

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



**ENTREPRENEUR
SHOWCASE:**

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Celebrate- Page 2**

Welcome to the April issue of the **The Commerce Connection**, brought to you by Venture Access! The content you will find in this month's newsletter appropriately follows the spring theme of growth. Our featured Entrepreneur Showcase business boasts resiliency and expansion since its opening in Summer 2020; we celebrate three new business openings around the county; and enrichment and learning opportunities for businesses are popping up everywhere!

WE'RE ALL IN TO CELEBRATE Written by Heather Murphy

In a recent study by Duke University it was concluded that infants, ages 9 to 15 months, exert 50% more energy in one day than adults! Maybe this has you breathing a sigh of relief that you don't have to question your workout routine and why you couldn't keep up with your kids. But you might also be wondering, "so how do I slow things down"?!

We Rock the Spectrum (WRTS) Kids Gym is the "hidden gym" of Harford County. Tucked back off the road at the base of the Rock Spring Station apartments is the all-inclusive indoor kids gym locally owned by Nikki and Trey Wooton. Featuring sensory-sensitive equipment like swings and a mini zip line it is the perfect place for kids of all abilities and all ages (recommended age 6 months to 10) to burn off energy while having fun in a safe, friendly, and community environment.

The statistics for business failures within the first one to two years tend to trend high, which makes the upcoming two year business anniversary celebration that much sweeter for the Wooton's. The original opening date of April 18th was abruptly thwarted by the worldwide pandemic and national shut downs. "County Council President Patrick Vincenti and Delegate Mike Griffith were absolutely instrumental in helping us to work with the Harford County Health Department to put a plan in place to safely open our facility", commented Nikki. Instead of open play opportunities, they quickly pivoted to private rentals and enacted round-the-clock deep cleaning breaks to ensure safety for all guests. Community, safety, and inclusion has been their focus since the very beginning.



Source: [usnews.com](https://www.usnews.com)

Two years later, the Wooton's credit the family-like relationships and connections they have formed as a positive impact from the pandemic. "COVID-19 helped create more of a community environment for our gym than the image of just another play place", noted Nikki. Their reviews and repeat customers say it all, WRTS is a family atmosphere.

The growth of services and offerings demonstrates the care and investment they put back into the community. Aside from open play session and birthday parties, WRTS now offers a meeting place for local parent groups, mini summer camps, field trip hosting, and special events like Parents Night Out and Toddler Time.

WRTS Forest Hill has also been recognized as a Regional Training Facility by corporate, for which there are only 9 total! This leadership opportunity showcases the successes of Nikki and Trey, providing mentorship for other new franchise owners and to share best practices.

You are invited to celebrate with the WRTS family at their upcoming Anniversary Celebration on 5/28 from 9-4, featuring \$10 one-hour play sessions (highly recommended to sign up), free local food, outdoor vendor fair, special appearances, and MORE!



ENTREPRENEURIAL NEWS, EVENTS, & RESOURCES

OPEN INSTITUTE FOR BLACK WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR EXCELLENCE

This new pilot program launching in Howard County in partnership with Maryland's four Historically Black Colleges and Universities seeks to "[build] an alliance to enable promising, diverse, and disadvantaged women business leaders for a more equitable future".

Applications close May 2, 2022. Visit [TEDCO's website](#) for more information and requirements.



FOURTH FRIDAYS AT THE GROVE

Looking for a way to enjoy the spring and summer weather, get out with the family, and support local? Fourth Fridays is the perfect event for you! Come out to enjoy local food, beverages, and shopping all at Harford County's very own agri-business incubator, The Grove at Harford. Follow their [Facebook](#) for the schedule!

UPCOMING WEBINAR EVENTS

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

- [Webinar: Marketing to Millennials and Gen Z](#) **4/28** from 1-2pm.
Register by 4/27
- [Webinar: Home-Based Businesses...Why?](#) **5/10** from 1-2pm.
Register by 5/9
- [Webinar: Rethinking Employee Benefits and Compensation for Better Talent Acquisition and Retention](#) **5/12** from 1-2pm.
Register by 5/11



SMALL BUSINESS ESSENTIALS ASK THE EXPERTS 5/17

Business owners can get FREE advice from a team of professionals, including a banker, an accountant, an insurance agent, and a lawyer. The event will be hosted in a hybrid at the GroundFloor at Harford, located at 2021G Pulaski Highway in Havre de Grace. For the first time, the seminars will be offered in a hybrid format, meaning that attendees will have the option to join virtually if they choose. Please email Lisa at lmkrysiak@harfordcountymd.gov after registering for the event if you would like to be in virtual attendance. Register [here!](#)



2022 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

A NEW DAY-A NEW ERA-MOVING BEYOND THE PANDEMIC



5/24 Hosted by the Baltimore Region of the MD Small Business Development Center, this virtual conference will offer resources and expert advice to put your business on track to grow post-pandemic. Topics of discussion include: Access to Capital; Marketing; Self-Care; and Productivity. Register [here!](#)

FOLLOW ALONG WITH VENTURE ACCESS



CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE NEW BUSINESSES!



Forest Hill Wine & Liquor- “Good Cheers Start Here” is committed to offering a wide variety of both upscale and affordable wines, with reasonable pricing on all lines of product.

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Fawn View Farm is first generation family run farm farming corn, soybeans, small grain and hay. The brand new **Cow Crossing at Fawn View** celebrates the dairy farm operation on the farm so be on the look out for tasty soft serve, extreme milkshakes, and fresh cheeses!

Like and Follow! 



County Executive Barry Glassman and Chief Advisor Billy Boniface joined Colonel Johnny Casiano and other officials from Aberdeen Proving Ground, in the official ribbon cutting for the new **Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)**. The VBOC, powered by the U.S. SBA, joins resource partners MD SBDC, MD PTAC, Project Opportunity, the U.S. Army Network Cross-Functional Team, the U.S. Army Office of Small Business Programs, the US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command C5ISR Center, Chemical Biological Center, and the Army Research Laboratory in the Harford Business Innovation Center to provide FREE resources to entrepreneurs in order to foster business growth in Harford County.