

Congratulations to the Business & Leadership Essential Certificate Program's Inaugural Graduating Class of 2022

Toronto, ON – April 7, 2022...Black Creek Community Health Centre is pleased to congratulate the inaugural graduating class of the Business & Leadership Essential Certificate program, delivered by the Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA), in partnership with Schulich Executive Education Centre.

Among the 18 graduates are nine intrapreneurs, who are Black professionals building their leadership skills within existing organizations, and nine entrepreneurs, who have a business idea or an existing entrepreneurial business. At the end of the 10-week Business & Leadership Essential Certificate Program, graduates receive a certificate from Schulich Executive Education Centre.

The Black Entrepreneurship Alliance is led by Black Creek Community Health Centre in partnership with the Schulich Executive Education Centre, as well as YSpace at York University, and TD-Community Engagement Centre. The BEA offers six different programs designed to support Black professionals and entrepreneurs to achieve their business goals.

Impacted by the pandemic, Tariq and his business partner, Mohammed had to step away from their thriving Parkdale neighbourhood storefront where they served unique tea blends to loyal customers for more than six years. Julianne was able to apply the certificate course's leadership skills when secured a position in her desired field midway through the program.

"The Business & Leadership Essential Certificate program opened a door of opportunity when we needed it most. We felt welcomed within a supportive space, where we were inspired and supported to build a new business model, along with the required infrastructure to bring our selection of teas to an online marketplace. We are reaching more customers, inspiring a global customer community to discover their passion for our tea blends."

- Tariq Al Barwani, Co-founder, Plentea

"I started this program while working in a Finance/Legal position, with the goal to work in healthcare in the future. Midway through the program, I landed a role in healthcare, and I got to see the topics we covered in course material unfold before my eyes. The Marketing & Strategy course content gave me the knowledge required to speak confidently in stakeholder meetings. I never imagined this program would be so applicable to my role so soon. I'm pleased to be a part of the first cohort to graduate from this program."

- Julianne Riviere, Research Coordinator, Research Institute, St. Joseph's Health Centre

The program, funded by Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev), welcomes applications from Black applicants from the Greater Toronto Area, providing guidance, instruction, and mentorship, as well as financial, legal, practical, and marketing support to assist budding and existing entrepreneurs.

"Our partnership with Schulich Executive Education Centre, delivering the Business & Leader Certificate Essential program is valued added to the long-term success of the Black entrepreneurial ecosystem. I'm excited about this strategic collaboration because it equips Black entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs with the essential business skills to build future-ready companies and effectively navigate a changing business landscape. Schulich Executive Education Centre's commitment to supporting present and future Black leaders will positively impact diverse participation levels in emerging economies."

- Olu Villasa, Manager, Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA)

"At the Schulich Executive Education Centre, our team is committed to supporting entrepreneurs towards success and providing the platform to achieve it. It is especially rewarding to have been a part of the journey towards success this inaugural graduating class has been on. Many of our graduates are individuals from our own community here at the Schulich School of Business within York University and we could not be more proud of their accomplishments and

growth. We are incredibly honoured to have partnered with the Black Creek Community Health Centre in rolling out this learning journey that truly fosters a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment to a community that has faced many barriers to success. I know this program can and will change our graduates' lives for the better in tangible ways and I am excited to see them each excel in the months and years to come."

- Rami Mayer, Executive Director, Schulich Executive Education Centre

"As a community health centre, our role is to provide health care, but we also create healthy environments where communities thrive, by encouraging and supporting success within the community. This program is just one innovative way Black Creek Community Health Centre is bringing real and tangible change to a community that traditionally faces too many barriers. This program breaks that cycle - providing skills, support, tools, and opportunities."

- Cheryl Prescod, Executive Director, Black Creek Community Health Centre

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About FedDev Ontario

For more than 12 years, the Government of Canada, through [FedDev Ontario](#), has worked to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation and growth in Canada's most populous region. The Agency has delivered impressive results, which can be seen in southern Ontario businesses that are creating innovative technologies, improving their productivity, growing their revenues, and in the economic advancement of communities across the region. Learn more about the impacts the Agency is having in southern Ontario by exploring our [pivotal projects](#).

About Schulich Executive Education Centre

The Schulich Executive Education Centre is a strategic business unit of the Schulich School of Business at York University. The centre provides lifelong learning for the development of professionals and executives, beyond their full-time education and entry into the work force.

About Black Entrepreneurship Alliance (BEA)

In 2021, the Government of Canada announced an investment of close to \$3 million for the Black Creek Community Health Centre (BCCHC), in partnership with York University's YSpace, Schulich Executive Education Centre (SEEC), and TD-Community Engagement Centre, to support Black-Canadian entrepreneurs and businesses in Humber River-Black Creek. The funding comes as part of the federal government's first-ever [Black Entrepreneurship Program \(BEP\) Ecosystem Fund](#)— an investment of more than \$400 million to support the long-term success of Black entrepreneurs and business owners in Canada.

About Black Creek Community Health Centre

Black Creek Community Health Centre (Black Creek CHC) is a respected multi-service agency serving Toronto's North York West and adjacent communities since 1989. BCCHC works with individuals, families, and organizations to deliver comprehensive health services and programs that enable community members to receive the best care, where they live. Best known for their holistic healthcare approach, Black Creek CHC brings together and relies on the continued support of government, healthcare, and community partners to address the unique needs and challenges of the community.

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