

Changing the Face of Business

2019 Report to Our Donors

RoHo - WEV's 2019 Business of the Year is Making a Difference in Kenya



*Caleigh Hernandez
Founder & CEO of RoHo*

If success means lifting people out of poverty, providing fair work conditions, empowering women, and making beautiful, high quality products, then it's easy to understand why WEV named RoHo the 2019 Business of the Year.

RoHo Founder and CEO Caleigh Hernandez grew up in a low-income family and the frustration she felt seeing the lack of opportunities available to her parents motivated her to find a way to reduce poverty. As a college student working for a nonprofit in rural Uganda she began a journey that has financially changed the lives of hundreds of people, mostly women, in Kenya. Her company, RoHo, provides fair paying jobs to skilled artisans that takes them out of poverty and brings stability to their households.

The idea for RoHo came to Caleigh as she walked through a dusty local craft market. "I remember turning and looking over my shoulder because something sparkling caught my eye," said Caleigh. "It was a pair of these beautiful beaded leather sandals. They really struck me because it was such a contrast to what was all around me. At that moment, I knew these were more than just a pair of shoes. Looking at them I saw an opportunity to break a cycle of poverty."

The following summer, Caleigh returned to East Africa on a quest to find the highest quality sandal manufacturers in the area. Her search led to Lydia, a Kenyan woman entrepreneur and single mother who spoke very little English. Despite the language barrier, the two women had an immediate connection as they bonded over beautiful shoes. Lydia told Caleigh about the 42 artisans she worked with and the intricacies of sandal making, and she was excited by the prospect of working with Caleigh to expand her business.



Caleigh with artisans who now make a fair wage thanks to RoHo.

Caleigh returned to the US with a business idea, a way to produce her products and the passion and motivation to start a company however, she was very aware that she was missing the business knowledge to make it successful. In 2017, she received a scholarship that allowed her to take WEV's Smart Entrepreneurial Training (SET) course.

"SET walked me through every step of the business process from hiring to marketing to financials to developing a quality business plan to seek funding. I particularly struggled with gaining an understanding of the financials, but my fears were mitigated through a brilliant excel sheet, class discussions and speakers from the business community. The business knowledge I now have helps me to actually make sound decisions for RoHo rather than just praying and hoping it works."

Caleigh currently participates in Thrive and credits her business consultant, Jeff Alkazan, for teaching her to be a leader, not just in her business, but also in all her career goals. "I am becoming a change maker in the ethical brand space, not just in my own business and that helped elevate my ambitions and goals to a whole other level. WEV's programs and support have changed not only my business, but my perception of myself as a legitimate business woman."



*The beautiful beaded sandals
that started it all.*

Today RoHo sells exquisite handcrafted beaded leather sandals, jewelry and purses online and in twenty boutiques all over the US as they continue to be committed to ethical work and economic empowerment. "Lydia and her artisans have earned record profits so they can provide for themselves and their families. We're working to break the cycle of poverty by providing opportunities that help people help themselves."

WEV PROGRAMS 2018-19

Beginning Q4 2018 - YTD

94

English Explore

Pre-business training course clients

36

Spanish Explore

Pre-business training course clients

101

English Smart Entrepreneurial Training (SET)

Business planning & development course graduates

28

Spanish Smart Entrepreneurial Training (SET)

Business planning & development course graduates

86

THRIVE

Long-term business growth consulting program clients

13

Loans

Total Number Approved Loans YTD 2019

Meet the WEV Loan Team



The WEV loan team (left to right): Marta Quintero, Marni Brook, and Stephanie Martinez,

Marni Brook

Director of Lending

Marni joined the WEV staff in 2018, however prior to that she spent many years on the WEV Board of Directors. She has over 24 years experience in community banking and lending in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and her passion is working with small business owners to help them achieve success and sustainability. Marni focuses on growing the loan program by increasing awareness, deepening relationships with community partners and communicating the importance of capital in establishing and growing small businesses.

Marta Quintero

Bilingual Loan Officer

Marta has 20 years of banking experience serving both small community banks and larger financial institutions from Goleta to Oxnard. She is very excited about assisting Latino entrepreneurs in becoming educated and successful as small business owners in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

Stephanie Martinez

Loan Program Assistant

Stephanie has over 20 years of experience in the administrative field in various settings such as non-profit and mortgage lending. She has a deep desire to fulfill and exceed her personal and professional goals, and to help WEV clients to do the same. Stephanie works closely with loan clients to help them through every step of the loan process.

WEV LOANS

Kind Cup Getting Ready to Launch



Christine Brown
Founder & CEO of Kind Cup

How many of us have used a product for years, knowing it could be better but never doing anything with our brilliant idea to improve it? Christine Brown cannot relate. After five years of using a silicone menstrual cup that she felt was poorly designed, she decided to make a better one. With hard work and determination, she has turned her idea into a business. Patent pending, Kind Cup launches on Nov. 22nd having gotten through the final pre-launch stretch with a \$25,000 loan from WEV.

As the founder and CEO of Kind Cup, Christine's goal is to produce a product that exceeds all others in the market while also empowering women and being a positive influence socially and environmentally. To that end, the company plans to provide access to their reusable, 100% medical grade silicone menstrual cup to women traditionally lacking in reliable menstrual products by teaming with select partners, such as Direct Relief, to distribute them. Kind Cup is also working to minimize their environmental footprint through every phase of their production by using earth-friendly linen bags, the highest quality raw materials, local print shops and sustainably sourced paper.

Christine, a sixth-generation Carpinterian attended Mount Holyoke, an all-women's college, where she was supported by brilliant women and individuals who championed change and success through hard work and community. When she signed up for WEV's Smart Entrepreneurial Training class in 2016 she was looking for that same kind of supportive network.

"I knew that to succeed in this venture, one that requires an endless list of so many different skills including medical device design, raw and manufactured material properties, FDA and regulatory requirements, patents and trademarks, marketing, and web design, that I would need to tap into the type of community I had in college on a local level," said Christine. "I found that in WEV."

When trying to get funding for her new venture, Christine ran into the usual issues a new business faces when dealing with traditional banks. "I went through the process of an application with one bank, a few calls and discussions with others and they all gave me the run-around or their typical response that they required 3 years of tax returns. In the end, only WEV was able to take a holistic approach in evaluating my business and truly provide the financial support for me to launch. I'm sure, sadly, that there are plenty of other businesses that never launch simply because they weren't able to find that kind of support.

"I'm grateful to WEV and their supporters for believing in me and the vision of Kind Cup," said Brown. "Through that support, we are now about to realize what we set out to achieve so many years ago of creating a new standard for cup design, quality, and accessibility."



Kind Cup's patent pending design is easier to use and more body-friendly than traditional cups.

Talk of the Town Moves to Bigger & Better Location



Tami Mayorga
Owner, Talk of the Town Salon

Talk of the Town Hair Studio is a family-owned business founded by Tami Mayorga's grandparents who for more than 30 years ran a traditional hair salon with the philosophy that every client should leave feeling like a million bucks. Tami has maintained that customer service approach while she transitioned the business into a hair restoration and hair extension boutique that has been so successful she is now moving her second location in Santa Barbara to a bigger facility with the help of a \$90,000 loan from WEV.

Tami was inspired to specialize in hair restoration after a family member was diagnosed with breast cancer. "That made me want to help people who had hair loss, especially with cancer,

because that hit home for me," Tami said. "We are passionate about providing our clients with a friendly, personal, and empathetic touch at each stage of the journey."

There are many reasons for hair loss but the message of Talk of the Town is that you do not have to live with it. They offer a number of safe, proven, and effective hair loss remedies and tailor their recommendations for each client to meet their exact needs. The salon offers medical wigs, human hair wigs, and more than 10 different methods of hair extensions for all hair types as well as treatments that help grow natural hair and laser hair treatments.

With her new direction for the business, Tami was also ready to take the third generation family business practices that included keeping books the old-fashioned way, with pen and paper, to the next level. She credits WEV's RESET class with helping her get her systems modernized and giving her more control over the numbers. "My business was running fine and was profitable but, I really had no understanding that I could be doing it better and easier. The class gave me more understanding of the financial aspects of cash flow, reserve management and organization. I might still have an accountant doing my books but I am involved and aware of what the numbers are which lets me be more in control."



Tami (right) with 18-year-old client Berit Ashby, who suffers from a disorder that causes hair loss.

Knowing that her business was thriving and ready to grow it, Tami applied for a traditional bank loan and faced the rigid requirements that make it difficult for small business owners to be approved. Though the bank denied her because she'd recently purchased a home which made her debt to income ratio out of their acceptable range, WEV was able to take a more comprehensive view of Tami and her business and see her potential for tremendous success.

Tami is now getting additional support as a member of Thrive, and is putting the \$90,000 loan to good use as she moves her Santa Barbara business into a new 748 square foot location on Carrillo Street. "WEV has empowered me to build and grow my business by helping to provide the tools, education, capital and support I needed. I am confident that we will continue to grow and exceed our goals and could have not done or do so without WEV's Thrive and loan programs and the help of everyone involved."

Applying for a WEV Loan

Someone might be a good fit for WEV's loan program if they:

- Have a written business plan.
- Have either completed business training (such as WEV's SET program) or already have business experience.
- Do not qualify for a bank loan but have filed taxes for the most recent year and own at least 51% of their business.
- Are a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and has resided within Santa Barbara County or Ventura County for at least one year.

For more information or to apply for a WEV loan visit www.wevonline.org/loans

WEV LOANS BY THE NUMBERS

2019 YTD Approvals

Number of WEV Loans Approved

13

Total Amount Loaned

\$490,000

Average Loan Amount

\$67,690

Maximum Loan Amounts

Business Startups - up to

\$25,000

Business Expansion- up to

\$150,000

New League of Extraordinary Women member Cynthia Torres is Giving Back



Cynthia Torres
CEO of New Dawn Counseling
& Consulting, Inc.

Cynthia Torres is one of 11 special members of the League of Extraordinary Women who represent the success of WEV in a very significant way. Cynthia is a WEV client business owner who has also become a WEV donor. As the CEO of New Dawn Counseling and Consulting, Inc., a company she founded in 2016, Cynthia has built a business that is so successful she will be inducted into WEV's Million Dollar Club at the upcoming Small Business Celebration and she has decided to give back to the organization to help others women reach their goals.

"I decided to join the League at the 2019 Empowerment is Priceless breakfast," said Cynthia. "Listening to the speakers, I got really excited about helping other women succeed and creating better opportunities for their lives and their families. I have always believed in the power of sharing, so knowing the impact the WEV program has had for me makes me want to share it with others."

"I am a Psychotherapist by trade, and had not had any formal business training until I started working with my Thrive Business Advisor this past year. I love the idea of having someone with more experience in the business world who can guide and support me as I take the company to the next level."

Migrating from Colombia 20 years ago, Cynthia came to the United States to pursue her Master's degree as a Marriage and Family Therapist at California Lutheran University. Today her company provides culturally appropriate mental health and wellness services to about 1,250 clients and has 19 full time employees. "What makes us unique is that 90% of our employees are bilingual-bicultural in Spanish and we provide 80% of our services to the Hispanic community."

A big believer in the power of community, Cynthia values the one WEV provides her. "My Thrive business advisor has connected me with other women entrepreneurs who are becoming my 'tribe'. I value spending time with them, and learning from all of their experiences. Now as a member of the League, I am expanding my connection to WEV and looking forward to supporting others in that same way."

Cynthia encourages other women to dream big and not let anyone discourage them. "What are the odds?," she asks. "I am a Hispanic, single mother of two with an accent, and no business expertise... if I can do it, they can too!"



Cynthia with fellow League members Nicki Parr, Claudia Cordova Rucker and Lisa Fabrega at a recent League event.

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