

August 27, 2007

### **Cardea Educational Services – Opening the Door to Learning**

Carol Skovsted, a special education high school teacher for over thirty years, was ready for retirement and thinking about her “next assignment”. She had many interests, including creative artwork, cooking, jewelry making, and, of course, always a passion for education. Carol thought about starting her own business in one of these areas, but was not sure how or where to begin. A friend, who currently had his own small business, suggested the UW- Milwaukee Small Business Development Center (SBDC) as a good starting point.

Carol enrolled in the SBDC Entrepreneurial Training Program (ETP). At the onset, she had so many different ideas for types of businesses to start. During the class, she developed and fine tuned her business concept to focus specifically on her passion - special education. Her start-up business portfolio included program development, testing services, differentiation instruction, and positive intervention plans. She had a good grasp on business skills, including marketing and sales, financials, and developing a business plan, and learned how to apply them to her own business,

Part of the class included developing a “One Minute Commercial” (elevator pitch) as part of networking and sales skills. Its primary purpose was to explain you and your business within one minute and get a call to action from the listener. After many iterations, and help from her assigned coach to keep her focused, she developed an articulate, concise elevator pitch. She was able to “pitch” her business to the Brown Deer school district. They are going to use her testing services and requested a proposal for working with teachers.

*“Working with the SBDC was extremely helpful. They taught me things about a business I had never thought of. The reality checks during the entire process kept me focused and moving forward. To try to start a business without these resources would have been a nightmare. The support and patience was outstanding. On a scale of 1-5, I would rate them a 6.” - Carol Skovsted, Business Owner*