



LIFTOFF BY CCAWR HOSTS INAUGURAL LIFTOFF LAUNCHERS EVENT

A Celebration of Black Entrepreneurs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WATERLOO, ONTARIO (March 7, 2023) - The LiftOff BY CCAWR Black Entrepreneurship Program is thrilled to announce its upcoming spring LiftOff Launchers event on **Friday, March 24 at 5 PM EST**. The theme of this event is **Building Community**, which is designed to showcase the achievements of Black entrepreneurs and their contributions to the Black business ecosystem. The event will also feature entrepreneurs who are either currently enrolled in or have completed the LiftOff Program.

LiftOff is supported by a Government of Canada investment of over \$2.9 million, through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#) (FedDev Ontario), to support Black entrepreneurs from the earliest stages of starting a business to innovating, growing and scaling an existing business.

“The government of Canada is thrilled to support the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region in the delivery of its LiftOff program for Black entrepreneurs,” said the Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for FedDev Ontario. “The Black Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Fund is unlocking the potential of Black entrepreneurs and the CCAWR is providing the critical tools, opportunities and services to Black entrepreneurs and businesses in the Kitchener-Waterloo region.”

The LiftOff Launchers event will be held at [St. George Banquet Hall](#) in Waterloo and will offer a range of activities for attendees. These include a keynote speech from the **President of Guelph Black Heritage Society (GBHS), Denise Francis, who has been recognized as one of Canada’s 100 women to watch in 2022 by Canada International Black Women Excellence**. Guests can enjoy live music, food and drinks, business showcases, and networking opportunities with industry professionals.

“LiftOff Launchers will be a celebration of the Black founders who have completed the full LiftOff Black Entrepreneurship program and are moving on to continue growing and scaling their business enterprises,” said **Dr. Trevor Charles, Executive Director at LiftOff**. “It will also be a celebration of the first year of LiftOff and its impact on the entrepreneurship ecosystem of Waterloo Region and Wellington County. LiftOff is directly benefiting Black entrepreneurs with a broad range of business ventures. It has challenged them to critically evaluate and test their business ideas and has provided guidance to help move their businesses forward. We look forward to continuing to learn and grow, and we are grateful to our partners and funding support from FedDev Ontario that makes this all possible.”

The event welcomes all entrepreneurs, partners, and industry professionals. For additional details and to purchase tickets, please [visit the event page](#) or email tatkinson@liftoffbyccawr.org.

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About LiftOff By CCAWR

The [Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region](#) has collaborated with members of the vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem of Waterloo Region and Wellington County to develop and deliver an incubator and accelerator program for Black early-stage and growth entrepreneurs. The LiftOff Black Entrepreneurship Program is designed to support Black entrepreneurs from the earliest stages of starting a business to innovating, growing, and scaling an existing business. This project is funded by the Government of Canada through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#).

About FedDev Ontario

For 13 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, growth and job creation 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 productivity, growing revenues, creating jobs, 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](#), our [Southern Ontario Spotlight](#), and FedDev Ontario's [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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