

## Business Spotlight

### FOUR SEASONS FOOTWEAR



JUSTUS LESCHIED; FOUR SEASONS FOOTWEAR

Living in a small town like Dryden, Ontario, local businesses, and their owners can become like family especially if they have been around for 34 years.

It recently became public that Justus Leschied, owner of Four Seasons Footwear would be retiring and closing the well-known shoe store located in the downtown Midtown Square. I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity to sit down with him and chat about how the journey began, the joys and challenges and his reflections of owning and operating the business for more than three decades.

Lil Leschied was the lady that started it all when she purchased the remaining stock from Ed's Shoe Store in Dryden in 1987. She always wanted to own a business so when the opportunity arose, she required some financial assistance to start up. Surprisingly enough, she was able to secure funding through the PACE office, formerly in Ignace and used some personal finances to cover additional costs. Her plan was to grow the business with an ideal location and larger floor space, which happened in 1992 when she moved the store to Whyte Avenue in the Midtown Square. It was this year that Justus partnered with his wife to help with the business and strive to follow its mission statement of 'supplying shoes of quality, comfort and style'.

Their combined commitment was to provide customer service in a professional and caring manner to clientele throughout Northwestern Ontario. With dedicated, loyal staff of many years, the couple was able to meet this commitment and continued to serve Dryden and surrounding communities with quality footwear and impeccable service.

#### Inside This Issue:

New Website Launch.....	2
Business Support.....	3
• RRRF Recovery Fund	
• Loan Programs	
• Community Funder Forums	
Calendar Events.....	3
Mentorship.....	4
Incubation.....	4
Remote Access.....	4
Staff Comments .....	5
NWO Pitch IT.....	6
Board Recruitment.....	6

Lil and Justus enjoyed the many semi-annual trips away to the shoe trade shows to choose the next season's hottest trends and styles, while also learning about marketing with integrity and the importance of proper comfortable footwear for all ages.

In 2003, sadly the beloved Lil passed away leaving behind Justus who continued to successfully operate the Dryden store to date. He kept her dream alive and remained dedicated to providing quality footwear and excellent service to the retail community.

Through the pandemic, the store was forced to close during the ongoing restrictions and lockdowns. Since this type of business requires customers to try on the product, it was difficult to have curbside or a means to purchase online. Justus always believed in face-to-face contact with his customers to provide great customer service. He learned to budget through the pandemic keeping inventory low not knowing when the next lockdown would happen. The pandemic was likely his greatest challenge while being in business. He believed in maintaining a balance between personal life and business to be successful and taking vacation time to rest and rejuvenate so you are always at your best for your customers.



Unfortunately, he has now made the decision with deep regret to close the doors permanently after 34 years and finally retire. He has three children and eight grandchildren that he is looking forward to spending more time with but will miss meeting new people in the store each day. He stated that his job was more than just selling a product, it was meeting a need and he did that with professionalism and integrity. The friendships over the years and loyal support were a great accomplishment for him at Four Seasons.

When I asked him what advice he had for a new business owner he replied that one needed to be critical in thinking, know and respect your competition, maintain balance, and invest in yourself. Dream big but don't let your dream cloud your reality.

It was a pleasure to sit down with Justus during his final month of business and learn the story of Four Seasons Footwear. He will miss his customers dearly and will cherish the many friendships he developed along the way. We congratulate Justus and the staff for their years of serving the community and wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

## A NEW YEAR... A NEW LOOK FOR THE PACE WEBSITE!

The whole team here at PACE are happy to announce the launch of our new website. Our website went live at the end of January 2022, the look and navigation have a fresh new look with Calendar events that feature business webinar sessions for interested businesses, sessions for entrepreneurs looking to start a

business, as well as other business-related series. A new tab was added to include our new programming, such as the PACE Mentorship, Incubation and Remote Access information and application forms.

Several pages are still in progress. Please visit the site and check out our

events calendar or the up-to-date Covid business relief information tab.

We hope you enjoy the site and find the information you are looking for. We would be pleased to receive your comments or suggestions.



# BUSINESS SUPPORT

## Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF)

Due to the ongoing lockdowns to businesses in January, the government announced an extension to the repayment terms for both the Canadian Emergency Business Account (CEBA) and the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF).

The repayment terms have been extended for an additional year to December 31, 2023. If these loans are repaid by December 31, 2023, businesses will benefit from the forgivable portion of these loans of 25% on the first \$40,000 and 50% on the \$20,000 top up portion.

## PACE Loan Programs

**Micro Loan Program** – These loans are available for businesses looking to start up or expand and require between \$500 - \$15,000. The process requires a business plan and application form submission for recommendation to the committee.

**Business Loan Program** – These loans are available for business start up or expansion and require between \$15,001 - \$150,000, however there are circumstances where a loan application can be submitted for up to \$300,000 if eligible criteria is met.

Please visit the PACE website for more information along with the application forms.

[www.pace-cf.on.ca](http://www.pace-cf.on.ca).

## Community Funder Forums

PACE is planning some in person Funder Forums this spring with our various partners to provide information and one on one conversations in our communities. If you are looking to start up a business, need help with a business plan or just want to see what is out there for business support, check our Facebook page and website for upcoming dates and locations.

## PACE Website Calendar Events to Watch For

Check out the series that PARO has scheduled for webinars

- March 9<sup>th</sup> - Business Webinar Series #3 – Your Numbers, Your Story

# Mentorship, Incubation and Remote Access Technology Programs

## PACE Business Mentorship ~ Building Momentum Through a Positive Supportive Circle

**H**elping entrepreneurs and small business owners thrive is our mission.

The business mentorship program directly supports entrepreneurs and small business owners by helping new or existing entrepreneurs gain “lived experience” guidance from seasoned business owners that will assist the new business owner/ entrepreneur to overcome the challenges and hurdles they may face.

The program provides resources and opportunities for new business owners [Mentees] to learn about starting or scaling up a business –from an established or retired business owner [Mentor] who are interested in sharing their knowledge.

If you are interested in becoming a Mentor or a Mentee please visit our website for more information on how to participate.

## PACE Small Business Incubator ~ Empowering Growth

**A**s part of our ongoing commitment to support entrepreneurs in the area, the Small Business Incubator program aims to provide new or existing business owners affordable workspace alongside an opportunity for on-site skill development, business training, and access to the full complement of

business counselling services that PACE provides.

The workspace at the PACE office offers the entrepreneur an accessible place to grow their business in its early stages of development at a reduced rate for rent. The program encompasses training in a variety of business topics for participants to maximize their potential.

For additional information or an application please visit our website: [www.pace-cf.on.ca](http://www.pace-cf.on.ca)

Contact **Kerri Howarth, Program Coordinator** by email: [kerrih@pace-cf.on.ca](mailto:kerrih@pace-cf.on.ca) or by telephone at **PACE at 1 807 221 3293/ Toll Free 1 800 465 5307**

## PACE Remote Access to Technology Program ~ Encouraging Digital Growth

**T**he Remote Access to Technology Program directly supports the evolution of businesses as they adopt new technology that makes online and remote work more effective and profitable.

The Remote Access to Technology Program helps scale those changes by offering financial contribution supporting relevant technology such as:

- Things that help with remote work, things that help keep focus on the core business and/or automation (especially important as your business grows)

- Apps that allow access to your desktop or files when you are away from your desk
- Process and quality control apps or software that help ensure employees are doing tasks correctly
- Or a program or app that helps promote a professional image in your social media marketing

**Please visit our website for more information or an online application**

# Executive Director's Report – Shannon Wogenstahl

I am very excited to have rejoined the PACE team as the Executive Director. It has been a busy few months. We recently held our AGM which was a virtual event again this year. We are very pleased with the number of businesses that we supported with the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund. Our loan portfolio continues to grow as we support new business start ups as well as existing business expansions.

We have partnered with other organizations and are planning seminars as well as a funder's forum again in the spring. Watch for the information on the Youth Enterprise Camp which will be taking place in July in Dryden. This is a great opportunity for our youth to start thinking about being their own boss. It gives them the tools needed to come up with a business idea and bring the product to market during the week-long event.

The staff has continued to give back to communities we serve by donating to the Dryden Christmas Cheer and volunteering at the local food bank. This past year has been very hard for families, and organizations like these are very appreciative for the manpower to assist them to help the community.

As the COVID restrictions start to loosen and spring approaches bringing warmer temperatures we look forward to getting back into the communities we serve.



**SHANNON WOGENSTAHL**

Executive Director



**NOREEN COX**

Business Development Coordinator



**KERRI HOWARTH**

Program Coordinator



**SANDRA OSTMAN**

Administrative Assistant

## PACE Partners with Northwest Ontario Innovations Pitch It Event

The NWO **Pitch IT** competition opened to individuals located within the Kenora and Rainy River Districts to present their business idea, new business start-up and proposed business expansion.

This inaugural event hopes to see entrepreneurs from the Northwestern Ontario Region, it is designed for businesses to pitch their business idea to a panel of Judges and Investors for the chance to win prizes starting at:

**1<sup>st</sup> prize - \$5000 plus a BDO voucher | 2<sup>nd</sup> prize - \$2000 | 3<sup>rd</sup> prize - \$1000**

Applications were accepted from **February 14<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>** and the event itself will be held virtually **on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm CST.**



PACE is a not-for-profit corporation which is funded by Industry Canada FedNor to support Community Economic Development throughout the Patricia region ranging from Pickle Lake to Ignace to Machin. Communities served, in addition are Lac Seul First Nations, Sioux Lookout, Wabigoon Lk First Nation, Dryden and Eagle Lk First Nation.

### **Our expectations are simple.**

#### **Board members must:**

- Commit to a three-year term with the option to renew
- Adhere to the PACE Code of Conduct for board members.
- Attend monthly board meetings
- Actively participate in small business loan making decisions

## **WE NEED YOU TO JOIN OUR BOARD**

PACE is looking for

Energetic, Passionate People to:

- Set financial policy decisions
- Build community networks
- Act as catalysts in the PACE catchment area
- Monitor and measure result of spending

The Board Member Application can be submitted from the PACE website, look for board recruitment under the About tab.

For more information, please contact us at 221-3293

[WWW.PACE-CF.ON.CA](http://WWW.PACE-CF.ON.CA)