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Launch NY Limited Partner Fund Makes First Investments

New for profit financing program builds on the success of nonprofit Launch NY Seed Fund

Buffalo, N.Y., April 3, 2019 – Launch New York (Launch NY), Upstate New York’s first and only venture development organization to provide pro bono mentoring and capital access to high-growth startups across the 27 westernmost counties of the state announced today that LaunchNY Seed Fund I, LP, its for profit Limited Partner Fund, has made its first investments in four promising startups. This milestone marks the inaugural investment from Launch NY’s new Invest Local Financing Programs, a returns-based investment opportunities platform for accredited investors looking to make a profit while also having a positive impact on the Upstate New York entrepreneurial ecosystem and regional economy.

The LP Fund works in tandem with the Launch NY Seed Fund, which has been built as a nonprofit fund through donations and grants, becoming one of the most active seed funds in the country and the most active in New York State since inception in 2016. Based on its commitment to funding high-growth potential startups in economically distressed areas, U.S. Department of Treasury designated Launch NY as one of only 17 venture funding Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) nationwide and the only one deploying its own capital in New York State.

Launch NY’s LP Fund has made its inaugural investments in four companies. The startups receiving investment from the LP Fund have all benefited from Launch NY’s full service mentorship, due diligence, and portfolio management, which is a requirement to be eligible for funding. The investments are as follows:

- [EagleHawk One Inc](#), a drone powered technology company revolutionizing the way commercial roofs are inspected and maintained, located in Buffalo
- [ShrubBucket](#), an e-commerce business for gardening made-easy as the first-time provider of home delivery for full-sized plants, headquartered in Ithaca
- [Ecolectro](#), an Ithaca-based company that uses polymer technology to accelerate the world’s conversion to use of clean fuel and chemicals
- [Willow](#), a Buffalo-based company that has created a healthcare decision-making tool for families needing assisted living facilities

“Launch NY has been gratified to see incredible interest from accredited investors in supporting our robust pipeline of investment-ready companies fueled by our pro bono mentorship and nonprofit seed fund. By introducing the new LP Fund we created a way to effectively double the capital we have available to local startups, and investors have an opportunity to earn a profit while doing good in a community they hold near and dear.” said Dr. Marnie LaVigne, President and CEO of Launch NY. “Knowing that our clients have asked for thirty times the capital we have provided to date, the LP Fund is a critical part of our expanding Invest Local Financing Programs. We are seeing the region transform economically and culturally through entrepreneurship, and people want to get involved.”

“Our deal flow and need for seed and early stage capital in Upstate New York remains significant. It is exciting to help fill that gap by having more capital to deploy from our recently recapitalized nonprofit seed fund and the co-investment it now triggers from the LP Fund,” said COO and Fund Manager Lindsay Karas Stencel, who was recently named Upstate Capital Association of New York’s Early Stage Dealmaker of the Year. “We look forward to maintaining our brisk investment pace and connecting more investors than ever with our innovative startups in Upstate New York.”

The for profit LP Fund is designed to co-invest alongside Launch NY’s nonprofit Seed Fund and provide investment capital to companies who meet Launch NY’s [criteria](#), which includes working with Launch NY’s [Entrepreneur-in-Residence](#) (EIR) program for at least three months. EIRs work with client companies before, during, and after Launch NY’s rigorous investment process that prepares entrepreneurs not only for achieving key milestones in their business, but also raising funding from Launch NY and other investors.

“EagleHawk would not be where it is today without the support of Launch NY. The coaching and the mentorship provided early on helped us position our business to raise capital,” said Patrick Walsh, Co-Founder and CEO of EagleHawk One, which is among the first companies to receive investment from Launch NY’s LP Fund. “Then when we started to raise capital, Launch NY’s commitment was seen as a vote of confidence and helped us secure commitments from other angel investors. We feel very fortunate to be a part of the Launch NY family.”

“With Launch NY as our lead investor, conversations with other investors have been progressing more smoothly and their network has opened many doors,” said Alex Hagen, President and Co-Founder of ShrubBucket. “With this investment we will be able to focus on expanding our business and building a stronger brand.”

For more information about Launch NY, its programs, including its Investor Network, Seed Fund and other 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 24 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 900 companies comprising more than 3,300 jobs, attracting over \$22 million in co investment and follow-on capital. Launch NY Portfolio Companies have created over 185 jobs with 34% of portfolio companies being women-led and 21% minority-led.