

2022 Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony

ENTREPRENEUR-of-the-YEAR AWARDEES

EAC: Capital Region Chamber Foundation

Entrepreneur: Ann-Marie Berdar

Business: Bare Blends, LLC

Ann-Marie Berdar finds her passion to help people with their health



Ann-Marie Berdar, never intended to start a multimillion-dollar franchise at 22. Her parents immigrated to the US with only about \$400 and a suitcase from Hungary. Having watched her parents struggle to make ends meet she said, “not for me!” While in college, she stumbled upon Yoga but couldn’t afford to pay the \$3,000 to become a certified instructor. So, she applied for a scholarship and to her surprise, won the award that allowed her an internship position in Aruba teaching yoga at a studio with a nutritious health café. It was then, she realized “this is the life I want” and returned to the states to execute her dream.

Ann-Marie’s passion for wellness led her to get a Master’s in nutrition at Stony Brook University. Having excelled in Cell Molecular Biology in undergrad, she wanted to find a way to combine her commitment to healthy nutritious food with her science-based knowledge, and with that began her entrepreneurial journey. She says comically, “If you want to be an entrepreneur, you should learn about business,” and with that she signed up for the Entrepreneur Assistance Center’s Entrepreneur Boot Camp training at Capital Region Chamber Foundation (CRCF).

The business advisors at CRCF helped Ann complete her business plan and introduced her to key leaders in the food industry and, received other technical assistance on financial record keeping and marketing analysis. Ann then went on to find a mentor and an investor to launch her very first business Bare Blends in 2018.

Bare Blends, based in Stuyvesant Plaza across from the University at Albany, sells plant-based smoothies and meals made to order from carefully selected, all natural, unprocessed, locally sourced ingredients. According to Ann-Marie, “Bare Blends is built on the foundational pillars of environmental sustainability, healthy eating and helping those in need especially as related to food insecurity. It is the only female-owned and whole food, plant-based franchise in the U.S.” Bare Blend’s food waste is donated to local farms, animal sanctuaries or compost piles whenever possible. Ann-Marie and her team continuously promotes their mission to help them think outside the box.