

THE COMMERCE CONNECTION

Brought to you by Venture Access, Harford County's dedicated entrepreneurial entity supporting entrepreneurs in their quest to successfully formulate, launch and grow profitable companies.

POWERED BY THE
HARFORD CHAMBER COUNTY OF COMMERCE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH


HARFORD
COUNTY
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BARRY GLASSMAN, COUNTY EXECUTIVE
LEN FARRISH, DIRECTOR



ENTREPRENEURS SHOWCASE
Taking the Leap:
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Welcome to the September issue of the **The Commerce Connection**, brought to you by Venture Access! This issue features a new face to the Venture Access Community, Boards By Dana! Keep reading to learn how Dana took the leap in making her business dream into a reality!

TAKING THE LEAP Written by Natalie Pixley

"There will always be a million reasons not to do something. Sometimes you just have to take the leap!"

And taking the leap is exactly what Dana Berbenich did in creating Boards by Dana! After several months of creating charcuterie boards for friends and family, Dana turned her passion into a business, officially launching Boards by Dana at the end of October 2021.

Dana has always loved food and entertainment, and being part of an Italian family, charcuterie was always around her. After a 10-year career in HR and relocating to Harford County with her husband in 2018, Dana struggled to find the best next steps. While she loved her career in HR, she wanted time to pursue her passion and meet new people, so she decided to take a job in fragrance sales so she would have the flexibility she wanted. Dana created charcuterie boards for friends and family and shared her creations online, which quickly began to attract social media attention.

Over the summer of 2021, (with a lot of encouragement from her mom and husband!) Dana decided to make her passion into a full-fledged business. The summer was spent creating a strong business plan, securing licensing and certifications, and creating an online presence; all in preparation for Boards by Dana to make its first official sale in late October. By Thanksgiving, another 18 boards were sold and Boards by Dana was exploding on social media, reaching tens of thousands of people.



Boards by Dana built international connections through social media that helped the business expand to where it is now, including charcuterie workshops, parties, non-profit galas and corporate events, coaching, and Dana's latest creation, grazing tables. "I have met so many people and built connections that never would have happened otherwise."

Dana aims to take advantage of this organic growth and take her business full time in the next year. Dana is passionate about spotlighting small business and hopes that Boards by Dana will soon expand into a physical store front that can showcase local artisans, meats and cheeses, and produce. "Sometimes you just have to take the leap. Surprise yourself with what you can do!"

Boards by Dana is a fully licensed and insured woman-owned small business based out of Bel Air, MD, bringing quality, custom charcuterie boards, boxes and grazing experiences right to your home. Please follow Boards by Dana on social media and place an order for your next event or party!

SEPTEMBER SYMPOSIUM: MAINTAINING AN ADA COMPLIANT WEBSITE

Join us on September 28th from 10:00-11:00am for our next symposium; maintaining an ADA compliant website! This webinar features Michael Carico, President and Founder of AbleSpark and will discuss:

- What is ADA website compliance?
- How to I update my website to be compliant?
- How do I maintain ADA compliance?
- And more!

[Register Here!](#)



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FROM HELLOALICE

Check out these [grant opportunities from HelloAlice](#):

- Military/Veteran Owned Businesses
- Restaurant Disaster Relief
- Stacey's Rise Project for Women entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurial Spirit Fund for minority-owned businesses
- Small Business Growth Fund
- And more!



UPCOMING WEBINAR EVENTS

Stay tuned to the [SBDC Online Training calendar](#) to ensure you are up-to-date with the latest educational opportunities!

- [Webinar: Business Insurance 101](#) **9/19** from 1-2:30pm.
- [Webinar: Understanding Financial Statements](#) **9/21** from 2:30-3:30pm.
- [Webinar: Launch your Business with Customer Focused Marketing](#) **10/17** from 2-3pm.



QUICKBOOKS 101

Join the Harford County Economic Development office at The GroundFloor in Havre de Grace for a [QuickBooks introductory seminar](#) led by an industry professional. Doors will be open at 5:30 p.m. for attendees looking to network in person. To attend virtually, email Lisa at lmkrysiak@harfordcountymd.gov AFTER registering.



BUSINESS RESOURCES FOR HISPANIC ENTREPRENEURS



The U.S. Small Business Administration Baltimore District Office and the Latino Economic Development Center are offering a free webinar for Hispanic entrepreneurs! Come hear an overview of the programs and learn about business resources specific to Hispanic-owned businesses.

[Register Here!](#)

HUBZONE CERTIFICATION PROCESS AND PROGRAM UPDATES

Becoming a certified diverse supplier can open your business to receive government and corporate contracts as a part of government efforts to ensure businesses like yours can play a more significant role in our economy. This webinar covers The Historically Underutilized Business Zones Certification. The HUBZone certificate is designed to help sma businesses in urban and rural communities connect with federal contract dollars. Topics include:

- How the HUBZone certification program has changed
- What the program requirements are, and if your business meets them
- How to apply and what the application process looks like

To register click [here](#).





Join the Venture Access community! Our brand new community membership portal is now open! Chat with other community members, ask questions of our resource partners, register for events, and more! Whether you have been a member for some time or are brand-new, please click below to create your account.

Join Our Community

10,000 SMALL BUSINESSES GROWTH PROGRAM

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program is looking for businesses that are poised for growth to join their next cohort! Learn more about the program [here](#).



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