

Four local businesses take top prizes at FirstOntario 1Awards

Small business owners recognized in annual pitch competition with \$200,000 in prizes

Hamilton ON, May 22, 2024 – This year’s group of four winners created a chocolate bar like you’ve never enjoyed before, vegan deli slices that would make you think twice, a community grocery store in an up and coming neighborhood and a welcoming space that offers speech language pathology services delivered straight from the heart. Hamilton’s DSRT Co., Nonno’s Plant-Based Butcher, Barton Lettuce and Simcoe’s Speech Hens delivered the winning pitches and shared \$25,000 in cash and \$175,000 in professional in-kind services.

“The collaboration we are seeing from business communities in different regions is quite unique,” said Joanne Battaglia, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Community Partnerships at FirstOntario Credit Union. “They all have great ideas and passion to succeed, but they also have a deep appreciation for their community and each other. We’re happy to work with our partners to support them through this program.”

The 1Awards program – which just wrapped up year 12– would not be possible without the continued commitment from partners. Thanks to Agro Zaffiro LLP, Giant Shoe Creative Agency, KPMG, Mohawk Centre for Entrepreneurship, Play Advertising, The Hamilton Spectator and Weever, winners receive specialized services (legal, accounting, marketing, digital, financial and advertising). Additional supporters include The Thornton Group, The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and Carmens Group.

FirstOntario and 1Awards partners have invested more than \$2.1 million into small business communities through the Hamilton, Halton, Niagara, Brant and surrounding regions with a goal of helping local entrepreneurs get to the next level and succeed.

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About FirstOntario Credit Union

FirstOntario is a full service cooperative financial institution, serving members for more than 80 years throughout the Golden Horseshoe, Niagara Region and Southwestern regions of Ontario. With \$6.6 billion in assets under management, FirstOntario is one of Canada’s largest credit unions. Everyone is welcome to be part of FirstOntario for financial services including daily transactions, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario profits are invested into the communities we serve through support for entrepreneurs, competitive rates and charitable pursuits including our award-winning student nutrition program. Learn more about us today at FirstOntario.com.