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Diane Portnoy, Founder and CEO

Giving Immigrants a Voice

The Immigrant Learning Center honors 38 nominees for the 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards

MALDEN, Mass, September 16, 2019 / The Immigrant Learning Center is honored to announce the nominees for the 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards. Thirty-Eight outstanding business leaders who are Massachusetts residents from 26 countries and founded businesses in 24 local communities, from Hyannis to Springfield, are contending for these eighth, annual awards. More than a competition, in today's environment where powerful forces are sending messages to immigrants and refugees such as "go back to your country," these Awards send a message of gratitude to the international entrepreneurs who have chosen Massachusetts as their home to live, innovate and create jobs.

A committee of experts in each area will review the nominations and select a winner in each of four categories: growth, neighborhood, high-tech and life science. Winners will be announced at the Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards Benefit on Tuesday, October 29, 2019, at the Royal Sonesta Boston in Cambridge, Mass. Everyone who agrees that immigrants are assets to Massachusetts is invited to attend. Ticket and sponsorship information is available at www.ilctr.org.

The 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Award Nominees:

Business Growth

According to data from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, private employers increased their workforce by 3.7 percent from 2015 to 2018. The four nominees in the Business Growth category increased their number of full-time-equivalent employees by 18 to 233 percent during the same time frame. The nominees for the 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in Business Growth are:

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

Ely Kaplansky, Kaplansky Insurance in Needham and 11 other communities from Israel

Joseph Ngaruiya, A Better Life Homecare in Springfield, Worcester and Suffield, CT from Kenya

Son Vo, TTS Trio, LLC in Fiskdale from Vietnam

Neighborhood Business

Small businesses are the lifeblood of many neighborhoods. They provide needed goods and services, and they give back to their communities. They are also an important source of jobs. In the report *Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow*, the Americas Society/Council of the Americas and the Fiscal Policy Institute found that immigrants were responsible for all of the net growth in Main Street business between 2000 and 2013, both in Greater Boston and nationally. The 17 nominees for the 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in Neighborhood Business are:

Carlos Barbosa, Colors of Cape Cod in Hyannis
from Brazil

Frank Chan, Chan Insurance Agency in Boston
from Hong Kong

Sebastian Corbat, Del Sur LLC in Lowell
from Argentina

Luiz DaCosta, Modular Concepts LLC in Marlborough
from Brazil

Agusto DaCunha, Ola Cafe in Somerville
from Portugal

Edna Etienne, LeFoyer Bakery in Mattapan
from Haiti

Yessy Feliz, Tails Inc. in Jamaica Plain
from Dominican Republic

Zoila Gomez, Gomez and Palumbo, LLC in Lawrence
from Dominican Republic

Jean Jose, J&R Restaurant and Bakery in Malden
from Haiti

William Joseph, Globo Computer Center in Lynn
from Haiti

Giuseppe Masia, Giuseppe's Fresh Pasta & Fine Food, Inc. in Newburyport
from Italy

Miriam Morales, Recreo Coffee in West Roxbury
from Nicaragua

Phalla Nol, Phalla's Produce in Lowell
from Cambodia

Gildardo Preciado, Tertulias Café in Boston
from Colombia

Shane Smyth, Hugh O'Neill's Restaurant and Pub in Malden
from Ireland

Hong Tran, LEHONG Attorneys at Law, LLC in Worcester
from Vietnam

Ahmed Yusef, Suitmen LLC in Marlborough
from Iraq

High-Tech

The six 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 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in High-Tech are:

Alexander Falk, Altova, Inc. in Beverly
from Austria

Qichao Hu, SolidEnergy Systems in Woburn
from China

Larry Kim, MobileMonkey, Inc. in Boston
from Canada

Idriz Limaj, connectRN Inc. in Waltham
from Macedonia

Venky Soundararajan, nference in Cambridge
from India

Massimiliano Versace, Neurala, Inc. in Boston
from Italy

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 10 nominees for the 2019 Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Award in Life Science are:

P.J. Anand, Alcyone Lifesciences, Inc. in Lowell
from India

Patrick Anquetil, Portal Instruments, Inc. in Cambridge
from France

Waleed Hassanein, TransMedics, Inc. in Andover
from Egypt

Jan Kieleczawa, Wyzer Biosciences in Cambridge
from Poland

Babak Movassaghi, InfiniteMD, Inc. in Boston
from Germany

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

Ram Sasisekharan, Visterra, Inc. in Waltham
from India

Sharon Shacham, Karyopharm Therapeutics in Newton
from Israel

Bin Wu, Phosphorex, Inc. in Hopkinton
from China

Marta Ortega-Valle and Andrey Zarur, Greenlight Biosciences, Inc. in Medford
from Spain and Mexico

About Barry M. Portnoy

Barry M. Portnoy was the founder of The RMR Group, an alternative asset management company, and a founding board member of The Immigrant Learning Center. As a consummate entrepreneur, he built businesses in multiple industries, employed thousands and contributed mightily to local economies. His steadfast support of The ILC gave thousands of immigrants a voice. Because of his unwavering belief in immigrants and the transformational impact of entrepreneurship, The ILC Immigrant Entrepreneur Awards were renamed after his death in 2018.

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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