

Business Achievement Award winners announced
Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce celebrates the best of local business

The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce held their twenty-third annual Chair's Gala, featuring the Business Achievement Awards Thursday Nov 8nd, 2018 at The Four Points by Sheraton Kingston. Over 310 guests attended the gala, which celebrates the success of local business in nine categories.

The winners were:

Innovation Award (Sponsored by Kingston Destination Group): KEYS Job Centre

Tourism/Hospitality Award (Sponsored by Tourism Kingston & Kingston Accommodation partners): Improbable Escapes Inc.

New Business of the Year: (Sponsored by Wilkinson & Company LLP): Fab-Cut Systems Inc.

Small Business of the Year, 1-10 Employees: (Sponsored by Shorelines Casino Thousand Islands): Active Orthopedic Solutions.

Medium Business of the Year, 11-34 Employees (Sponsored by Four Points by Sheraton Kingston): Auto Service Kingston

Large Business of the Year, 34 plus Employees: (Sponsored by YourTV): Diamond Hotels Management Inc.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year (Sponsored by Kingston Economic Development Corporation): Jordan Milani, iGuide

Business Person of the Year (Sponsored by Collins Barrow Chartered Accountants): Rick Kramer, MicroAge Kingston

Chair's Award (Sponsored by The Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce) Nancy Cardinal, Digigraphics

Local businesses are nominated by their customers, clients, staff and peers for the annual Business Achievement Awards. A group of peers from the Kingston business community evaluates each nomination through such criteria as customer and employee relations, business growth, business standards and ethics, and community involvement.

Award winner details:

Innovation Award: KEYS Job Centre

KEYS Job Centre is a community-based organization with expertise in employment services. Their over 30 programs include helping youth and students, assisting mature workers, immigrants, job seekers, persons with disabilities, as well as employers. KEYS Job Centre has been serving communities in Eastern Ontario since 1983 and have grown to employ a staff of over 70 employees in five locations including in Kingston, Gananoque, Elgin and Smith Falls.

Tourism/Hospitality Award: Improbable Escapes Inc.

Improbable Escapes is Kingston's very first escape room experience! Since opening our doors on June 25th, 2015, we've grown alongside the Kingston community; originally a two-woman operation, Improbable Escapes has evolved into a team of seventeen artists, designers, and performers. Opening with two experiences, our facility now offers four indoor escape rooms and two outdoor adventures with a fifth indoor game coming this year. Our community partnerships have allowed us to bring gamification to events, museums and historic Kingston landmarks like Fort Henry National Historic Site, Bellevue House National Historic Site, the Military Communications and Electronics Museum and more!

New Business Award: Fab-Cut Systems Inc.

Fab-Cut Systems is a family owned business owned by Rene & Laurie Barnes. They officially started the business Jan 2/17 with 5 employees. Today they have 10 full-time, 2 part-time employees plus 2 transitional military veterans working out of 616 and 624 Justus Drive locations. Fab-Cut is focused in manufacturing CNC plasma cutting tables designed to meet customer's needs in North America. They are constantly working on introducing new features and designs to make sure customers have the most

versatile systems available. Fab-Cut's sales mostly consist of leads developed using a strong social media and internet marketing focus.

Small Business Award: Active Orthopedic Solutions

Active Orthopedic Solutions Inc. was founded in 2006, by an Occupational Therapist, who identified that Orthotic/Bracing services in Kingston were lacking as a result of the closure of the Orthotics & Prosthetics Department, St Mary's of the Lake Hospital. They have two full services clinics and two satellite operations. At the flagship clinic, they fabricate orthoses/ braces for the entire human body and their new Providence Care Hospital clinic provides services to both in/out patient populations. They specialize in the fields of orthoses/bracing, custom footwear, Diabetic ulcer management, compression/Lymphedema garments, mobility aids and devices to increase independence with daily living.

Medium Business: Auto Service Kingston

Auto Service Kingston opened in September of 2012. Their business has grown rapidly while building solid first-name basis relationships with their clients. They have expanded from two to eleven employees and from three to nine service bays at their new location. At Auto Service Kingston they strive to be their clients' first call; whether their vehicles are due for maintenance, a set of tires, or broken down on the highway. Even if it is something they have to go to another shop for, such as a windshield, bodywork, or a recall at the dealer, they will guide them through the repair process.

Large Business Award: Diamond Hotel Management Inc.

Diamond Hotels Management Inc. operates properties in Kingston and Sault Ste Marie, Ontario, employing 260 people (based on seasonality). Our brands include the Delta Hotels by Marriott Kingston Waterfront, AquaTerra, Holiday Inn Express & Suites Kingston, Holiday Inn Express Sault Ste Marie and Ramada by Wyndham Kingston Hotel & Conference Centre. Exceeding the expectations of corporate, group and leisure guests has been the core pillar of Diamond Hotels' approach to hospitality since 1991. Our award winning properties and dedicated teams are proud to offer well-appointed guest rooms, leading meeting, conference and event spaces, exceptional dining and state-of-the-art recreation facilities.

Young Entrepreneur Award: Jordan Milani, iGuide

A little over 5 years ago, I decided to start my own business. When I take the time to reflect on that choice, I realize that I could have never known how much effort it would take to get me where I am today, running a growing real estate marketing service as my second business venture. My first two

years as an entrepreneur were spent as a video producer before transitioning and refocusing my efforts to launch iGuide Kingston back in January 2016. Since our start, we've been blessed with continual growth and adoption by the local real estate market for our technology and services, providing our company with a proper foundation to build something innovative and impactful in an ever changing digital landscape.

Business Person Award: Rick Kramer, MicroAge Kingston

Rick Kramer is a lifelong Kingstonian who has owned MicroAge since 2010. Between 2012 and 2017, Federal Government procurement changes resulted in a loss of \$1.1 million in annual sales. MicroAge maintained top line revenue through new revenue streams, nearly doubled the workforce, and was able to increase net profits by over 350%. 2018 Awards for MicroAge include one of the 50 IT Companies in Canada and a ranking of 357 of the top 500 worldwide. Community and Charity in Kingston includes supporting Compassion Child for 8 years, 100 Men Charity for 3 years. Rick has also served as Board member for the Mess Studio and has produced annual donations to the UFKF, Homebase Housing, Junior Hockey Teams while offering paid time off for staff to volunteer during work hours

Chair's Award:

Chamber Chair Melody Knott chose Nancy Cardinal, Co-Owner, Digigraphics

Nancy's continuous and consistent generosity spreads across a genre of local events, business partnerships, charities and community awareness such as; Buy Local, sponsoring celebrate philanthropy, supporting AFP, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce (GKCC, United Way), Operation Red Nose, Kingston Pride, Mental Health and The Kingston Community Health Centre's Anti Bullying Campaign and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Kingston's local initiatives. She has contributed to Shoe Box filling/giving, Mademoiselle, and The CIBC Run for the Cure and more. Having this support system and the goal of healthy living helped in her creating a not for profit/co-op style women's exercise class and healthy connections club, where all women are warmly welcomed, hence the name "Connect Fit Club" Finally, she has contributed and supported Reid and Ben's Halloween Blood Drive for radio station 989 THE DRIVE.