

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: (718) 960-8806
bronx.sbdc@lehman.cuny.edu



Small Business is Big Business and It's Happening Right Here in the Bronx!

Bronx, NY - The Bronx Small Business Development Center (SBDC) proudly hosted its 2nd Annual Celebration of Success: A Small Business Showcase on Thursday, October 23, 2025. The event brought together a vibrant crowd of Bronx entrepreneurs, community leaders, elected officials, and business supporters, all gathered to celebrate our small business awardees on their achievement.

The showcase highlighted the transformative power of small business ownership and its essential role in fueling the borough's economic growth. Attendees experienced a lively mix of networking opportunities, exhibitor resource tables, professional headshots, and B2B connections, along with the recognition ceremony, inspiring keynote address, and an innovative AI presentation designed to help small businesses learn tools to thrive in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

Distinguished Guests & Participants

The celebration was graced by an esteemed lineup of elected officials, Lehman campus officials & faculty, our partners, along with NYSBDC leadership, that reflected the borough's strong support for entrepreneurship. NY State Senator Luis Sepúlveda, Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson, Assembly Member Landon C. Dais, and NYSBDC State Director Sonya Smith all joined the event to honor the achievements of Bronx small business owners.

Academic leaders from Lehman College reaffirmed the institution's commitment to small business growth. The Provost and Senior Vice President Jorge Silva-Puras was joined by Interim Dean - Kimberly Kendall of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies and the Dean of the School of Business - Dene Hurley, along with other faculty, staff, and students, underscoring Lehman's dedication to innovation and preparing the next generation of entrepreneurs.

The event drew strong support from community and business leaders. Lisa Sorin, President of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce highlighted the power of unity across the borough to advance business initiatives. BIDs, Merchants Associations, and other partners joined the celebration, emphasizing their key role in the Bronx's vibrant ecosystem.

Event Highlights

The program combined networking with learning opportunities designed to support business growth:

- **Keynote Address:** "Driving Change: Building a Business that Serves the Community" by Jason Montalto, CEO of Honda of the Bronx.
- **AI in Action Presentation:** Practical Ways to Power Local Small Business Growth" by Marcelo Rodríguez, Business Developer and Technology Strategist.
- **Professional Headshots, Networking & Resource Connections**
- **Awards Ceremony**

2025 Awardees

LAWAL PROTECTION SERVICES LLC - Client Trust Award



Mohamadou Ouaba has built a journey defined by hard work, trust, and service. After nearly a decade protecting New York communities as a licensed security guard, he founded his own security company, navigating licensing and business challenges with guidance from the Bronx SBDC. Today, he is a trusted presence in the Bronx, committed to excellence and integrity. [More info](#)

MVP LIFEGUARDS LLC - Youth Empowerment Award



Olga Perez - a certified lifeguard instructor and bilingual leader, she has turned her passion for water safety into purpose, training over 200 lifeguards and partnering with schools and city programs. With guidance from the Bronx SBDC, Olga navigated certifications and business growth, creating opportunities for youth and inspiring the next generation. [More info](#)

SPIN & LEARN INC - Rising Star Award



Yasiris Ortiz turned her love for table tennis into a tool for education and empowerment. With guidance from the Bronx Small Business Development Center, she strengthened her business model, expanded to over 30 NYC schools, and inspired more than 10,000 students through movement, focus, and teamwork. [More info](#)

FIX IT WITH PIGGY LLC - Tech Sparks Award



Ashonda Culcleasure - from repairing phones in her living room to empowering the Bronx with tech education, she has turned passion into purpose. With guidance from the Bronx SBDC, Ashonda navigated business planning, legal compliance, and growth, expanding her impact to support youth through tech courses, internships, and community programs. [More Info](#)

BOOST BEAUTY BEYOND SPA LLC - Beauty & Wellness Award



Betzayda David transformed her vision into a sanctuary where beauty, wellness, and emotional balance come together. With guidance and support from the Small Business Development Center, she turned challenges into opportunities, building a thriving spa experience rooted in over 14 years of expertise and her philosophy of "Healthy Skin for Everyone." [More Info](#)

METROCARE RIDES INC - Start-up Excellence Award



Ebrahim, Virgen, and Abdullah set out to solve a critical problem: the lack of reliable medical transportation for vulnerable neighbors. In 2024, with guidance from the Small Business Development Center, they turned their vision into a community-focused solution delivering safe, compassionate non-emergency medical transportation across New York City, Westchester, and Yonkers. [More Info](#)

BRONX SPECIAL KIDS - Community Engagement Award



Gisselle Ramirez - Bronx parent and educator co-founded Bronx Special Kids LLC in 2023 to support families of children with disabilities. With guidance from the Bronx SBDC, she turned her vision into a thriving organization offering bilingual workshops, sensory-friendly events, and a hands-on gardening club—creating spaces where every child is celebrated and every parent feels supported. [More info](#)

Sponsors and Partners

This year's celebration was made possible through the generous support of **J.P. Morgan Chase**, official sponsor of the event.

Partners and collaborators, including the **U.S. Small Business Administration**, **NYC Department of Small Business Services**, **Community Capital New York**, **TD Bank**, **Pursuit**, **Spring Bank**, **United Capital Source**, and **Verizon**, provided entrepreneurs with vital resources, financing, and mentorship information to their business and the borough's economy.

Inspire. Celebrate. Network. Grow.

The Bronx SBDC team extends its appreciation to all who contributed to making this year's Celebration of Success a memorable and inspiring tribute to the borough's entrepreneurial spirit.