



LIFTOFF BY CCAWR HOSTS LIFTOFF LAUNCHERS/ PITCHING EVENT

A Celebration of Black Entrepreneurs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kitchener, ONTARIO (September 13, 2023) - Anticipation is building as the LiftOff by CCAWR Black Entrepreneurship Program proudly unveils its highly anticipated fall LiftOff Launchers & Pitching event, scheduled for **Friday, September 29 at 5 PM EST**. Under the theme of **"Business as a Foundation for Community Enrichment,"** this event stands poised to illuminate the remarkable accomplishments of Black entrepreneurs and their invaluable contributions to the thriving Black business ecosystem. Distinguished entrepreneurs, hailing from both the ranks of current participants and esteemed alumni of the LiftOff program, will take centre stage, sharing their inspiring journeys and transformative impact.

CCAWR received 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 knows how important the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region is to the delivery of the LiftOff program for Black entrepreneurs,” said the Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for FedDev Ontario. “With support through FedDev Ontario’s Black Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Fund, CCAWR is providing critical tools, opportunities, and services to Black entrepreneurs and businesses in the Kitchener-Waterloo region.”

“The Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region continues to make a difference for Black entrepreneurs and the Black business ecosystem in the Waterloo region and beyond,” said the Honourable Bardish Chagger, Member of Parliament for Waterloo Region. “The LiftOff Launchers & Pitching event is going to be a positive opportunity to spotlight and celebrate the incredible impact and accomplishments Black entrepreneurs in our community are making.”

The LiftOff Launchers & Pitching event will be held at [SDG Idea Factory](#) in Kitchener and will offer a range of activities for attendees. These include a keynote speech from **Leslie McCurdy**, a celebrated international performer, honoured with the silver Jubilee Pin and the 2017 Vigor International Award. McCurdy has enchanted audiences worldwide for over 35 years as an actor, dancer and singer, most notable for her captivating one-woman plays like *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman* and *Things My Fore-Sisters Saw*. 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 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 mjatta@liftonbyccawr.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.

About FedDev Ontario

For 14 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](#).