

The business of small businesses

California Capital is looking to back underserved entrepreneurs. Are you ready for the ride?

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

"Almost every day, we hear from small-business owners, 'I wish I had known you were here when I first started.'"

That's Deborah Muramoto speaking, sitting at a conference table with her team, explaining just what California Capital does. She's the president/CEO of the company, named as a Women's Business Center by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

It's also designated by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a "community development financial institution." Meaning that "51 percent-plus of our assets are invested in programs and services that benefit low- to moderate-income communities, communities of color, disadvantaged communities, veterans, LGBT and women," Muramoto said.

In other words, California Capital helps the underserved open their own businesses,

and does it well: Last year, it administered free education and counseling to nearly 3,000 entrepreneurs and provided \$37 million in access to capital.

"Our tagline is, 'Capital and capacity to serve communities,'" she said.

Muramoto and her team have a network of community partners helping them spread the word, including the Sacramento Employment & Training Agency and the Del Paso Boulevard Partnership, which is committed to bringing new businesses to Old North Sacramento.

Which dovetails nicely with California Capital's upcoming North Sacramento Business Success Forum, one of many free forums it regularly hosts throughout our region. The model has a tagline of its own: "Get expert advice on how to start, fund and grow your business."

Muramoto founded the forum program in 2002 as a bridge for immigrant refugees who could not practice their professions in the U.S., so started small businesses



The California Capital team for its Business Success Forum is ready to help small businesses on the road to success.

PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

instead, she said. "We wanted them to know how to navigate the system."

"We think of ourselves as a holistic environment that provides a continuum of services to small businesses," said Sophia Kanaan, director of the Women's Business Center. "With the North Sacramento forum, we get to let everybody know the nuts and bolts of what we do," including guidance on financing, taxes and resources.

Experts will be there to answer questions. "(Attendees) can talk to them about getting services and about doing business with local government," said Mike Schremmer, California Capital's director of operations. "Ultimately, we do follow-up care with the people who still need help."

In addition to the forums, California Capital hosts a lengthy menu of free classes at its headquarters, covering topics from how to market a business to locking down a logo.

As the March 5 forum will focus on Old North Sacramento, the question arises: Just what is needed there?

"More businesses," said Muramoto. "But in order to bring them in, the entrepreneurs need resources, education and access to capital, which is what we do."

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UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY, FEB. 27

SOULfull: Mindful business practices for soulful dreamers

6 P.M. | \$175 FOR SERIES

Participants will support one another through an eight-session series that cultivates the development of mindful business systems.

📍 Broad Room
1409 Del Paso Blvd.
Sacramento

SATURDAY, FEB. 29

On The Boulevard Art Show
6 P.M. | FREE

On The Boulevard group art show featuring Esteban Swayze, Traci Lords, Sacto Chilly and Slumfunk. Sponsored by Pabst Blue Ribbon, Dawg Pound Skateshop and Lurk Hard.

📍 Dawg Pound Skateshop
2100 Del Paso Blvd. Suite C
Sacramento

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

The North Sacramento Business Success Forum

5:30-8:30 P.M. | FREE

To register, and for more information:
www.cacapital.org, (916) 442-1729

📍 The Creator's Place
1901 Del Paso Blvd.
Sacramento

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Literacy Lounge
4-9 P.M. | DONATION

Several authors will share their work. Also enjoy a comedian, songstress, live painting and refreshments.

📍 Carol's Books
1913 Del Paso Blvd.
Sacramento