

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Lindsey Solomon, Communications Manager

lindsey@mountainbizworks.org

Eleven Entrepreneurs of Color Welcomed into Fourth Catalyst Cohort

ASHEVILLE, NC (October 27, 2022) — Mountain BizWorks' Catalyst Cohort is an inclusive entrepreneurship program to provide ongoing business and leadership skills-development for Entrepreneurs of Color. Last week, the program's third cohort graduated and the fourth cohort began their 12-month journey together.

Catalyst Cohort participants spend a year embedded in a peer advisory group facilitated by Entrepreneur in Residence, Jeremiah Robinson. In addition, participants have access to one-on-one mentoring, expert speakers, \$2,000 to use towards the cost of business development services, and other opportunities for transformational learning.

This month, after a highly competitive process, the Catalyst Cohort program welcomed 11 business owners into its fourth cohort. The participating entrepreneurs include:

- **Tessa Wilson of Contessa Aesthetics:** offers on-location hair and wedding makeup for weddings and special events.
- **Maria Florencia Schilling of Folk Saints:** produces "dulce de leche", a popular milk jam from South America.
- **Traci Freeze of Healed Skin and Candle Co.:** a plant-based skincare company that specializes in making massage candles, body butters, and sugar scrubs & more. HSC uses earth derived natural ingredients that aim to nourish & help heal your skin.
- **Patricia Waters of Chill Cereal Bar:** a catering company, providing a selection of cereals, milk, and toppings for clients to enjoy.
- **Nicole Johnson of Beginner's Mind PLLC:** provides online-based mental health service that assists adults on a journey toward emotional and relational health and wellness.

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- **Bobby Richardson of Black Bear Lock & Security:** a modern day Locksmith and Security Systems installer providing comprehensive security services that incorporate physical locks, security alarms, and cameras to protect homes and businesses property.
- **Jessica Bowman of Black Mountain Cider + Mead:** crafts dry cider and session mead from local apples and honey in an old furniture factory nestled among the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western NC.
- **Kristen Muñoz of Moon Girl Glass:** focuses on hand blown glass tableware, ornaments, jewelry, hummingbird feeders and lighting
- **CJ Barnwell of cjLights:** offers lighting and visual media design services, from theatrical, concert, and event lighting and projection/video design services to visual media content.
- **Elizabeth Soler of Rock Your Notebook:** provides quality hand-stitched notebooks for everyone to journal, plan, and document their lives on a daily basis.
- **Ricardo Tajeda of Show and Tale Creative:** a creative agency that provides unique, high-quality graphic design, photography, print, and blog writing services under one roof.

“There is a heightened sense of responsibility that comes from being in the Catalyst Cohort,” shared Jeremiah Robinson, Catalyst Entrepreneur in Residence. “I’m excited to have the opportunity to work with such amazing people doing amazing things and look forward to seeing them think bigger to stretch beyond their boundaries, achieving more together.”

Mountain BizWorks also congratulates the six small business owners that graduated from Cohort Three: Shammah Waller of Speed Snaps, Saeah Wood of Otterpine LLC, Nakisha Marvels of Cream Works, Bruce Waller of Kairos Carolina Digital, Neomi Negrón of Buggy Pops, and Jarika Johnson of Asheville Coffee Tours.

For more information about the Multicultural Catalyst Program and the Catalyst Cohort, visit MountainBizWorks.org/Catalyst.

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About Mountain BizWorks

Mountain BizWorks provides learning opportunities, coaching, and financing to emerging and established small businesses in Western North Carolina. We proudly create access to capital and support the local entrepreneurial spirit, in spite of barriers to traditional resources. We turn the dream of business ownership into a reality. For more information, visit mountainbizworks.org.