

# Micro Enterprise Solutions



Volume 10  
Spring 2006

## News from the Philadelphia Development Partnership

### What's at the heart of PDP's mission?

Hardworking entrepreneurs, their families, and their communities

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### PDP Reaches Out to Young Entrepreneurs

Selected to operate the Prudential Young Entrepreneur Program.

Philadelphia Development Partnership has long offered training, technical support and financial services to microentrepreneurs in Philadelphia and Chester. However, it was never specifically targeted to a particular demographic.

Now, thanks to a grant from The Prudential Foundation, PDP is specifically targeting young people aged 18 to 30. The Prudential Young Entrepreneur Program (PYEP) was launched this past fall by PDP. It's a seven-week curriculum that provides 42 hours of classroom instruction and training covering business topics such as marketing, sales, and financial statements, and which requires that students write a business plan in order to complete the program.

"It's a good program that exposes young people to entrepreneurship, many for the first time, and paints a picture of what it's like to be an entrepreneur," explains Earl Boyd, PDP's Training and Technical Assistance Manager. "It takes it out of the conceptual and puts it into real and practical terms for the students."

PDP was selected to run this program by the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO), which is administering PYEP on behalf of The Prudential Foundation. Originally launched in 1999 for young entrepreneurs in Newark, NJ, it is now in Phase III, with Philadelphia the first city to be added to the program. PDP was selected based on a competitive RFP process, notes Elizabeth Wilson, senior program manager for AEO. "Our goal is to serve more disadvantaged entrepreneurs and other youths facing

difficult circumstances in the inner city," she reports. "PDP showed that they had the ability to target this market. In particular, they have captured the 'ear' of people in the community."

Graduation ceremonies were recently held for the first two groups of PYEP participants. Out of the 25 students who enrolled, 18 completed the entire training course and 15 developed and submitted business plans. Now that they've completed the training, these graduates are eligible for loans of up to \$15,000 from the PYEP loan pool.

Under the guidance of Boyd, PDP is now administering the third wave of the PYEP. He notes that there are 12 students who are currently enrolled, just three fewer than started the course in March. One of the performance goals for PYEP is that 65% of the students complete the program, so PDP is right on target.

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Recent PYEP graduate Shalonda Profit has found a creative way to promote Dûyû Apparel, a new business that she plans to launch this summer.

## Message from the Executive Director

Starting a new venture takes a lot of energy, and can be a totally consuming activity. In addition to energy, it requires resilience, as it's inevitable that some strategies and tactics will not curry favor with the market.



Leslie Benoiel,  
Executive Director

These are just some of the reasons why I am so excited about the Prudential Young Entrepreneur Program (PYEP). While technically our services have always been available to younger entrepreneurs—those under 30 years old—we can now specifically target our services to this demographic.

Not only do young people have that energy that only youth can provide, they exude optimism—a necessity if one is going to become a successful entrepreneur. Building a business is not unlike performing an experiment, and requires a considerable amount of trial and error until the most appropriate “formula” is derived. By virtue of their age, young entrepreneurs have more time to refine their business plans.

Besides helping to increase the likelihood of long-term success, the PYEP offers us a great opportunity to work with young people in the neighborhoods and show them a positive and constructive way for them to channel their energies.

Finally, the initial groups we've been able to attract to the PYEP have shown a great deal of promise and we're very excited both by their progress with the program and their long-term potential as business people.

Programs like the PYEP show the need for and positive impact of the work we do here at PDP and, therefore, the support you provide to us.

## Bralef Philpot (1980 - 2005)

Bralef Philpot was a member of the inaugural PYEP class in Philadelphia. An engaging young man, Bralef—or Bray as he preferred to be called—had a well-developed plan to start a magazine covering Philadelphia's underground hip-hop scene, and was taking advantage of PYEP toward that end.

Unfortunately, his dream came to an abrupt end one evening in late December when he was murdered while sitting in a car in West Philadelphia. He was 25 years old. One of Bray's friends, a member of PDP's Community Capital Works peer lending program who was with him in the car at the time, was also shot several times but survived.

According to PDP's Earl Boyd, Bray stood out from the very first day of the PYEP orientation: when it was his turn to give a verbal synopsis of his business idea to the rest of the group, Bray exhibited an enormous level of enthusiasm and pride about the magazine he planned to start, and even brought along a prototype of the first issue, complete with layout design, editorials, and critiques of some new releases from local hip hop artists.

The Prudential Foundation and the Association for Enterprise Opportunity are planning to honor Bralef in some capacity and PDP will make a formal announcement once the details are ironed out.

## PDP Reaches Out to Young Entrepreneurs

continued from page 1



Boyd is especially excited by the most recent group of young entrepreneurs to complete the PYEP training course. The reason, he says, is because many are beyond the conceptual/idea phase and are already running businesses. Among the students are one with a trucking business, another who has been publishing her own magazine and a third who has a computer repair and refurbishing business. “They started these businesses out of necessity,” observes Boyd. “Now they want transform them into viable and profitable enterprises.”

Overall, since its inception in 1999 through May 2005, PYEP has served nearly 700 young entrepreneurs, with 475 of them completing the curriculum, and 137 starting or expanding businesses. According to AEO's Wilson, some \$283,600 in loans have been disbursed to graduates of the program, with the hope to make many more as the numbers grow.

For PDP, the PYEP is a natural complement to the mission. “As a private nonprofit organization, we are dedicated to cultivating and promoting successful microenterprises in neighborhoods throughout the Greater Philadelphia region,” states Executive Director Leslie Benoiel. “This partnership is a perfect extension to what we currently do.”



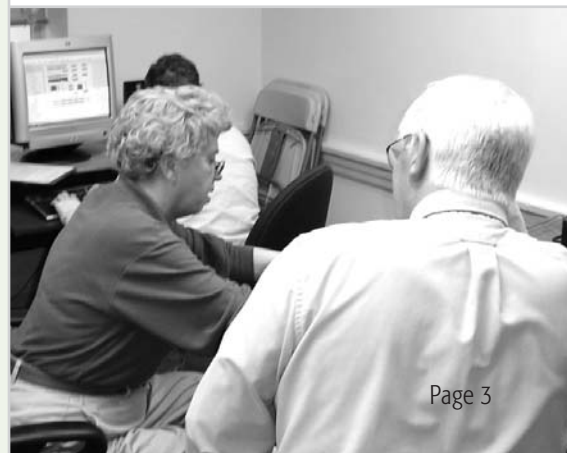
## CMP Helps Residents through Tax Season

For the fourth consecutive year, the Chester Microenterprise Partnership offered residents free tax preparation assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA was offered in concert with Pathways PA, one of the region's foremost providers of residential and community-based services for women and their children.

Each year, VITA relies on volunteers who are trained and certified to prepare state and federal income taxes. This year, three volunteers—two students from Widener University and one employee from the Boeing Corporation—staffed the CMP VITA site. One volunteer even gifted his old paper shredder to the CMP office to help properly dispose of sensitive information. Once the returns were prepared, they were filed electronically and the return automatically deposited into the resident's bank account. For recipients who did not have a bank account, CMP arranged for a representative from the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union to be on hand to help these individuals open an account or get their refund check cashed.

A total of 64 people benefited from CMP's VITA site this tax season, placing nearly \$56,000 in refunds back into their pockets. Additionally, nine people were eligible for the earned income tax credit for working families. At least half of the recipients were repeat customers, having used the service at CMP in previous years.

According to Tracey Johnson, who helped to coordinate and oversee the VITA site at CMP, the services were intended to help low- to moderate-income residents in Chester and Delaware County, particularly the elderly. "Many of the elderly are on fixed incomes, so offering this free service was extremely helpful," she noted.



## Creative Commerce

For David Lawrence, art isn't some esoteric luxury; it's a vital part of life. "Art is essential for your cultural, emotional and intellectual well-being," asserts the founder of Art on the Avenue Gallery, located in West Philadelphia. "It enriches your life."

With his new venture, founded in June 2005, Lawrence is hoping it will be profitable, not only for him, but for his customers as well. "Art makes a good investment because it's an appreciable asset that helps increase your net worth and create an asset," he points out.

The gallery sells contemporary fine art, original paintings, sculpture, ceramics and limited edition lithographs, focusing on the work of African American artists. With Art on the Avenue Gallery, Lawrence is taking a new tack in marketing, one that is influenced by his formal training as an artist and seven years as a manager of a retail fashion store. It features an artist every month and holds events that combine the art with music, technology and readings—resulting in what Lawrence calls a multi-dimensional gallery.

He credits Philadelphia Development Partnership and its Community Capital Works microfinance program with helping get the

Art on the Avenue's founder hosts events combining painting with poetry, music and multimedia.

gallery up and running. "CCW helped me during the R&D phase," Lawrence recalls. "I was funding it out of pocket and lacked the track record to get formal funding [from a bank]. CCW provided me with a loan at a critical time, enabling me to pay for equipment. It's one of the greatest things I've been exposed to."

As part of his involvement with PDP and CCW, Lawrence has joined a peer lending group called CPR, which has three other members: Carmen Goldston, Patty McClay and Tyrone Truitt. Meeting weekly, CPR members not only provide encouragement and support, but help each other objectively evaluate their businesses. "They provide me with critical feedback on business plans and even marketing schemes," Lawrence reports. "We create—and execute—projects that support all of our businesses."

As Spring approaches, Lawrence and his cohorts are hosting a networking event to generate business and keep building momentum. It's all about enriching the whole person, not just materially, but mentally and spiritually as well.

## New Employees

### PDP Staff

- Leslie Benoiel ..... Executive Director
- Earl Boyd ..... Training and Technical Assistance Manager
- Tessa Freeman-Anderson ..... Senior Program Specialist  
Community Capital Works
- Tracey Johnson ..... Business Development Associate
- Jennifer Krout ..... Special Projects and Communications Manager
- Pri Seebadri ..... Project Director  
Community Capital Works
- Tonia Terry ..... Operations and Compliance Coordinator
- Antoinette Truehart ..... Managing Director, Chester Microenterprise Partnership and Community Capital Works, Inc.
- Sharon Washington ..... Program Coordinator

### TRAINING SPECIALISTS/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF\*

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Carol Hendrix   | Ivey Ibrahim    |
| Kathleen Jeanty | Tesha Kelly     |
| Fred Koelle     | Neil McNair     |
| Kim Miller      | Elridge Moton   |
| Fred Schlossman | Michelle Winter |

### ENTERPRISE AGENTS/ OUTREACH SPECIALISTS\*

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Ben Footes   | Seward Johnson |
| Keith Warren | Theresa Weaver |
| Donavan West | Sandra Wilks   |

\* consultant/contracted service provider



### Tracey Johnson

Tracey Johnson joined Chester Microenterprise Partnership in January 2006 as business development assistant, working with Managing Director Toni Truehart. In this role, Tracey will act as the primary liaison between CMP, its consultants and the community, and perform outreach to community organizations.

"I plan to reach out to community organizations and promote CMP and its programs," she states. "I hope to generate a lot more visibility for us in the community—Chester and all of Delaware County—and find places where we can showcase our services."

Johnson, who is a microentrepreneur herself, learned about CMP by participating in one of its networking events for women, and was also a client who had benefited from CMP's computer lab and business library. When the opportunity to join CMP presented itself, she was eager to take advantage of it. "I feel very fortunate and thankful," she says.

A native of Chester, Johnson has enjoyed a varied career spanning the IT, video production and modeling worlds, and spent two years living in France. She returned to her hometown in 2005. In her spare time, Johnson enjoys reading, theatre, music and tennis.

### Sharon G.E. Washington

Earlier this year, Sharon Washington joined PDP as program coordinator, working closely with Earl Boyd, Training and Technical Assistance Manager. Currently she is focusing on the Prudential Young Entrepreneur Program (see story on front page), performing outreach to community organizations, as well as surveying clients that went through PDP's self employment/business ownership training programs to see how they benefited and how the program can be improved in the future.

In her new role, Washington says she wants to learn about microenterprise development and help PDP improve its services to constituents. "I plan to learn as much as possible in this job," she declares. "I'm a student and I am very good at learning quickly. I also plan to bring my creativity and insight to offer a fresh perspective."

Washington moved to Philadelphia in June 2005 with her husband, Jermaine, from Portland, OR, where she had been studying and working as an intern at Self Enhancement, a program serving at-risk youths in the city. In addition to her work at PDP, Washington is continuing her education at Temple University, majoring in African American Studies with a minor in Criminal Justice.



# Thank You to Our 2005 Supporters!

## Government

- ▶ Chester Economic Development Authority
- ▶ City of Chester
- ▶ City of Philadelphia Commerce Department
- ▶ Community Development Financial Institutions Fund of the U.S. Treasury
- ▶ Delaware County Office of Employment and Training
- ▶ Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (Pennsylvania Weed and Seed)
- ▶ Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- ▶ Pennsylvania Department of Labor (Self Employment Assistance Program)
- ▶ Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation

## Foundations

- ▶ Hamilton Family Foundation
- ▶ The Honickman Foundation
- ▶ The Philadelphia Foundation
- ▶ Piasecki Family Foundation
- ▶ The Prudential Foundation
- ▶ The Shefa Fund

## Corporations

- ▶ Aegis Realty Consultants
- ▶ The Bancorp Bank
- ▶ Beneficial Savings Bank
- ▶ Catalyst Consulting Group, Inc.
- ▶ Citizens Bank
- ▶ Commerce Bank
- ▶ Covad Communications Group
- ▶ First Keystone Bank
- ▶ Hewlett-Packard Company
- ▶ JNA Capital, Inc.
- ▶ Osiris Group, Inc.
- ▶ Philadelphia Management and Companies
- ▶ PNC Bank
- ▶ Republic First Bank
- ▶ Rising Star Business Forms
- ▶ Ruotolo Spewak & Co.
- ▶ Sovereign Bank
- ▶ TechGuides
- ▶ Urban Consultants, Inc.
- ▶ Urban Partners
- ▶ Wachovia Bank
- ▶ Yampolsky, Mandeloff, Silver & Company, P.C.

## Individuals

- ▶ Mr. & Mrs. William P. Becker
- ▶ Constance W. Benoiel
- ▶ D. Jeffry Benoiel & Amy Branch
- ▶ Leslie H. Benoiel
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- ▶ Leslie J. Tolles
- ▶ John Vornle
- ▶ Ignatius C. Wang
- ▶ Alan Wilson

## In-kind Contributors & Partners

- ▶ Association for Enterprise Opportunity
- ▶ Baker & Company, LLC
- ▶ Chester Education Foundation
- ▶ Chester Housing Authority
- ▶ Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Delaware Valley
- ▶ Delaware County Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ Executive Service Corps of the Delaware Valley
- ▶ Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition
- ▶ Junior Achievement
- ▶ Pennsylvania Microenterprise Coalition
- ▶ University of Pennsylvania Law School Small Business Clinic
- ▶ West Philadelphia Financial Services Institution
- ▶ Wharton Small Business Development Center
- ▶ Women's Opportunities Resource Center
- ▶ Widener University

Thanks to the generous support of so many people, we exceeded our annual goal of raising \$75,000 in individual contributions during the 2005 calendar year!

Our new individual contribution goal for 2006 is \$90,000. We hope we can count on your support this year to help disadvantaged entrepreneurs in our community.

## Taste of Success 2005 PDP's Annual Holiday Bake-off Event

### A Special Thank You to Our Wonderful Sponsors:

#### Lead Chef Level

- ▶ Commerce Bank

#### Maitre D' Level

- ▶ Philadelphia Management
- ▶ PNC Bank
- ▶ Sovereign Bank

#### Sous-Chef Level

- ▶ Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition
- ▶ Philadelphia Private Bank (The Bancorp Bank)

#### Pastry Chef Level

- ▶ Aegis Realty Consultants
- ▶ Beneficial Savings Bank
- ▶ Catalyst Consulting Group
- ▶ JNA Capital
- ▶ Osiris Group, Inc.
- ▶ Ruotolo Spewak & Co.
- ▶ TechGuides, Inc.
- ▶ Urban Partners
- ▶ Wachovia Bank

### We also appreciate the generosity of those who contributed items to our silent auction:

- ▶ Leslie Benoliel
- ▶ Peter A. Benoliel
- ▶ Scott Heiler, Office Basics
- ▶ Peter Lane, The Mann Center
- ▶ Melanie Marchand, Sisters in Shape
- ▶ Philadelphia 76ers
- ▶ Clesha Staten, Simply Clesha's Gifts & Baskets
- ▶ Judy Wicks, White Dog Café
- ▶ Ellen Yin, Fork Restaurant



Traci McNeal (center), shown here with PDP Board Chair Jim Hartling (left) and Executive Director Leslie Benoliel (right), placed first in the desserts category with her delicious and mouthwatering apple pound cake.



Celebrity Chef Smiley, owner of Happy Face Catering, offered samples of his popular raspberry jalapeno meatballs and mango smoked salmon taffy.



Guests at PDP's Holiday Bake-off were able to bid on one of 12 silent auction items, including the Wine Lover's Gift Basket seen here.



Nathan Townsend served portions of his winning entry in the hors d'oeuvres category: baked salmon in creamy garlic mango sauce.



A guest contemplates indulging in Patricia McClay's homemade "cheesecake delight" at Taste of Success 2005.



Guests took the opportunity to network with other event attendees while sampling the culinary creations of PDP's entrepreneur clients.



Mary Tedesco (right), owner of Nora Lees Café, a Cajun-style BYOB in Ridley, offered Blane Stoddart a choice of spicy or mild jambalaya.



Thelma Tighman (left), a CCW peer lending group member, chats with Mark Ledger (right), a PDP board member, about her business.

## Board of Directors

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William Smith .....Vice Chairman  
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Mark Ledger ..... Treasurer  
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Thomas Arasz ..... Secretary  
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Frederick Holding .....Chairman Emeritus

Leslie H. Benoliel ..... Assistant Treasurer  
Philadelphia Development Partnership

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Affairs Coalition

Jerry Cotlov ..... Andrew Miller  
East River Bank ..... Beneficial Savings Bank

Antoinette Crawford-Major ..... Ahsan Nasratullah  
PA Department of Community ..... JNA Capital, Inc.  
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Emanuel Freeman ..... Robert Palmer  
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Eva Gladstein ..... Philip Price, Jr.  
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Neighborhood Transformation ..... The Partnership CDC  
Initiative

Maisha Jackson ..... Ignatius C. Wang  
Franchise Owner ..... Urban Consultants, Inc.

Roger A. Johnsen, Esq.

Curtis Jones  
Philadelphia Commercial  
Development Corporation

## PDP Client Gets a "Boost" From National Program

In March, PDP client Kathleen Jeanty, principal of InnerLeaf Communications, was selected to receive a \$1,000 award from The Women and Company Microenterprise Boost Program (MBP).

Founded by Jeanty in 2004, InnerLeaf Communications is a full-service marketing communications firm specializing in strategic marketing consulting, public relations, and event planning and management. The award will enable Jeanty to upgrade her business' technology and telecommunications infrastructure. Specifically, she plans to purchase a new computer and DSL access, which will enhance communication with her clients.

MBP provides cash awards, business training and technical assistance to low- and moderate-income female microentrepreneurs to enhance their business ventures. The award is supported by a grant from the Citigroup Foundation and Women and Company, held in partnership with

the Women's Opportunities Resource Center (WORC), a longtime PDP partner organization in Philadelphia. Jeanty learned about the MBP earlier this year through PDP staff.

Jeanty launched her venture after being laid off from three different jobs within the space of three years. Unwilling to become a victim of corporate layoffs and an uncertain economy yet again, Kathleen threw herself and all of her savings into starting her own business, a dream she'd held since high school. "I always knew I wanted to do something entrepreneurial, and circumstances at that time renewed my determination to make it happen."

Kathleen Jeanty



Jeanty has received technical assistance from the staff at PDP, enabling her to grow her business to include such clients as the United Negro College Fund, Western Union and the African American Chamber of Commerce of PA, NJ and DE. Impressed with her business acumen and professionalism, PDP has also become a client, using InnerLeaf Communications' services to organize its annual bake-off and other business networking events.

A single mother, Kathleen is hoping that continued success as a business owner leaves a lasting impression on her eight-year-old son. "Not only is he learning that hard work does eventually pay off, he is starting to recognize the benefits of other positive attributes consistent with entrepreneurship: perseverance, commitment and professionalism."



1334 Walnut Street, 7th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Tel: 215.545.3100  
Fax: 215.546.8055

### A Microenterprise Development Agency

that provides capital, training, business counseling and networking opportunities to small and micro-businesses in the Greater Philadelphia Region.

[www.pdp-inc.org](http://www.pdp-inc.org)

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**A Hand Up**