

DON RYAN

CENTER FOR INNOVATION

Update for Town Council
April 11, 2023

David Nelems, CEO

Overview

We have been very busy since my last update in October.

- *More use of the The HUB by partners, mentors, and of course, Program Companies.*
- *Our partnerships are strong, and we are receiving good feedback from working with multiple organizations.*
- *New events and programs have been enthusiastically received.*
- *We are functioning efficiently; providing valuable services to everyone we interact with.*
- *Awareness of the DRCI is growing and our reputation is positive.*

PROGRAM UPDATE

Programs



RESILIENCY

2 currently

79 since March 2020



STARTUP

7 currently

20 Companies since Feb 2020



GROWTH

5 currently

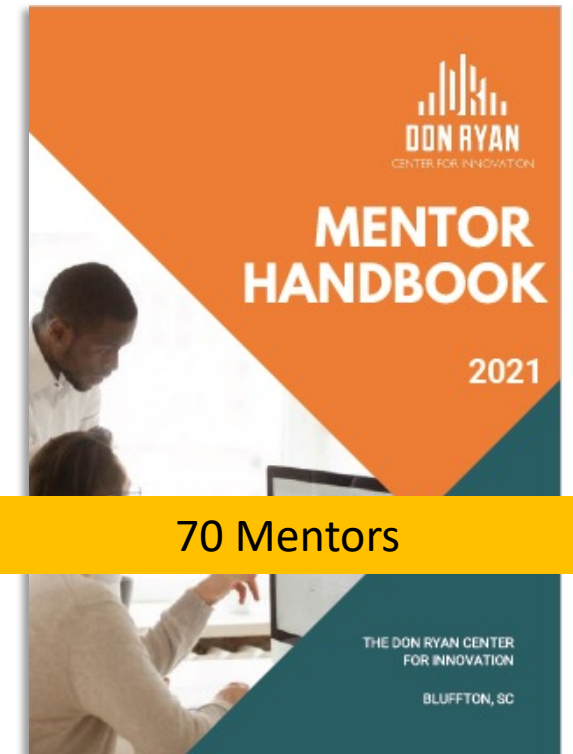
9 Companies since July 2020

Membership



1046 Members

Mentorship



70 Mentors

BUSY START TO 2023



A **localbiz** EXPERIENCE

THE ONE PRESENTATION YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS



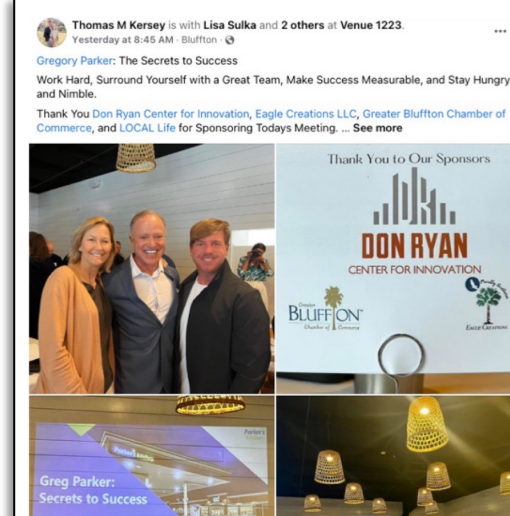
GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH PARKER'S FOUNDER AND VISIONARY GREG PARKER WHO WILL SHARE THE SECRETS TO HIS SUCCESS.

WHEN & WHERE
MARCH 22 | 7:30 AM
VENUE 1223
1223 MAY RIVER ROAD, BLUFFTON

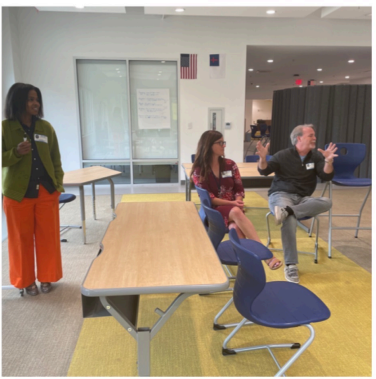
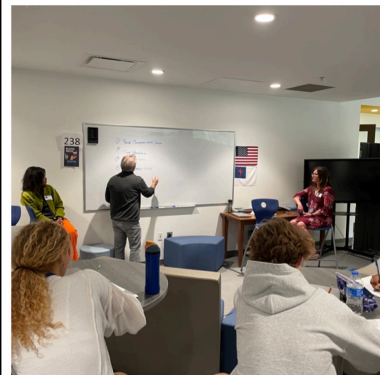
TICKETS
\$25 (INCLUDES BREAKFAST)
LOCALBIZSC.COM/PARKERS

Parker's
fast, fresh & friendly

PRESENTED BY: **DON RYAN**
CENTER FOR INNOVATION



BUSY START TO 2023



[making a difference]

improving our community

Written by Mark E. Lett | Photographed by Rutha Ritterbeck

THE LEADERS OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR THE REST OF US

The first of us make life better for the rest of us.

In Bluffton and across the Lowcountry, difference makers are out in force, determined to leave local life better than they found it.

Among them: David Nelems of The Don Ryan Center for Innovation and Jody Hayward from the Port Royal Sound Foundation — two leaders of organizations committed to improving the economy, the environment, and the quality of life in the Lowcountry.

Business is getting a boost in Bluffton, where start-up companies are lining up for advice and assistance from a town sponsored center for entrepreneurs.

From multi-purpose offices off the Burkhalter Parkway, the Don Ryan Center for Innovation is providing guidance and first hand experience to entrepreneurs and start-up companies that call the area home.

The center's mission is to help grow business while strengthening and diversifying the Bluffton area economy.

"We're really hitting our stride now," said David Nelems, the center's chief executive. "We intend to be in the right place, at the right time with the right message."

In some two decades of activity, the center has helped more than 60 businesses get their start and has provided advice and direction for more than 200 businesses.

Nelems said a variety of early stage businesses have been served, placing emphasis on those with the potential to "scale up" to serve the national marketplace. Recent start-ups gaining the center's assistance include a jet engine manufacturer and a retired English teacher who developed a popular quilting appique.

The center operates as an agency of the Town of Bluffton as the Small Business Concierge, directing businesses to local, state and federal resources. "The Town Council has been a big supporter and a key to success," Nelems said.

Among the center's services include office space and equipment, marketing and public relations support and pro bono legal advice through partnerships with local legal services.

The center has also launched a "HEROES" program, targeted at Lowcountry military veterans, police, firefighters and medical first responders. The program puts participants on a path to entrepreneurship and provides mentors with military service and business experience.

"They come to us with ideas and ask how to get started," said Nelems, adding that military experience combined with business guidance are ingredients for remarkable success.

A recent launch, he said, served a military retiree who developed a "no spill" spat for dog food bags and other applications.

"This area is well populated with veterans and retired first responders who have sound business ideas," said Nelems. "It's our honor to provide the appropriate support."

david nelems
THE DON RYAN CENTER FOR INNOVATION

anthemmediagroup.com | 25

BUSY START TO 2023

BUSINESS HEALTH CHECK



Business Health Check



Do you feel good about your company's performance?

Yes

No

Not sure

powered by SurveyMonkey

Scoring:

- **100-90 Points:** You are doing great. [Sign up to be a DRCI Mentor](#)
- **89-80 Points:** Looking better than most but still room for improvement.
- **79-60 Points:** Let's talk about some strategies that can help
- **60 or below:** Well... We can get you on the right track

Did you score less than 90?

[Set up a brief business health checkup call with Paul](#)



BUSINESS HEALTH CHECKUP?

"Better Call Paul!"

PAUL ARVANTIDES

VP of INNOVATION

(843) 540-7039

CALL PAUL NOW!



www.donryancenter.com/paul

PERFORMANCE

Twelve Companies in DRCI

- *Looking to add 2-4 more in next 60 days*

Measure	Goal	Status
# of informational or networking events hosted quarterly	5	5
# of mentors in the mentor network	40	70
% of businesses supported based in Bluffton	75%	66%
% of businesses supported that classify as an MBE	10%	25%
% increase in revenue generated by DRCI businesses	5%	On target
% increase in jobs created by DRCI affiliated businesses	10%	On target

Questions