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BREAKTHROUGH

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MEET THE FOUNDERS



APRIL FENALL

PIIKUP LLC

April Fenall is the Founder and CEO of Piikup LLC, a socially responsible delivery partner for businesses and consumers. Our goal is to grow Piikup across Northern California connecting our mission to train the workforce and employ people that are multi-groups like youth, women, queer and justice-impacted people needing a first and second chance often facing high and shifting barriers to obtain, sustain, and level up in the workforce with relevant and in-demand job skills.

The idea for Piikup was planted after my own difficult experience navigating the workforce after doing the hard work and receiving my B.A. as a justice-impacted queer Black woman. As founder & CEO of Piikup LLC April oversees day-to-day operations, sales, and marketing alongside a team of 7 - 10 people that are both employees and interns.

April believes that if small businesses thrive then the communities and people that live there will also thrive. She imagines how many people with similar lived experiences as her would be empowered if more barriers were removed versus them being a roadblock. To date, Piikup has been recognized by the Oakland Indie Awards for Social Change Maker. Piikup has been featured in Edible East-bay Magazine twice, Reasons To Be Cheerful, and Voice America podcast

ABOUT APRIL

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AURORA DIAZ

THE JEFAS

Aurora Diaz is the founder & CEO of The Jefas, the first e-commerce platform and beauty box for Latinas. Her mission is to create the ultimate shopping destination for Latina-founded beauty brands.

The idea for a Latina beauty platform began in 2017 and the company was founded in 2021. As founder & CEO of The Jefas, Aurora oversees business development, marketing, and operations. She has an extensive background working within the beauty space and tech companies, specifically e-commerce startups.

Aurora believes that the next generation of Latinas needs a space of representation in the beauty space since Latinas spend \$8B a year on beauty and over-index as makeup purchasers by almost 2x. Aurora was recently named part of Inicio Ventures 100 Rising Latinx Founders to Watch list.

ABOUT AURORA

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BRIA HUTSON

THA MF'N VEGAN

Bria Hutson is the founder of Tha MF'n Vegan, a black women-owned vegan food manufacturing company specializing in snack nourishing Plant powered food and premium organic jackfruit meat. Tha MF'n Vegan is food allergy-friendly (soy-free, nut-free, and gluten-free), and does not contain any artificial ingredients or synthetic chemicals. Her Mission is to Build thriving communities through a Plant-Centric lifestyle, by trailblazing the movement for whole plant-powered food for Tha Culture.

Tha MF'n Vegan was founded in 2019, two years after Bria transitioned to a plant-based lifestyle. At that time veganism was not mainstream, and the market had few convenient options to transition easily. Thus, frustrated by the absence of fresh, delicious whole plant-powered foods in her community, she decided to be the change. As founder & CEO of Tha MF'n Vegan, Bria currently oversees the key components of business: Product research and development, operations, procurement, logistics, marketing, and sales.

Bria believes that people want to be healthy and make healthy choices, however, they want it to taste good, they want it to feel familiar, and they don't want to be an experiment. Therefore, she is showing consumers that they do not have to sacrifice taste and texture for nutritional value and vice versa.

ABOUT BRIA

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CANDICE COX

CANDID ART ACCESSORIES

Candice Cox is the Founder & CEO of Candid Art, an artisanal Jewelry, Women's & Children's apparel brand. Her mission is to inspire women to celebrate their personal space, unleash their creativity and influence the world through jewelry and apparel.

Candid Art was founded in 2011 by Candice Cox after she quit her job in Corporate America and relocated to New York to live free and unrestrained life. She had a strong love for handmade jewelry and little knowledge of the fashion industry, and she decided to learn how to make feather earrings on Youtube. She honed her craft over time and later that year launched her first site on Etsy and grew from there. As founder and CEO of Candid Art, she oversees the day-to-day operations of the company from product development, strategy, and sales. She manages her team and develops new product designs and well and manages the customer experience.

Candice started her company because she saw a lack of representation of African Diaspora women in the lifestyle industry, with large opportunities in jewelry and children's lifestyle industry. She also wanted to provide affordable, sustainable, and unique jewelry & apparel that made a statement and allowed a person to feel like an individual.

To date, Candice Cox has been recognized for design, sustainability, and affordability in over 20 magazine and news features such as Vogue, Essence, Cosmopolitan, NBC Bay Area, Home & Garden, HSN, QVC, and GQ just to name a few.

ABOUT CANDICE

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CASEY RICHARDSON

BLAZE GROUP LLC

Casey Richardson is the co-founder and CEO of Blaze Group, an ed-tech ecosystem that helps Black women entrepreneurs grow 20x faster. Her mission is to decolonize pathways to business success for Black women.

Blaze Group was founded in 2020 when Casey left a 10-year career of structuring multi-billion-dollar loans for tech companies to edify Black women. Casey leveraged her expertise to create scalable, tech-driven solutions that provide unprecedented access to Black women entrepreneurs. As co-founder & CEO of Blaze Group, Casey oversees the company's strategic direction, key partnerships, funding strategy, management of operations, and talent development. Casey believes that radical progress can be made by changing goalposts and removing the relevance of traditional gatekeepers.

To date, Blaze Group has been recognized as a 2023 Webby Awards Honoree for Best in Metaverse, Immersive, & Virtual and a 2022 Webby Awards Honoree for Best in Business & Finance. Blaze Group has been featured in Podia, Pretty Women Hustle, ShoutOut ATL, Canvas Rebel, and more.

ABOUT CASEY

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EVA ALLEN

FULL BELLY BAKERY

Eva Allen is the Founder and Executive Pastry Chef of Full Belly Bakery. Our mission is to elevate the bakery experience, facilitating connections and building lasting memories among friends, family, and/or coworkers - one cake at a time

Full Belly Bakery was founded in 2017 after Eva was frustrated with grocery store/low-quality cakes. She started by baking desserts and pastries for friends and family and 3 years later decided to get a formal degree in Professional Pastry Arts. As founder & executive pastry chef of Full Belly Bakery, Eva oversees daily production, recipe development, customer relations, catering orders, wedding cake inquiries, accounting, and marketing/advertising.

Eva believes that there is a need for higher-quality cakes based on flavor over sweetness. In addition to employing a bakery staff that is paid a living wage in California. To date, Full Belly Bakery has been featured in Eater SF, the Montclairion, and Berkeleyside Publications

ABOUT EVA

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FAITH MASON

KORELEO

Faith Mason is the Founder and President of Koreleo. Koreleo's patented collection of bodysuits and leotards provide functional lumbar support and inflammation control that stays in place while athletes, dancers, and performers practice or compete. Her mission is to provide relief, support, and prevent certain over and repetitive use injuries often found in gymnastics, dance, figure skating, and many other disciplines. We have since addressed such medical conditions as: Scoliosis, EDS, hypermobility, and POTs as well.

Koreleo was founded in 2019 and was inspired by Faith's daughter who was an elite gymnast who suffered a near career-ending stress fracture from repetitive training, lack of rest, and years of impact on her developing anatomy. Extensive research, consultations with Orthopedics and DPT's, field trials, and functional testing enabled Faith to create a patented and effective product. As the Founder and CEO of Koreleo, she is the sole manager of product development, manufacturing, sales, marketing, and fulfillment.

Faith believes it's time to address the health and welfare in certain communities that are overlooked when it comes to innovation and support. She did not create Koreleo to make a quick buck, but rather to raise awareness about the long-term effects of overtraining and to offer a tested and proven option for prevention and relief. To date, Faith has been awarded a patent and purchased USA Choice Apparel in 2022. She also secured her first NCAA contract with FISK University Women's Gymnastics Team.

ABOUT FAITH

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IMANI M-GLOVER

THE LEMONADE BAR

Imani M-Glover is the proprietress of The Lemonade Bar, where we specialize in handcrafted, organic lemonades and handcrafted organic frozen lemonade, out of the Oakland, San Francisco Bay Area. Imani is the founder of an organic beverage company. Our mission and goal is to provide organic products that are locally sourced, from farmers we know by name, we also want to be able to have a distribution center where we manufacture all of our products. We also produce organic lemonade, jams, and spices. Oh, not to forget we would also like to obtain a food truck.

The company was founded in 2002 when Imani's third year of marriage, her husband decided to invest in a hotdog cart. Quickly, Imani composed a plan to begin utilizing the hot dog cart to its full potential. Unfortunately, the business didn't do so well, but Imani and her husband didn't give up. They incorporated fresh squeezed lemonade, and that took off without a hitch.

Ultimately, the lemonade began to outsell the hotdogs, so they dropped the hotdogs, and The Lemonade Bar was formed. By 2018, The Lemonade Bar was no longer a hobby but a business. Imani oversees the daily operations, making sure we attend to our catering customers online, bookings, festivals, and fairs, as well as making sure we are in compliance with the farmers market and the health department.

Imani believes that if you have a passion and love for what you do, the rewards will come later. It took about six years for our business to really become profitable. To date, The Lemonade Bar has been featured on CBS News for their lemonades, featured in the port lab newsletter for Women's Month 2022, featured with salesforce as lemonade lady two years in a row, and lastly featured on the Townrootz podcast.

ABOUT IMANI

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JANEEN MENDOZA CRUZ

KUALI LLC

Janeen Mendoza Cruz is the founder and co-owner of Kuali, an artisanal Mexican salsa company. Her mission is to bring the bold, authentic and unapologetic flavors of México in every salsa made.

Kuali was established in 2020, mid-pandemic, because she refused to settle for the inauthentic salsas in the U.S. market. When you taste Kuali's salsas you'll think "esto es México" (this is México). As founder and CEO, Janeen oversees the operations, sales and social media presence of the company.

Janeen believes a more authentic and unapologetic salsa experience is needed for the Latino community in the U.S. market. To date, Kuali has been featured in the S.F. Chronicle, Epicurious and highlighted by a number of Latino influencers on social media.

ABOUT JANEEN

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KAMILAH MITCHELL

TEAS WITH MEANING

Kamilah Mitchell is the founder of Teas With Meaning, an organic loose leaf and tea infused products company based in Oakland, California. “Magic is the main ingredient,” Mitchell often says, as her focus has been to share the magic of tea time through authentic experiences, self care, and intentional conversations.

Teas With Meaning started in 2018 following Mitchell's 2017 cancer diagnosis. As founder and CEO, Mitchell has played every role to ensure and maintain business development. At the heart of the brand is intention, purpose, and wellness. Whatever Kamilah does professionally and personally is...with meaning.

TWM has collaborated and partnered with over 75 businesses that include but aren't limited to Whole Foods, ESSENCE, Target, Twitter, Salesforce and Google. TWM values being a part of New Voices Family and every mentor relationship built from platforms that include 1863 Ventures, AmEX, GoldmanSach, and other successful black women founders/ceos.

ABOUT KAMILAH

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KYRA LUMPKIN

PENROSE APOTHECARY

Kyra Lumpkin is the founder of Penrose Apothecary, and eco-friendly niche perfume company. Her mission is to provide high quality aromatic experiences that promote genuine and sincere interaction.

Penrose Apothecary was founded in 2021 when Kyra decided to take her love of good fragrance and good conversation and create a platform for it. As founder and creator of Penrose Apothecary, Kyra not only oversees every aspect of running Penrose, but she personally crafts every fragrance and creates every candle from start to finish.

As founder and creator of Penrose Apothecary, Kyra not only oversees every aspect of running Penrose, but she personally crafts every fragrance and creates every candle from start to finish. To date, Penrose Apothecary has been recognized by Revolt TV, ShoutOut LA, Sweet July, 1 Hotel, and Live St. Louis.

ABOUT KYRA

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LINDSAY KNOX

LADHA JEWELRY

Lindsay Knox is the Owner and Designer of Ladha, a handmade fine jewelry company based in Oakland, Ca. The intent behind Ladha is to promote self-expression and confidence. Lindsay's aim is to create elegant and understated jewelry that evokes a sense of worldliness.

Ladha was founded in 2019 and started as a side hustle while Lindsay was employed by a prominent Bay Area jewelry designer. Ladha became a full time enterprise in the Summer of 2020 and the brand has been growing ever since! Ladha is a one woman show and Lindsay oversees all aspects of the business including: design and production of all jewelry, wholesale fulfillment, digital marketing, in person selling events, bookkeeping and project management as it relates to custom projects.

Lindsay believes that as we dress ourselves our jewelry serves as "seasoning" that helps to bring out one's true personality and individual style. Lindsay's designs are to be considered future heirlooms that allow the wearer to shine as they move through the world, flaunting their unique flavor. To date, Lindsay has been recognized by renowned jewelry influencer Gem Gossip and was interviewed on her widely read blog in 2021. She has also been recognized by the Women's Jewelry Association as well as other prominent jewelry orgs across the country while celebrating diversity in jewelry design and retail. Ladha is also regularly featured in online and print marketing for various established wholesale accounts.

ABOUT LINDSAY

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NICOLE FELIX-BORDERS

POUND BIZNESS

Nicole Felix-Borders is the Chief Operating Officer and Co-Owner of Pound Bizness LLC, a gourmet artisan baking company based in the bay area that sells pound cakes reminiscent of time spent with grandma and gives an alternative to commercial made desserts. Pound Bizness's mission is to connect communities through traditional experiences and create employment opportunities for local residences one slice at a time.

The company was founded in 2018 when a gracious act turned into a dozen orders and the decision was made to turn her husband's family recipe into a business. As Chief Operating Officer and Co-Owner of Pound Bizness LLC, Nicole serves as the Chief Operating Officer and oversees all administrative, operational and sales/marketing responsibilities.

Nicole believes that with education, exposure and mentor/sponsorship, we have the tools to be successful entrepreneurs and create a path that will leave a legacy for years to come. To date Pound Bizness LLC has been recognized by California Assemblymember Mia Bonta, the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce and National Coalition of 100 Black Women and the National Association of Black Accountants, Inc. Pound Bizness has also given scholarships to youth entrepreneurs and has been featured on ChedHer News and Town Rootz Podcast.

ABOUT NICOLE

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REGINA HARRIS

PRIDEFUL PATCHEZ

Regina Harris is the Founder/Owner of Prideful Patchez, a patch boutique that specializes in culturally inspired patches. Her mission is to bring representation and empowerment to communities of color by providing them with prideful, affirming statement patches to increase their pride and self-esteem.

Prideful Patchez was founded in 2019 when she discovered there were barely any patches on the market that represented her as an African American woman. As founder & CEO of Prideful Patchez, she oversees the day-to-day operations, and she manages the strategic planning for the company.

Regina believes that her product creates a platform for customers to express their identity and make a statement through patches. To date, Prideful Patchez has been recognized by Sheen Magazine and Shout Out LA

ABOUT REGINA

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STEVONNE RATLIFF

BEIJA-FLOR NATURALS

Stevonne Ratliff is the founder of Beija-Flor Naturals, an organic skin and haircare company. She set out to develop a line of beauty goods that were affordable, environmentally conscious, and have small batch quality. The inspiration for Beija-Flor Naturals was the beautiful nourishing botanical ingredients that she encountered while living in Brazil.

Founded in 2012, Beija-Flor Naturals is one of the first e-commerce brands to offer quality natural and organic products to Women of Color online. After suffering from skin discoloration, Ratliff learned that she was allergic to mineral oil - the primary ingredient in nearly all cosmetics at the time. With a small savings of a few hundred dollars, she became a self-taught cosmetic chemist - formulating and manufacturing clean beauty products out of her apartment kitchen. The brand soon grew into a brick and mortar retail collective of 100+ BIPOC and Woman owned brands in Oakland and San Francisco, CA. Beija-Flor Naturals products can be found in 600+ retailers nationwide. As founder & CEO of Beija-Flor Naturals, Stevonne Ratliff oversees all aspects of the company including production, distribution, fulfillment and marketing; although her true passion lies in marketing and strategic partnerships.

Stevonne Ratliff believes that the key to wealth and stability for disadvantaged founders lies in our ability to create innovative products, stay aware of global market changes and work together. The brand has been featured in publications such as Vogue, The New York Times and San Francisco Chronicle. With the popular Maracuja Milk for Kinks Curls and Coils being named "Best in Green Beauty" by Byrdie Magazine x Treehugger in 2021. Stevonne has received mayoral honors from the cities of San Francisco and Oakland, CA in addition to entrepreneurial awards from Pepsi Co, Amazon Business, Facebook and most recently she has been named a 2022 recipient of the Visa Shes Next in Fashion Award.

ABOUT STEVONNE

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