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Grateful LaGuardia CC Business Graduates Give Back



Suzanne Scanlon organized fellow graduates from 10,000 Small Businesses, a free business education program funded by Goldman Sachs and run in conjunction with LaGuardia Community College, to “pay it forward”.

For Suzanne Scanlon, giving back is second nature. So, when the lawyer and co-founder of the successful Berger Legal Secondment & Solutions d/b/a Bliss Lawyers, a virtual law firm that provides businesses with legal services and recruitment alternatives for full-time and part-time secondment attorneys, graduated from 10,000 Small Businesses, a free business education program funded by Goldman Sachs and run in conjunction with LaGuardia Community College, she knew she wanted to pay it forward.



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SEP "We wanted to properly express our gratitude," said Scanlon, who organized a group donation. "We couldn't give Goldman Sachs anything they would need, so we decided to replicate what they've done on another level." She and her classmates agreed they wanted to help LaGuardia in some way. Explaining that while in the program, which is held on the college's campus in Long Island City, they learned of the hardships of some of the students. She said, "We wanted to make a class gift to LaGuardia – that was the obvious choice." More specifically, they made a donation to LaGuardia Community College Foundation, whose mission is to raise, manage, invest and distribute funds for the college in support of immediate and long-term student, academic and facility needs, goals and priorities. Since 2003, the foundation has raised more than \$4.1 million and assisted more than 2,500 students.

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SEP After that initial gift of \$2,600, contributions continued to come in from the graduates. And not just from Scanlon's class, but from previous classes as well. "We've challenged other cohorts to help, and they have responded," said Scanlon.

The 10,000 Small Businesses Fund has been established and so far has contributed almost \$8,000 to the LaGuardia Community College Foundation. L
SEP "With their generous donations, 10,000 Small Businesses alumni are helping LaGuardia students get ahead and build a better future for themselves and their families," said Susan Lyddon, vice



president of institutional advancement at LaGuardia.<sup>L
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For her own part, Scanlon has benefited greatly from 10,000 Small Businesses. "I realized that though I was a lawyer, I had no formal business education," said the co-owner of the three year old company, which she operates from her home in [Ridgefield, Connecticut](#). At a business conference, she heard about the program – a \$500 million national initiative designed to help small businesses in the U.S. create jobs and economic growth by providing entrepreneurs with a practical business education, access to capital and business support services – applied, and was accepted. She got started immediately on her growth plan, a requirement and one of the reasons Scanlon was so interested in participating. But what she got was a lot more.

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SEP</sup>"I applied and entered the program for the curriculum and business education," she said. "I also got 28 new friends and business relationships." Noting that her fellow classmates and business owners are similarly situated and can relate to various issues," she added, "This group was a place to find understanding, ideas and solutions."

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SEP</sup>She also got a business advisor, who helped identify opportunities for growth, and a packet of materials on the first day of class, among other things. "This added so much value to the program," she said. "This all was an unexpected surprise!" <sup>L
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Since beginning the program this past June, Scanlon has hired five new people to work on a full time basis and has expanded into two more states. Bliss Lawyers has experienced revenue increase and is now operating in 10 states, with the goal of spreading throughout the U.S. and Europe. ^L_{SEP}

She also continues to execute her growth plan. "Part of my growth plan is to share my company's visions and mission with the entire legal industry," she explained. In December she spoke to the New York Bar Association about virtual law firms, lawyer lending libraries and doing away with billing hours. She is also working on a book about this concept that will be published by the American Bar Association in 2015. "The concept of this book came right out of my participation in 10,000 Small Businesses," she pointed out. ^L_{SEP}

Scanlon is grateful for the assistance and guidance provided to her, as well as the investment made by Goldman Sachs and LaGuardia in her and her fellow graduates. "We wanted to give back to the community that supported us," she said. "I think the 10,000 Small Businesses Fund will have a long and good life as new cohorts come in and scholars achieve success."