is building the opportunities to help take them there.

## **AWE FACT**

Almost half (46%) of small and medium-sized businesses in Canada have some female ownership and 16% are female majority-owned.  
*Statistics Canada*

“Alberta Women Entrepreneurs is among the foremost vehicles for supporting Alberta businesswomen. Their successful businesses — and their individual achievements — contribute to their communities and the Canadian and global economies.”

**Honourable Rona Ambrose**  
**Minister of Health and**  
**Minister Responsible for**  
**Northern Alberta**



# AWE BUILDS THE PERSON

**AWE OFFERS LEADERSHIP AND SKILLS TRAINING, PEER MENTORING AND COACHING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES AT ALL STAGES OF GROWTH.**

A successful business begins with a focused, informed and passionate leader. AWE is helping women business leaders access the advice and resources they need to help build opportunities for success through training, peer mentoring and networking events.

## **PEER MENTORSHIP TO SUPPORT BUSINESS LEADERSHIP**

For Jodi McDonald, President of Edmonton-based Keystone Labs Inc., AWE's unique leadership training resources came along at just the right time. Her small but growing company, which provides contract testing services to international and Canadian pharmaceutical firms, had reached a difficult stage in its lifecycle.

"By late 2011, I had grown the business as much as I could, based on the network of people I knew," says McDonald. "I had topped out and wasn't sure how to make the business grow any further." As a result, work had slowed, money was tight and McDonald was feeling rudderless. That's when she heard about Excelerator.

Excelerator is a 10-month program located in both Calgary and Edmonton, in which a small group of established women business owners meet once a month to learn about all aspects of business, from leadership and coaching to strategic planning for growth, managing change and financing. The program also features guest speakers, including fellow women business owners and industry leaders. To qualify, participants must have at least \$250,000 in annual sales, have a desire to grow their business, have been in business for two years or more and operate a business-to-business enterprise. Its goal is to help women-owned enterprises double their business within two years.



**Jodi McDonald**  
**PRESIDENT OF KEYSTONE LABS INC.**

For McDonald, Exceleator was an instant immersion course in business growth. "My background is science and I didn't have a formal education in business," she says. "I had learned the language of business, but I wasn't completely confident I was applying the proper techniques and tools in accounting, planning and business development."

Most important, however, is that Exceleator helped McDonald "re-establish myself as the leader of our company." Her increased confidence spilled over into stronger relationships with employees, suppliers and customers. In fact, last year, she attended the international WBENC conference in the U.S. for women-owned businesses, where she had the opportunity to connect with the world's top five pharmaceutical companies. "With the help of AWE and the Exceleator program, I was able to make connections I would never have made on my own. And, I wasn't just handing them a business card. They were paying attention to me because I was a woman-owned business and asking me questions about how I could help them."

The program has also allowed her to network with fellow business owners facing the same challenges. "We are all facing the same struggles, all trying to make the same decisions, and all trying to grow our companies while providing for our families and employees," she says. "Now, I have a group of friends who I can call any time, and they will listen."

## AWE PROGRAMS

### AWE leads various programs to support entrepreneurs

**Are You Ready for Entrepreneurship?** workshop provides prospective women entrepreneurs with information to help decide when and if owning a business is right for them.

**Roadmap for Success** workshop provides entrepreneurs with education on business planning basics with the help of an AWE business advisor.

**Building on Success** workshop series engages industry professionals to teach strategies and tactics to support business growth in human resource development, sales, marketing and financial management.

**Connecting to Contracts** program helps women business owners identify and seize new opportunities to secure contracts with major international companies.

**Exceleator** program offers monthly meetings that bring together a small peer group of established women entrepreneurs who are focused on business growth.

**NextStep to Success** workshop for Aboriginal Women creates opportunities for potential business owners to learn how to start a business.

**NextStep to Success – Train-the-Trainer** program provides a learning curriculum and unique delivery approach to facilitators who deliver training to women in Aboriginal communities.

**Annual Conference:** Each year, over 150 people attend AWE's showcase of leading experts and successful entrepreneurs.

**Partnership Events:** AWE actively recruits and promotes women business owners as speakers, and works with many organizations to engage and support entrepreneurs.

**Student Events:** Hoping to inspire the next crop of entrepreneurs, AWE participates in student programs at several major universities and business schools.

"My involvement with AWE has been personally and professionally rewarding. Women have so much to offer in business, and it's very important that we have positive role models and mentors to help us along the path to success. I welcome the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with others, and I always learn something from them in return."

Wendi Crowe  
Barrister & Solicitor, Miller Thomson LLP

# AWE BUILDS THE BUSINESS

**AWE IS HELPING WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES FIND THE TOOLS, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES NEEDED TO EXPAND THEIR ENTERPRISE, DEVELOP PRODUCTS AND ENTER NEW MARKETS ACROSS CANADA AND GLOBALLY.**



**Phoebe Fung**  
**PRESIDENT OF VIN ROOM**

Among AWE's many successes is its capability to help women entrepreneurs throughout the business lifecycle.

## **CAPITAL TO SUPPORT CONTINUOUS GROWTH**

Phoebe Fung of Calgary had an interesting idea for a new business — one that might have raised an eyebrow or two among prospective lenders given that she had little experience in her proposed venture. Phoebe wanted to create Canada's largest wine bar, with over 100 wines available by the glass in an upscale, casual atmosphere. Her own background was in the corporate world, not the restaurant or wine industry.

Unbowed, Phoebe thought her business experience could help her achieve top-tier returns in the highly competitive and low-margin hospitality industry. While trying to launch the Vin Room in 2008, it was another lender that suggested she might want to check out AWE as an additional source for start-up capital.

That turned out to be a fortunate recommendation that has helped Fung grow Vin Room into Canada's largest wine bar with two locations, and be named one of Profit Magazine's top new growth companies in 2011. "Initially as a start-up," says Fung, "AWE's loan program provided access to capital that typically might be out of reach for us, as well as access to expertise and a third-party perspective on our business plan."

AWE's funding for the first Vin Room was paid-off within three years. "When it became time for our next location," she says, "the second AWE loan was a good testament to their support of our growth plans, which helped us to make the case for lending with our commercial bankers."

Her AWE experience has also proven to be valuable in her own growth as a business leader. "From a personal growth perspective, I have been lucky to speak at one of AWE's conferences and have taught a class on financial management," she says. "This is invigorating, from a personal growth perspective, to see and meet other aspiring entrepreneurs, and to share experiences and learnings with others."

“At TELUS, we believe in innovation, spirited teamwork and initiating opportunity. We are proud to launch our Supplier Diversity Program, which will provide our commitment to enable more opportunities for historically under-represented groups to compete for our business.

Our vision is to build a portfolio of suppliers that more closely reflects the communities where we live, work and serve.”

**David Sharma**  
Chief Procurement Officer  
TELUS Communications Company

## ADVICE TO SUPPORT EXPANSION

For Laureen Regan, President of Calgary-based Social Club Discount Listing (scdl.com), AWE's lending services proved to be a welcome alternative to the banks and other traditional lenders when she was seeking bridge financing to expand the web-based employee perk program, which offers discounts on products and services from top local and national retailers.

“Banks can be quite restrictive in who they will lend to,” says Regan, who was already a successful entrepreneur and owner of Calgary's Regan Productions Ltd., which produces corporate and government video and interactive content.

AWE took the time to understand the business and, today, SCDL has over 40,000 members. AWE continues to provide ongoing financial advice. “For us, at a later stage of growth and already established with a proven model, AWE was able to provide that next step,” she says. “That's the beauty of AWE. . . they are a full-service operation for women in Alberta at all stages of business growth.”

### AWE FACT

When starting a new business, the ability to share knowledge is “important” for 86% of potential women entrepreneurs in Canada and 83% of those surveyed say access to mentors is also key to success.

*BMO Women's Day Study (2012)*

**Laureen Regan**  
PRESIDENT OF SOCIAL  
CLUB DISCOUNT LISTING



## CONNECTING TO CONTRACTS

Through mentorship, workshops and trade missions, women business owners can identify and seize opportunities to secure contracts with major international companies.

Among the key resources is achieving certification as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) by WEConnect Canada. This guarantees to companies who wish to buy from women-owned businesses that certified companies are majority-owned (51%) and managed by women. AWE helps entrepreneurs meet buyers from large corporations and provides coaching and training so that women can leverage opportunities. This includes assistance on how to present their business offerings and respond to requests for proposals.

"I have had access to and interviews with people, particularly procurement officers at large pharmaceutical companies, that I would never have been able to access on my own," says Chris Rokosh, President and CEO of The Optio Group of Calgary, which is Canada's largest medico-legal education, litigation support and consulting company.

The trade missions and events organized by AWE and WEConnect Canada are proving to be invaluable. "Just spending time with successful women who have their eye on the world and business growth has been invaluable to me," she says. "I would absolutely recommend this for anyone who is looking to grow."

### AWE FACT

- The WEConnect International corporate network represents more than US\$700 billion in annual purchasing power.
- Certified businesses in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba secured 127 contracts valued at approximately \$10.5 million dollars.



**Chris Rokosh**  
**PRESIDENT AND CEO**  
**OF THE OPTIO GROUP**



## MENTORSHIP TO SUPPORT SUCCESSION

Mother and daughter Char and Jessina Smith, who own Smith Research Inc. and Smith Docs Inc. of Calgary are among the many women business owners who have benefited from the full scope of AWE's services. Their legal research company employs over 20 people in the Western provinces and is primarily a federal government contractor, generating over \$15 million in federal contracts over the past dozen years.

"Last year, I was at a crossroads with the business and wanted to expand outside of federal contracting to also provide services to the oil and gas and legal sectors," notes Char. "While running a successful business in a knowledge-based industry, I had little background in business development and turned to AWE for their experience, expertise and support."

In the course of just one year, Char and Jessina have actively engaged in the AWE's Excelsior Program, attended numerous seminars, have achieved WEConnect Canada certification and have participated in a trade mission.

"The knowledge that I've gained has had a significant impact on my business growth," she says. "Highlights include: starting a new \$5-million three-year contract; adding four full-time and two part-time permanent staff members; implementing a new health benefits program for all employees; executing a marketing strategy to the private sector; and creating a long-term succession plan."

Char credits AWE and its resources directly with this surge in business activity. "Not only have they provided me with the tools and theoretical knowledge for successful strategic planning," she says, "they've also provided me with the support and confidence to continue to grow my business in the future."

### AWE FACT

Nearly 80% of global businesses are family-owned and more than 34% of these businesses say their next CEO will likely be a woman.

*Fathers and Daughters: Passing on the Family Business*  
*Business Week (2011)*



**Jessina & Char Smith**  
**OWNERS OF SMITH RESEARCH INC. & SMITH DOCS INC.**

# AWE BUILDS THE COMMUNITY

**AWE PROVIDES PROGRAMS THAT CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND OUR OVERALL ECONOMY.**

AWE helps identify, recognize, and celebrate the achievement of women entrepreneurs.

## **BUSINESS INVESTMENTS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES**

For Virginia Sumalinog, AWE has given her an opportunity to realize a long-held dream. "As an early childhood educator, it has always been my dream to operate either my own daycare or preschool," she notes. "Within a year, and with the help of AWE, I've been given the opportunity to own both."

Today, she is the proud owner and director of "Maligaya" Happy Daycare (Northland Daycare) in Edmonton and the KinderVillage Preschool in St. Albert. "What's unique about these facilities is that they encourage the children to be well-rounded and happy, through their interactions with other children and the stimulating activities that we provide," she explains. "This, in turn, makes our parents feel proud and secure about the services the children receive."

Virginia has a committed staff that uses state-of-the-art technology such as "smart white boards" to promote interactive learning and pre-reading programs that build the basic foundations for literacy. She thanks AWE for giving her the tools and confidence to achieve this success. "AWE regularly visits me and my business to give tips on how to reach more families, which was a major challenge in my first couple of months of operation," she says.

"AWE also advised me on how to choose my staff. They also notify me about upcoming AWE-sponsored leadership seminars that have helped me manage my staff and to keep them as effective and efficient team members."

Today, her daycare is at full capacity with a wait-list and she already has plans to build another daycare by the end of 2013. "I gladly recommend AWE to other entrepreneurs because it will help you every step of the way so that your business prospers," she states.



**Virginia Sumalinog**  
**DIRECTOR OF "MALIGAYA"**  
**HAPPY DAYCARE**

## **BUSINESS TRAINING TO SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

AWE's NextStep to Success program for Aboriginal women creates opportunities for potential business owners to learn how to start a business. Through the NextStep to Success business plan learning series Aboriginal women create plans to launch and manage their own businesses with the support of a peer circle.

AWE is expanding its NextStep To Success Train-the-Trainer program, which brings the NextStep to Success learning curriculum and unique delivery approach to facilitators who deliver training to women in Aboriginal communities. The Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, Cold Lake First Nations, St. Paul Community, Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, Kehewin Cree Nation, Kikino Métis Settlement and Whitefish Lake First Nation and Athabasca Tribal Council are among the many communities that have supported the NextStep to Success program.

"One of the goals of the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) Employment & Training Department is to deliver effective training programs that will enhance the quality of life and work for our community members and empower our clients to find meaningful, sustainable career paths. The NextStep to Success Train-the-Trainer has provided an opportunity for ATC to assist aspiring entrepreneurs in the process of building their business plan. By 2020 Alberta anticipates hiring more than 13,000 new workers in the oil and gas sector; this means the opportunity for starting a thriving business in our region is greater than ever. After completing the Train-the-Trainer Program, our Employment & Training Coordinators now have a better understanding of what building a business plan incorporates, what is personally invested in running a business and the insight to help set realistic goals with our clients." - Roy Vermillion, Chief Executive Officer, Athabasca Tribal Council.

### **AWE FACT**

Aboriginal women comprise 37% of the total number of Aboriginal Canadians who are self-employed. Their participation is increasing at a rate 2.5 times higher than that of non-Aboriginal women.

I was honoured to have facilitated the NextStep to Success Program in Fort McKay.

My role as facilitator was to share my knowledge of business planning with the group, and to provide the participants with the necessary tools and techniques to turn their business ideas into viable opportunities. I met a group of incredibly unique and talented women, all striving to better themselves and others; women dedicated to a process of learning; all willing to contribute their experience and ideas, to learn and share. Several of these women have ventured into business for themselves and are excited about the future and what it holds for them, their families, and their community.

**Marnie Suitor, PAED, CMP, CMC, PFP**  
Facilitator - NextStep to Success

# CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT

“This award means so much more . . . because it’s coming from Alberta. It’s coming from women. It’s coming from a group of people who care about supporting and helping women entrepreneurs in this province.”

2012 Celebration of Achievement Honouree  
**Arlene Dickinson**  
CEO, Venture Communications

## PAYING TRIBUTE

The Celebration of Achievement award pays tribute to an exceptional entrepreneur who has achieved recognizable success. This visionary woman is an inspirational leader, who has built an entrepreneurial venture in Alberta with significant impact on the economy and the community, and who acts as a role model for women in business. This is the only event of its kind in Alberta that brings together female entrepreneurs with representatives from government, industry, media and educational institutions to celebrate the outstanding contribution of an inspiring female entrepreneur.

## AWE FACT

For the inaugural year of the Celebration of Achievement, there were over 250 attendees who came out to celebrate our award recipient.

**Arlene Dickinson**  
CEO OF VENTURE  
COMMUNICATIONS





# AWE

## 2012 CONFERENCE

### **CONNECTING TO SUCCESS... ACCELERATE YOUR PATH TO PROFITS**

With 25 speakers from all areas of business and 120 attendees AWE's 2012 Connecting to Success Conference provided professional and entrepreneurial women the opportunity to learn strategies and tactics, gain inspiration, establish connections and access professional resources to grow their business.

AWE Facebook comments:

*"We had an amazing time at the AWE conference...! Met and learned lots about business and success from inspiring women, such as Michele Bailey, Charmaine Hammond, Jessica Jackley, and more! Looking forward to next year's event!" - Canadian Youth Business Foundation*

Twitter feed:

*"...Such a valuable two days to invest in growing our business. Thx for putting on such a great event!" @evoLEASEtion - Angela Armstrong Prime Capital Group*

"Women have joined the ranks of entrepreneurs in great numbers in this province over the past few decades," said Honourable Heather Klimchuk, Minister of Culture. "It's because of organizations like the Alberta Women Entrepreneurs that focus on encouraging women to seek and to realize their greatest potential that we are able to build a strong and diversified Alberta for all."

**Honourable Heather Klimchuk  
Minister of Culture**



## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS - Year ended March 31, 2013

Revenues	Unrestricted	Externally Restricted	Internally Restricted	2013 Total
Contributions from WED	\$ 975,000	\$ -	-	\$ 975,000
Other Contributions	356,355	-	-	356,355
Interest Income	-	207,072	-	207,072
Program Income	93,639	-	-	93,639
Recovery of Bad Debt	-	36,151	-	36,151
Amortization of Deferred Capital	22,000	-	-	22,000
	<u>\$ 1,446,994</u>	<u>\$ 243,223</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$ 1,690,217</u>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 864,701	-	-	\$ 864,701
Travel	129,905	-	-	129,905
Marketing	122,647	-	-	122,647
Events	96,999	-	-	96,999
Rent	82,900	-	-	82,900
Special Project Expenses	60,088	-	-	60,088
Amortization of Property & Equipment	56,590	-	-	56,590
Professional Fees	48,629	-	-	48,629
Office	48,587	-	-	48,587
Other Loan Fees	13,161	-	-	13,161
Training & Board Expenses	13,017	-	-	13,017
Insurance	10,323	-	-	10,323
Repairs & Maintenance	5,737	-	-	5,737
Bank Charges & Interest	4,976	-	-	4,976
Loss on Loan Receivable	-	(55,211)	-	(55,211)
	<u>1,558,260</u>	<u>(55,211)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,503,049</u>
Excess (deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses	<u>\$ (111,266)</u>	<u>\$ 298,434</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>\$ 187,168</u>

### STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS - Year ended March 31, 2013

Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$ 7,705	\$ 4,940,829	\$ 505,057	\$ 5,453,591
Excess (deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses	(111,266)	298,434	-	187,168
Transfer to unrestricted	95,000	-	(95,000)	-
Net Assets, End of Year	<u>\$ (8,561)</u>	<u>\$ 5,239,263</u>	<u>\$ 410,057</u>	<u>\$ 5,640,759</u>

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION - As at March 31, 2013

<b>Assets</b>				
Current Assets	\$ 217,159	\$ 1,993,135	\$ 410,057	\$ 2,620,351
Current Portion of Loans Receivable	-	1,107,385	-	1,107,385
Long Term Loans Receivable	-	2,142,361	-	2,142,361
Property & Equipment	94,427	-	-	94,427
	<u>\$ 311,586</u>	<u>\$ 5,242,881</u>	<u>\$ 410,057</u>	<u>\$ 5,964,524</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Current Liabilities	\$ 129,967	\$ 3,618	\$ -	\$ 133,585
Deferred Operating Contributions	131,392	-	-	131,392
Deferred Capital Contributions	58,788	-	-	58,788
	<u>320,147</u>	<u>3,618</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>323,765</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>				
Externally Restricted	-	5,239,263	-	5,239,263
Internally Restricted	-	-	410,057	410,057
Unrestricted	(8,561)	-	-	(8,561)
	<u>(8,561)</u>	<u>5,239,263</u>	<u>410,057</u>	<u>5,640,759</u>
	<u>\$ 311,586</u>	<u>\$ 5,242,881</u>	<u>\$ 410,057</u>	<u>\$ 5,964,524</u>

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AWE's programs and services would not be possible without the generous support and funding of Western Economic Diversification Canada and the Government of Alberta.



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## OUR VOLUNTEERS

We sincerely thank our many volunteers, including speakers and other contributors, who provided an estimated 661 hours of their valuable time.

# aWe

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