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Diane Portnoy
Founder and CEO

Forty outstanding community members nominated for The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards

MALDEN, Mass, March 26, 2018 / Forty Massachusetts residents from 24 countries who founded businesses in 18 Massachusetts communities, from Hyannis to Springfield, have been nominated for The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards. They are outstanding business leaders who are making their mark in four business categories: growth, neighborhood, high-tech and life science.

A committee of experts in each area will review the nominations and select a winner in each category, who will be announced at The ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards Dinner on Thursday, May 3, 2018, at the Royal Sonesta Boston in Cambridge, Mass., with special guest speaker Jay Ash, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Master of Ceremonies Shannon Dooling, reporter at WBUR. Ticket and sponsorship information is available at www.ilctr.org.

The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Award Nominees

Business Growth

According to data from the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development, private employers increased their workforce by 5.2 percent from 2014 to 2017. The six nominees in the Business Growth category increased their number of full-time-equivalent employees by 68 to 3,400 percent during the same time frame. The nominees for The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in Business Growth are:

Boppanda Ganapathy, Boston Services, LLC in Burlington
from India

Fausto Garcia, Five Star Plating in Lawrence
from Dominican Republic

Jose Garcia, Ebi Sushi in Somerville, Sapporo Ramen in Cambridge and Sushi Kappo in Boston
from Guatemala

Elias and Juana Interiano, El Potro Mexican Bar & Grill in Lowell, Malden and Somerville
from El Salvador

Yan Liu, TVision Insights in Boston
from China

Neighborhood Business

Small businesses are the lifeblood of many neighborhoods. They provide needed goods and services, local jobs, and they give back to their communities. The 19 nominees for The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in Neighborhood Business are:

Adolfo Aguilar, Tu Y Yo Mexican Restaurant in Somerville
from Guatemala

Maria Alcantara, Lawrence Training School, Inc. in Lawrence
from Dominican Republic

Yovanny Arias, Sharps Barber Shop in Hyde Park
from Dominican Republic

Umesh Bhaju, Zumi's Espresso in Ipswich
from Nepal

Veronice Biscalquim, Outstanding Cleaning, Inc. in Somerville
from Brazil

Freddy Blanco, Don Quijote Market in Boston
from Dominican Republic

Jitka Borowick, Cleangreen, Inc. in Barnstable
from Czech Republic

Brad Brown, The Blue Frog Bakery in Jamaica Plain
from Canada

Margarita Druker, Persona Jewelry in Boston
from Moldova

Tania and Antonio Forte, Red Fez Bar and Grill in Chicopee
from Portugal

Fernanda Ghi and Guillermo Merlo, Artango Dance School in Brighton
from Argentina

Shelia Gibbs, Optical Expressions in Springfield
from Guyana

Fahri Karakaya, Pera Mediterranean Bistro in Williamstown
from Turkey

Inna Khitrik, Inna's Kitchen in Boston
from Russia

Sun Kim, Sun Kim Bop in Springfield
from South Korea

Ekaterina Morozova, Lash Boutique in Hyannis
from Russia

Rodrigo Souza, Comeketo Brazilian Steakhouse in Leominster
from Brazil

High-Tech

The 11 nominees in the high-tech category have each made remarkable contributions in their fields and to the American innovation economy. They are at the cutting edge of technologies as diverse as machine learning, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, energy storage, digital video and artificial intelligence.

The nominees for The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in High-Tech are:

Aki Balogh, MarketMuse, Inc. in Boston
from Hungary

Sridhar Bogelli, Apps Associates LLC in Acton
from India

Lior Div, Cybereason, Inc. in Boston
from Israel

Max Faingezicht, ThriveHive in Boston
from Costa Rica

Alexander Falk, Altova, Inc. in Beverly
from Austria

Bart Heilbron, BlueConic, Inc. in Boston
from Netherlands

Bettina Hein, Pixability, Inc. in Boston
from Germany

Qichao Hu, SolidEnergy Systems in Woburn
from China

Natan Linder, Tulip Interfaces, Inc. in Somerville
from Israel

Christina Qi, Domeyard LP in Boston
from China

Panos Bethanis, survey.com in Boston
from Greece

Life Science

Immigrant entrepreneurs are a critical component to Massachusetts' reputation as a leading life science ecosystem. These founders are making significant breakthroughs that impact the health and well-being of us all. The four nominees for The 2018 ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in Life Science are:

Guangping Gao, Voyager Therapeutics, Inc. in Cambridge
from China

Michael Koeris, Sample 6 Technologies in Boston
from Germany

Bernat Olle, Vedanta Biosciences, Inc. in Cambridge
from Spain

Jonathan Thon, Platelet BioGenesis in Cambridge
from Canada

About The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc.

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways. The English Language Program provides free, year-round English classes to immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston to help them become successful workers, parents and community members. The Public Education Institute informs Americans about the economic and social contributions of immigrants in our society, and the Institute for Immigration Research, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.

For more information, visit the website <http://www.ilctr.org>. The ILC can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

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