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Small Business Development Center

SBDC Helps Wauwatosa Entrepreneur Reach Milestone

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Jessie Cannizzaro had a goal to start her business before she turned 30. On June 1, 2011 she launched Milestone Plumbing Inc., appropriately named for the milestone she reached just two weeks before her 30th birthday. Prior to starting her business, this journeyman plumber with an MBA attended the Entrepreneur Training Program (ETP) at UW-Milwaukee Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

The 12-week ETP provided coaching and resources that Cannizzaro needed to sharpen her business skills and develop her business plan. "I took the class because I knew if I signed up for it and had deadlines, I would finish the plan," says Cannizzaro. "I love working in the field, and I tend to find something physical to do versus sitting down and working on the plan, though I know it is important."

Funding was the biggest obstacle for Cannizzaro. "Because it was a brand new business, a traditional bank was not willing to do a business loan," she says.



The ETP introduced Cannizzaro to the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, where she obtained funds that helped her get the business off the ground. Those funds are now helping to hire an employee and purchase a second truck.

Milestone Plumbing provides installation and repair services to residential and commercial customers in primarily Milwaukee and Waukesha counties, though Cannizzaro never turns down a referral, even if it means she has to travel further from her home base in Wauwatosa.

Cannizzaro grew up helping in the family plumbing business. Though she never intended to start her own plumbing business, she now looks forward to expanding and adding five or six plumbers in the next few years. As she grows she considers SBDC Business Development Manager Kathy Orr a valuable resource.

"It is so key to have those resources to reach out to. Because I'm in uncharted territory, still trying to figure things out, plan and make my next move," says Cannizzaro. "Having people like Kathy to reach out to really helps to make sure that I do think about every little thing."

After nearly two years in business, Jessie and Milestone Plumbing are still going strong. For more information on Milestone Plumbing check out www.milestoneplumbinginc.com.