

Passionate BC Ambassador for Women Entrepreneurs

In the fall of 2008, Women's Enterprise Centre recognized Maria Arankunda in a publication entitled *New Pioneers: Stories of 100 BC Women Entrepreneurs*. Since then, Maria has been taking centre stage as a successful woman business owner and passionate ambassador for women entrepreneurs in Rwanda, Uganda and BC.

A role model to women in business and members of the African Canadian community, Maria will be featured in a poster exhibition commemorating the History of Black Immigration to British Columbia. The exhibit is a partnership between Simon Fraser University Gallery and SFU Women's Studies Department and will be shown at the Teck Gallery (SFU Vancouver campus) from February 18 to May 10, 2009.

In March, Maria will share her passion and entrepreneurial savvy as a keynote speaker at the AGM for the Uganda Cultural Association of BC.

Recently she has been invited to partner with BPeace (The Business Council for Peace), a non-profit international network of business professionals who volunteer to help women entrepreneurs in post-conflict regions expand their businesses, create employment and build a more peaceful future for their communities. A professional cosmetologist, hair-stylist and owner of World Shine Ltd. in Burnaby, Maria didn't have to think twice before offering to participate in fundraising to help build Rwanda's first beauty vocational school.

One of the projects she will be working on is the import and sale of baskets, unique works of art hand-crafted by the women of Rwanda. Macy's in the US has been involved with BPeace for some time now and feature these beautiful baskets on their website www.macys.com/campaign/rwanda/index.jsp.

Maria is currently looking for interested individuals and businesses to help her sell the baskets and will soon be ready to launch her fundraising for the beauty school. She is excited about these projects and encourages anyone wishing to learn more about how to participate to contact her by email arankund@hotmail.com or phone 778.889.7940.

For more information about Women's Enterprise Centre and the New Pioneers book, see www.womensenterprise.ca.

Around the corner or around the province, Women's Enterprise Centre is helping women start, grow, and succeed in business by offering business advisory services, business skills training, business loans, resources, publications and referrals. Call us at 1.800.643.7014 or email info@womensenterprise.ca from anywhere in BC.