2020 Year in Review

Congratulations! 2020 is in the review mirror!!! While the challenges of this past year have impacted us all differently, there is no question we have all been tested personally and professionally... but you did it! YOU PASSED! We are so very proud of YOU.

It has been our honor to walk with clients as they navigated unprecedented changes, and we are so very grateful for the volunteers, coaches, mentors and investors who rolled up their sleeves as well, and gave so generously to help our community of women.

Our Athena Leadership series ended with a session on celebration, noting the importance of looking back and reflecting on what was accomplished, how we have grown personally and professionally, and expressing commitment to transforming into what might be.

"The Athena celebration isn’t chiefly about happiness or hoopla, though. It is simply about being together to mark something important to the group."

This year-end review aims to do just that. We’ve compiled highlights from our programming and clients, and included a preview of what we have planned for 2021. We hope you enjoy this look back at all we have accomplished together, and because we believe in the power of celebration, please send us your testimonials so we can continue to celebrate and support YOU in 2021 and beyond!

Thank you for being a part of our weVENTURE WBC community.
Kathryn, Jeannette, Kyle, Susan, Amber and Kathy
2019-2020 Program Outcomes*

654 UNIQUE Clients served TOTAL. Counseling, education and group trainings

8 NEW businesses launched and clients created 86 NEW jobs

Assisted 119 businesses with accessing private funding or applying for federal loans and relief programs

308 clients attended our 21 COVID response webinars May-September, and we have formed 5 Peer Groups to help support businesses affected by the pandemic

280 unique clients received 1:1 counseling for a total of 895 hours of direct counseling. 27% COVID specific and 73% general business support of which 84% are female and 16% are male clients

30 IGNITE 360 clients graduated from the program in 2019-20, up from 21 in 2018-19. 18 sponsored by CARES funding at no cost to them

454 individuals registered for 2020 Virtual IMPACT Summit and a dozen watch parties were hosted

7 GEMS program graduates and 12 emerging leaders graduated from the ATHENA Leadership Program

*our SBA program year runs Oct-Sep
weVENTURE WBC in The News

**Working From Home with Kids During COVID**

**TC Palm op-ed by Kathryn Rudloff, May 7, 2020**

My working from home has perhaps been harder on my toddler. He is too young to understand why even though I am home, I can’t give him 100% of my attention. It feels like I break his heart each time I say, “In a minute. Money has to…”

While my job has been extremely accommodating, managing a remote team, spending processes and plans, and navigating the uncertainty of the future have definitely been a challenge. Still, I find the work rewarding and energizing. As a local partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration, weVENTURE is in the forefront of helping businesses through this crisis.

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**weVENTURE WBC Awards Large Grant from CARES Funding**

**Viera Voice, Jun. 15, 2020**

In normal times, weVENTURE is focused on helping small businesses launch and grow. So, during a crisis like this, it’s a little bit of a pivot because we really want to help existing businesses sustain through this crisis. So, we offer one-to-one coaching and consultation with either our own staff business coaches or we have a team of subject matter experts and Florida Tech faculty, who will meet with clients one-on-one.” said Kathryn Rudloff, the weVENTURE executive director.

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**weVENTURE WBC Announces Winners of 2020 Women Who Rock Awards**

**Florida Tech News, Jun. 30, 2020**

weVENTURE Announces Winners of 2020 Women Who Rock Awards

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**Shopping Local has Ripple Effects**

**Florida Today op-ed by Kathryn Rudloff, Nov. 19, 2020**

In normal times, the flexibility of owning their own business is a big reason these women are able to juggle so well. But even supermoms need support — and they may be entering one of the most challenging times they will ever face.

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**weVENTURE WBC Hosts Virtual IMPACT Summit**

**Space Coast Daily, Aug. 10, 2020**

Virtual event provides inspiration for "mompreneurs".

**Florida Today op-ed by Kathryn Rudloff, Aug. 25, 2020**

Making it easy to Shop Local Article in Nov.

**Everything Brevard, Nov. 24, 2020**

The holiday shopping season is often the most profitable time of year for many small businesses, especially in retail. However, this year it is quite literally make or break for many small local businesses. We have heard from so many clients that their ability to survive into 2021 and beyond depends on how well they do this holiday season.

So how can you help?

I know in my heart many of us want to support local businesses, but it may be a challenge this year to shop in person if you are choosing to avoid the risk of gathering in public places. Additionally, it takes time that many of us don’t have to search for local businesses selling what you are looking for online. It is easier to just go to Amazon.com or a similar site and do a quick search for what you need. However, if you feel the same way we do about supporting local business and our local economy, it’s worth taking the time to shop local — whether in person or online.
Virtual IMPACT Summit 2020

Something truly incredible happened the last week in August. Hundreds of women - local entrepreneurs, business leaders and even national thought leaders - all came together through virtual meeting technology and socially distant watch parties to receive a healthy dose of inspiration and motivation - at a time when we all needed it most.

The IMPACT Summit, hosted annually by weVENTURE WBC, historically attracts hundreds of women every year to a local venue to network and learn. Since that sort of in-person, elbow-rubbing event was impossible this year, weVENTURE WBC found a unique way to continue the legacy while pivoting to a virtual event.

The new format turned out to be a blessing, allowing women to access the content long after the event premiere and recruiting five of the highest-level national speakers the event has ever experienced.

Takeaways from the event were pertinent - not only to women - but to all people currently struggling with the challenges of everyday life during a pandemic.

Liz Sara, chair of the National Women's Business Council, a resource to the U.S. Congress and Executive Branch on behalf of female business owners, discussed initiatives currently under way to help female entrepreneurs - access to capital, increasing patents for female investors and making national business resources more available to businesswomen in rural communities.

Sandra Shpilberg, author of the bestselling book “New Startup Mindset”, discussed the secrets to creating a profitable company, while dispelling some myths that hold female entrepreneurs back - like feeling the need to have a partner, and the "real" ways we can define success for ourselves and our business.

Monique Picou, a 30-year corporate veteran - having held leadership positions in global companies such as Sam's, Walmart and Proctor & Gamble - talked about the roles that women can [and should] play at every stage in their careers. A summary of Picou's words of wisdom? "Find your seat, leverage your seat, and set the table for others. Be a she-ro".

Gen. Ann Dunwoody, our nation's first female four-star general, took some time during the Summit to talk about the personal courage it takes to "do the right thing", even when it may not be popular. "When you walk by a mistake, you set a lower standard [with your inaction]," she reminded us all.

The Summit concluded with actionable advice from keynote speaker Lisa Dinhofer, known as "The Crisis Tamer". A specialist in the area of navigating trauma, her words rang especially true during this time of chronic uncertainty and emotional fatigue. "Right now, we are experiencing a time of constant adaptation to change, making many of us feel helpless, powerless. We have crisis fatigue from being in constant survival mode. However, there is such a thing as post-traumatic growth", she said. "Creating meaningful connections, participating in gratitude, nature dosing and connecting to something larger than yourself are just some of the ways to go about creating meaning in your life and help your perspective in current times".

2020 Virtual IMPACT Summit Videos are now available on YouTube!
2020 Women Who Rock Awards

Due to the continued uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and out of an abundance of caution, weVENTURE decided not to hold an in-person Women Who Rock awards ceremony this year. Instead, we decided to surprise the 2020 award winners, delivering their awards to their homes or place of business, while maintaining social distance protocols and having a little fun along the way!

Excellence in Mentorship Award - Erin Mitchell, Collins Aerospace

Erin has mentored hundreds of students grades k-12 as part of a robotics program called "FIRST Robotics" and "FIRST Lego Leagues". She also happens to be the Chief Financial Officer for Reinvented Magazine, so she and Caeley Looney are the dynamic duo focused on supporting the next generation of women in STEM.

Female Small Business Owner of the Year Award - Jeannetta Johnson, Little Folks Child Care AND Michelle Waldorf, Busy Bears Preschool Academy

This year we honored two childcare facilities, because these two women not only run successful businesses that employ people, but the service they provide empowers so many other women to pursue their careers - creating this economic ripple effect in our community.

Both women are known for their quality care, expertise and support they provide.

Women in the Workplace Champion Award - Lisa Steffen, Collins Aerospace

Collins Aerospace has numerous women in leadership positions and about 45% of local manufacturing talent is female, much higher than the industry average of 29%. Collins has done a great job prioritizing diversity and providing opportunities in the workplace. Lisa Steffen is their Melbourne Site Manager.

Dr. Mary Helen McCay STEM Award - Caeley Looney, Reinvented Magazine and L3Harris

Caeley is the spearhead of Reinvented Magazine, a magazine that encourages young women to explore their passions for STEM. As an engineer at L3Harris, she is both working in the high tech world, and thinking ahead to help pave the way for the next generation of women.

Zonta Yellow Rose Award for Excellence in Community Service - Cindy Mitchell, Salvation Army Domestic Violence Shelter

Cindy has been program director for the Salvation Army Domestic Violence Shelter since 2004. She has mentored and helped hundreds of women over the years, and trains police officers to recognize physical signs of abuse that can be documented and presented as evidence.

Watch the hilarious award delivery video HERE
Directory of Women-Owned Businesses

This year, weVENTURE has made it easy for you to #ShopLocal and #ShopSmall this holiday season and all year long. We have compiled a free searchable directory of almost 300 women-owned businesses in Brevard, Indian River and St. Lucie Counties to help you easily find and support local female entrepreneurs. While this directory will live as a free resource on our website all year long, we have also produced a special Digital Magazine Edition where you are sure to find something for everyone on your list. We also created "Women Entrepreneurs We Mean Business" stickers for registrants to proudly display.
Client Testimonials

Meghan Wolfgram - IGNITE 360® Graduate
When Meghan first joined weVENTURE, she was navigating business growing pains, and was the only employee at SwiftPaws. By the end of 2020, SwiftPaws was a team of six employees, with a 300% growth rate in gross revenue, all whilst maintaining their mission of 100% assembly and fulfillment done locally, here in Brevard.

Christel Reaves - IGNITE 360® Graduate
Christel joined the IGNITE 360® Program to build her business leadership capabilities. Since joining the program, she has not only grown as a business owner, but also in confidence. The IGNITE mentors were there to define and walk her through an effective hiring process, and Connected Class just hired their third employee and saw a 270% increase in sales.
After a third layoff, I was tired of being limited by and at the mercy of some company for my income. **So, I decided to forge my own path.** That’s when I reached out to weVENTURE, which was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I initially attended the Launch Your Venture class, which gave a high level overview of starting a business. **The mentoring, coaching, support, accountability, information, networking, and encouragement from other entrepreneurs was invaluable and just what I needed.** weVENTURE gave me the tools and the confidence to successfully launch my business, and continues to support me and my endeavors.

**With weVENTURE, I feel like I’m part of the community; part of something bigger.** It’s women, just like me, who have a dream, who are taking control of their own future, who are building businesses that excite them and solving problems in their community. Women supporting women.

Because of weVENTURE, I am happy to say, I am Deneen Edwards, Personal Financial Management Specialist and CEO of DAE Time Solutions. We focus on your finances, so you can focus on life. Please check out my website, daetimesolutions.com.

**DENEEN EDWARDS - WEVENTURE GRADUATE**
weVENTURE WBC has lots of exciting programming planned for 2021, including new Peer Groups being formed to support c-suite professional women and CEOs, working moms, and start-ups.

We are starting the year off with a Strong Coffee Strong Women 3-Part Series on how to become a certified woman-owned business.

Then, March is Women’s History Month and we are excited to again honor hard-working, deserving women in our community. The virtual event will take place March 23.

weVENTURE WBC strives to be the leading voice and resource for professional women.

Emerging female leaders will want to register for the Athena Leadership Development Program beginning in April. Stay tuned for details about the 2021 IMPACT Summit which will take place in August.
A special thank you to our League of Extraordinary Investors who help make all of our programming possible!

Josh Adams, Rock Paper Simple
Julie Braga, Marriott Residence Inn
Bernadette Castro, Castro Properties
Florida Insurance Hub
Beth Gitlin
Stacia Glavas
Iris Graham, Millefiori Medical Skin Rejuvenation
Dawn Mays, Call One, Inc.
Sandy Michelson, ZONTA of Melbourne

Karen Montas, Johnson & Montas, P.A.
Todd Pokrywa, The Viera Company
Wendy Romeu, Alluvionic
Kathryn Rudloff, weVENTURE
Betty Lou Steen-Clarke, weVENTURE Board of Advisors
Peter Tesch, Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, Inc.
Bobbi Whitmore, Bobbi’s at Parkside
Jenna Williams, Harmony Senior Living Advisors