

Better Middlebury Partnership

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Kick Start Middlebury Awards Grants to Incoming Businesses

Six businesses awarded between \$15,000 and \$20,000 grants

Middlebury, Vermont – July 12, 2021 – The Kick Start Middlebury program, created through a partnership of municipal, economic development, educational and business entities, has announced the recipients of its business recruitment incentive program. Six businesses will be awarded between \$15,000 and \$20,000 to bring new or expanding businesses to Middlebury after construction and the pandemic left several open storefronts.

The Kick Start Middlebury program generated 40 letters of interest from both new entrepreneurs and established businesses. From the initial 40 inquiries, a review committee comprised of local business owners, community members, and economic development professionals chose 12 applicants to present full business plans. Of the 12 finalists, six businesses will receive cash grants between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The remaining funds were spent on marketing and contracted services. Awardees must start their business within six months of signing the grant agreements.

The grant awardees are:

Addison West

The found. The discovered. The loved. Addison West is a destination with a singular purpose: connecting people with spaces and things they love. For home. For life. For others. Started in 2020, the business currently operates at 44 Main Street and 24/7 online at www.theaddisonwest.com and is seeking to expand to a larger space.

Calvi's

Calvi's is a restaurant that will pay tribute to the Calvi's that is fondly remembered by Middlebury residents, visitors, and Middlebury College alumni. It will be a 1920s-style ice cream parlor/soda fountain as well as a creperie with a fun atmosphere that appeals to visitors, students, and locals of all ages.

Midd Rock Bouldering Center

Midd Rock Bouldering Center will be an inclusive, welcoming, active community center featuring rock climbing, fitness training, youth programming and special events. They plan to take advantage of the recent exponential growth in rock climbing to contribute to the vibrancy of Middlebury. Rock climbing is as much a community as it is a sport and Midd Rock is proud to bring a sustainable, forward-looking, youth-centered business to Middlebury that will attract visitors from Addison County and beyond.

The Middlebury Studio School

The Middlebury Studio School, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provides education in arts and crafts for students of all ages in Addison County and surrounding towns. The school provides a place where children, teens, and adults can engage in creative endeavors, learn new skills, and engage with one another in an upbeat, safe, social setting. Their mission is to promote the creative process and community through art and craft

education for all ages and abilities. This will be a secondary location for the Middlebury Studio School, which will keep the clay program at its Route 7 location.

Sparrow Art Supply

Sparrow Art Supply will be Central Vermont's new go-to shop for all your art, craft, and creative needs, from oil paints to markers to pottery tools. Founded and run by a lifelong artist who is passionate about helping others find their own creative voice, it is ready to answer all your questions to find the perfect materials for your upcoming project. The space will not only carry art supplies but will also be a community center for creative workshops, gallery opportunities to exhibit artwork, and club meetings.

Your Home Too

Your Home Too is a vintage and vintage inspired lifestyle shop that will carry home decor and plants as well as niche paint and furniture embellishments. In addition to retail, they will also offer an array of classes and workshops geared towards helping everyone create a home they love. This is a secondary location to “Your Home,” located in Bristol.

Contact information for the Kick Start Middlebury recipients is available upon request.

The Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP) initially launched the Kick Start Middlebury program after reviewing similar initiatives that have been successful in other communities. “Middlebury is poised for a strong recovery from both the construction project and the pandemic,” explained BMP Executive Director Karen Duguay. “This program was intended to be a catalyst for revitalization, and we believe this mix of new and expanding businesses will do exactly that. These businesses will provide people an opportunity to come into the downtown often for shopping, dining, and experiences, and they complement our existing businesses that do the same. We feel very positive about our future in Middlebury as we all work to bring vitality to the heart of our community.”

Sarah Kearns of the Vermont Small Business Development Center agreed, “The creativity and entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Middlebury. This feels like the beginning of a new era for our town and county.”

The Kick Start Middlebury program was marketed regionally and generated inquiries from both within and outside of Vermont. Furthermore, several community organizations provided additional funding so that more businesses could participate, and the cash value of the grant packages increased. When the program was announced in March 2021, there was approximately \$50,000 provided by the Town of Middlebury’s business development fund which would support two to three grants valued at \$10,000 each. By the program’s end, there was a total of \$120,000 in funding--the town’s initial grant, plus donations from Table 21 (\$50,000), the Rotary Club of Middlebury (\$10,000), and Sassano Donor Advised Fund (\$10,000).

With a total of \$120,000 cash at its disposal, plus services and products donated by area businesses (listed below), the Kick Start Middlebury program is poised to change the town’s business and retail landscape. More than a cash prize and valuable start-up services, the initiative offered business support, coaching and connections that helped all the finalists, regardless of outcome, advance their ideas.

“Kick Start Middlebury was a great collaborative process that strengthened local relationships while also assisting entrepreneurs,” said Addison County Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Fred Kenney. “That foundation remains and will continue to serve businesses in the Middlebury region.”

The collaborating partners that created the Kick Start Middlebury program are the Better Middlebury Partnership, the Town of Middlebury, Addison County Chamber of Commerce, Addison County

Economic Development Corporation, Vermont Small Business Development Center, Middlebury College, and several Middlebury area businesses and property owners.

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Kick Start Middlebury Award Package

- \$15,000-\$20,000 cash grant, courtesy of the Town of Middlebury and donations from Table 21, Rotary Club of Middlebury, and Sassano Donor Advised Fund
- 802 Printing: Design services for promotional items
- Addison County Chamber of Commerce: Free one-year membership
- Addison County Economic Development Corporation: Bookkeeping consultation and one-year free membership
- Addison Independent: Print advertising
- Brennan, Punderson & Donahue, PLLC: Legal consult and assistance
- Clover Ridge Media: Website, social media, videography
- Downtown Up, LLC: Business coaching
- Farm Fresh Radio: Radio advertising
- Hall Communications (WOKO): Digital display, pre-roll advertising and radio
- The Image Farm: Graphic and website design
- IPJ Real Estate: Liaison with landlords
- Little Press Room: Printing and promotional item services
- Maple Run Marketing: Marketing services
- Mark Favreau Graphic Design: Graphic design services
- Power Marketing: Web design services
- Silver Maple Construction: Construction Services
- Sixpence Studios: Team headshots
- The Sun: Print advertising
- Vermont Gas: Energy services
- Waypoint Management Services: Business consulting services
- WVTK Radio: Radio advertising