

Finalists Announced for Social Enterprise of the Year Awards

By **Susan Post** - August 16, 2017



From creating employment opportunities to donating products, the finalists of the [2017 Social Enterprise of the Year Awards](#) are impacting the Columbus community in a myriad of ways.

In its fifth year, the Awards presented by The Metropreneur and SocialVentures (formerly the Center for Social Enterprise Development) are recognizing the innovative, socially-conscious business models of organizations new and established in Columbus.

This year we have expanded the awards field to bring even more awareness to the business owners and organizations focused on more than just profit.

New this year is the **Emerging Social Enterprise of the Year Award** recognizing for-profit social enterprises in their first year of operation. Finalist for the 2017 Award include:

Aunt Flow

In Aunt Flow's world, menstrual products in restrooms are as ubiquitous as toilet paper. The buy-one, give-one subscription-based service sends menstruators a box of tampons, and donates an equivalent to organizations that supply products to women in need. Aunt Flow is also partnering with businesses to provide tampons to customers and employees for free. Officially launching in October 2016, Aunt Flow has a presence at 20 public locations and is on track to donate 70,000 menstrual products by the end of the year.



Bottoms Up Coffee Co-Op

Bottoms Up Coffee Co-Op uses coffee and coworking as a means to fight infant mortality. Located in Franklinton at 1069 W. Broad St., the coffee shop, coworking space combo is in the heart of one of the neighborhoods that needs it most. Bottoms Up addresses Franklinton and Franklin County's high infant mortality rate by donating 10 percent of its profits to non-profits addressing infant mortality. With donations topping \$5,000 and counting, Bottoms Up has also hired a community health worker to counsel families in the neighborhood.

Growlers Dog Bones



Growlers Dog Bones brings a trio of benefits, turning out tasty treats for pup while making use of by-product from local breweries, but most importantly, providing employment opportunities to young adults with disabilities. Forty-five young adults have found employment opportunities and learned new skills through year-long baking programs or five-week summer workforce development camps. Growlers Dog Bones partners with local breweries like Seventh Son and Land-Grant to craft the bones for sale at farmers markets, festivals and more.



The **Social Enterprise of the Year Award** celebrates the impact of small, local for-profit businesses that have been operating for over a year. The 2017 finalists include:

Roosevelt Coffeehouse



Bringing the community together over coffee has allowed The Roosevelt Coffeehouse to donate over \$55,000 to support sustainable food initiatives, long-term clean water solutions, and human trafficking survivor restoration. Opened in 2015 at 300 E. Long St., the Downtown coffeeshop has become a community hub where connections are made and collaborations forged to create an even bigger social change. As customers sip on coffee locally, their impact is felt the world over through the organizations Roosevelt supports.

Hot Chicken Takeover

Serving up perfectly-fried Nashville Hot Chicken in Central Ohio since 2014, Hot Chicken Takeover has gone from pop-up to two permanent locations, growing its impact along with its footprint. From oft-packed restaurants at the North Market and in Clintonville, HCT provides supportive employment for a segment of the community that needs it most – the formerly incarcerated. While naysayers had their doubts about the fair chance employment model, HCT has a low 20 percent turnover rate compared to the national industry average of 100 percent. Now employing nearly 100 people, 95 percent of HCT’s team feels they are receiving the development they crave, and just over 80 percent feel stable in their lives.



She Has a Name Cleaning Services



Cleaning for a cause, She Has a Name Cleaning Services provides supportive employment for individuals coming out of traumatic pasts such as human trafficking and incarceration. More than just a job, SHAN offers a Career Advancement program for its employees focused on life skills, professional development, financial literacy, housing assistance, health & wellness and leadership training. SHAN has employed over 120 individuals and currently supports a full-time staff of 40. Of those hired, 43 percent are still employed or have moved on to new positions, with some achieving outcomes such as finding stable housing.

As social enterprise operations emerge as a viable revenue stream for non-profit organizations, the **Non-Profit Sustainability Award** recognizes the for-profit operations of established non-profit organizations. The first finalists for the sustainability award include:

Equitas Health

In 2012, Equitas Health (then ARC Ohio) had a \$6.5 million budget with government grants accounting for 76 percent of the total. In just five years, that budget has ballooned to \$74 million, but now 76 percent comes from the profits of their social enterprise Equitas Health Pharmacy. With 100 percent of pharmacy profits reinvested back into the organization's programs and services, the pharmacy has not only allowed Equitas to diversify its revenue streams, but expand the services it offers to clients. Addressing the healthcare disparities in the LGBTQ community, Equitas serves over 3,400 clients and is expanding its reach with a recently opened medical center and pharmacy in the King-Lincoln District, in addition to its original Short North location.



Furniture with a Heart



Faced with an 82 percent decrease in philanthropic revenue due to a change in the relationship with their biggest funder, the Furniture Bank of Central Ohio needed a new and sustainable revenue stream to continue to provide its services to some 4,000 local families each year. The organization turned to social enterprise, launching Furniture With a Heart, a furniture thrift store located at 2165 Morse Rd. In just over a year of operation, the store is putting the Furniture Bank on the path to sustainability, operating at a surplus that surpassed the organization's goal. The store has also created 12 new jobs, and generated over 2,600 hours of volunteer service opportunities.

Zero Waste Event Productions

The more Zero Waste Event Productions grows, the more waste they are able to divert from Ohio's landfills. What started as a project at Rural Action Ohio has spun out into its own social enterprise that helps festivals and events maximize the amount of material they can divert from the landfill through reuse, recycling and composting. Zero Waste's impact is growing. In 2016, the

organization serviced 18 festivals across the state; this year the projection is 25. Those 18 events led to 29,538 pounds of waste diverted from landfills, with the poundage expected to top 41,000 this year. And with every new festival comes new impressions, with Zero Waste estimating their concept will reach over 94,000 individuals in 2017.

All of the finalists will be honored and a winner announced at Aspire 2017 on Thursday, September 14. Aspire is made possible with support from [SocialVentures](#) and the [Columbus Chamber of Commerce](#).

Tickets are \$10. For more information and to register for Aspire 2017, [click here](#) or visit [AspireColumbus.com](#).



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