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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FEDERAL DEVELOPMENT FUND AWARDS LAUNCH NY FOR 2nd YEAR IN A ROW TO SUPPORT LOW & MODERATE INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS REVITALIZATION

Launch NY's latest award from U.S. Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund Supports New Investments, Including Local Restaurant & Production Facility Ru's Pierogi

Buffalo, N.Y., October 4, 2018 – In just two years of earning eligibility, Launch New York (Launch NY), Upstate New York's first and only venture development organization to help provide pro bono mentoring and capital access to high-growth potential startup businesses across the 27 westernmost counties of the state, has announced it is the recipient of another grant, this one totaling \$168,000 from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund, a federal program aimed at increasing lending and investment activity in low-income and economically distressed areas across the nation. This is the second year in a row Launch NY has received support from the CDFI Fund, which recently announced a total of \$202.2 million in awards to 302 recipients.

The \$168,000 award from the CDFI Fund is allocated for Launch NY's nonprofit Seed Fund to support investments in startups in what is known as an "evergreen cycle," which recycles returns to the fund to continue providing capital to new ventures in the future.

"Since 2016, Launch NY has invested over \$1.3 million in 30 of Upstate New York's most promising startups, including the latest investment in Ru's," said Dr. Marnie LaVigne, Launch NY's President and CEO. "Our portfolio companies are making a difference in growing our regional economy by attracting nearly four times our funding in co-investment and growing more than 115 jobs."

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Recipients of the Seed Fund include high-growth potential companies who have worked with Launch NY's mentors, known as Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, in order to prepare for Launch NY's rigorous investment process that not only helps entrepreneurs achieve key milestones in their business but also to position them for follow-on funding from other investors. Launch NY gives highest priority to those companies who demonstrate the greatest commitment to economic impact in the Upstate New York community.

Ru's Pierogi, a restaurant and production facility located on Buffalo's Lower West Side at 295 Niagara Street, is a prime example. Launch NY recently invested \$50,000 from its Seed Fund to help Ru's invest in its manufacturing operation and grow its sales team as it expands to retail sales through supermarket chains such as Tops and Wegmans.

Being a successful business in the city's Lower West Side, which has yet to catch up to the rest of Buffalo's economic and development renaissance, is important to Zack Schneider, one of Ru's founders and co-owners.

"When scouting potential locations for the business, we specifically looked at up-and-coming neighborhoods that had access to an eager labor pool and the Lower West Side delivered," he said. "From the historic buildings to an enthusiastic workforce, this area of the city is ripe for investment and development. The CDFI Fund award will go especially far here as other entrepreneurs look to become part of Buffalo's renaissance."

"It is so gratifying to see our nonprofit mission align with private sector investment, but especially where it means bringing neighborhoods and local businesses to their full potential," said LaVigne. "With over 75 percent of our portfolio companies in recognized low-income and economically distressed communities, Ru's shows how we can transform low income areas by investing not only in retail locations but also production facilities that support growing a workforce locally, while supporting product sales nationally and even globally."

Ru's Pierogi currently employs approximately 30 people in both its production facility and restaurant, a number that is expected to increase as its operation expands. In addition to standalone specialty shops such as Orchard Fresh, Farmers and Artisans, and Redlinski Meats, Ru's Pierogi are available at Tops and Wegmans locations throughout New York State and Pennsylvania. Including Launch NY's investment, Ru's Pierogi recently received \$1 million from new and existing investors to complete the next phase of its business plan. The company was also a 43 North Semifinalist this year.

For more information about Launch NY, its programs, including its Seed Fund and Entrepreneur-in-Residence mentorship, and entrepreneurial opportunities, visit www.launchny.org, and follow Launch NY on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.

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About Launch New York:

The mission of Launch New York, Inc. (Launch NY), the only U.S. Treasury-designated Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) directly funding businesses in New York State, is to identify, support and invest in high-growth, high-impact companies, and catalyze the entrepreneurial culture in the 27 counties comprising the western half of Upstate New York. Launch NY is a 501(c)(3) non-profit venture development organization that promotes economic development through best practices, including business mentoring and access to seed capital in order to create investment-ready companies which have the promise to create significant economic impact and jobs for our region.

Launch NY uniquely fills the gap in connecting all of Upstate New York's entrepreneurship resources to a pathway to success via unique proof-of-concept capital and high-quality pro bono mentoring support through 22 experienced local entrepreneurs-in-residence and its National Mentor Network of 2,000 industry, business and investment experts. Launch NY was formed as a result of a collaboration between private and public stakeholders in Upstate New York to create long term strategies that foster a robust, self-sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystem built on regional collaboration. Launch NY is headquartered in Buffalo and has regional co-locations with partner organizations in Binghamton, Ithaca, Rochester, and Syracuse. It has served over 825 companies comprising more than 2,700 jobs since starting operations in 2012.