

Honourable Mention



2019 Dr. Paul E. Garfinkel Awards for **Entrepreneurial Achievement**



AEGDESIGNS.CA



Ashley Gordon

For the last nine years, Ashley has operated AEG Designs, a successful graphic design and photography business in Sudbury, Ontario. She found it difficult to find full-time work in her field after being laid-off during the 2009 recession. With the help of the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit program, she decided to follow her dreams and become an entrepreneur.

Over the years, Ashley has built an established clientele, most of whom have turned into long-term clients, and even some into friends. In 2017, she suffered a serious setback after sustaining a concussion in a car accident. She suffered from memory lapses and forgetfulness, which led to some missed meetings and appointments. When she spoke, she would often lose her words and slur her speech, which made it difficult when consulting with clients, causing anxiety and embarrassment. Exhaustion, severe migraine headaches and vision disturbances forced Ashley to reduce her work load, as it became difficult to work in front of a computer for long periods of time, or be in brightly lit environments. It was the biggest challenge she'd ever faced while running her business.

Rising Up

Despite lingering symptoms associated with Post-Concussion Syndrome, Ashley was determined to build her business while

recuperating from her injury. By the end of 2018, while continuing to attend weekly rehabilitation therapy and counselling appointments, Ashley had doubled her business income from the previous year thanks in part to the loan from Rise which helped her purchase new equipment to continue to generate more business.

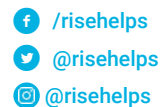
From January to May, 2019, Ashley surpassed the total income she made in all of 2017 - in only five months! On top of that, she welcomed her first born son Dawson, who arrived unexpectedly, one month early, in February, 2019 – and she was back at work a few days later with baby in tow.

"Rise could not have helped me at a better time. Throughout my recovery, business equipment was in need of repair and new items needed to be purchased. The loan allowed me to buy and repair office equipment that was crucial to the success of my business and allowed me to recoup the income I had missed out on since the accident. Despite a few setbacks in the last two years, my business continues to thrive and it truly is a rewarding and humbling feeling of accomplishment" – Ashley



Empowering people
Launching ideas

Rise Asset Development is a registered **charity** that provides low interest small business loans, training and mentorship to men and women with a history of mental health and addiction challenges.



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