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BLACK AND BROWN OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFIT CENTER

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Women Go For B-BOP Power

By Dianne Anderson

Women who are not typically the first to be invited to boardroom tables, namely women of color in low to moderate income communities, now have a place where they can hold their own boardroom meetings.

The newly renovated 10,000 square-foot Black and Brown Opportunities for Profit (B-BOP) Center held its grand opening this week with a sleek innovative space to scale up business acumen.

"This center is built for us, by us, we're not waiting anymore. We can do this. We can get the leadership, the training and networks necessary to give these women access so they can get the capital they need to build these thriving businesses," said Kima Russell, director of operations for B-BOP.

Russell said that business potential is big these days, especially being geographically close to the Ontario International Airport, as well as two of the nation's largest seaports.

The center wants to close the racial and gender gap on business inequality.

Many Black and Brown women, the hardest hit post-pandemic, are now getting back on their feet, and she said millions of square feet of inland warehouse space could be used by the women to house their own business products there.

"These ideas of entrepreneurial businesses could actually go global," she said. "Why not allow women to break these systemic barriers that are in place and focus on building sustainable businesses?"


According to a UC Riverside study, Black women in the Inland Empire represent a whopping 24% of the poverty rate, and women, in general, earn 68 cents on every man's dollar.

But they are also survivors, many holding down side hustles on top of their day jobs while raising families. They braid hair, sell party supplies. They're bakers and chefs.


"The reality is that Black and Brown women have been left out of this conversation for a long time. A lot of times, we are seen as the workers instead of being business owners," she said.

Russell said that B-BOP, the vision of Kim Carter, founder and executive director of Time for Change Foundation, is a one of a kind endeavor.

"I don't know of any other center dedicated to Black and Brown women that is providing an incubator and an accelerator," she said.



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Probably best of all, moms rushing home from work with no time to network can grab the kids and head to the center's on-site childcare.

There, they can enjoy the 14-room center, expected to be open 16 hours a day. There is abundant Wi-Fi with as many laptops as needed, some for checkout. In three separate conference rooms, they can meet up with investors. Aspiring restaurateurs or aspiring chefs could provide samples in the center's full kitchen.

Through a 12-week curriculum, they also plan to host mixers with local Chambers of Commerce, where participants can tap a wealth of information and forge knowledgeable contacts.

The entrepreneurial hub is sleek with an inspiring vibe where high-caliber professionals will lead the way.

Some women will come in with existing businesses or new business ideas, and learn to scale up. Small Business Administration representatives will explain opportunities with government loans. Entrepreneurs can pitch ideas to investors in the venture capitalist room.

There is also a legal room to get the right direction for how to partner with a venture capitalist.

"We don't want anyone to get the short end of the deal. These women are working hard to create their business plans and ideas, and we want their ideas to be protected, their intellectual property," she said.

For a nominal upfront fee, they are looking to reach as many women as come in. Everything is under one roof with wraparound education, capital, technology, and networking.

Russell, a licensed Realtor by trade, has had several side hustles herself over the years, including project management for international companies. She has gone to Cambodia and China to talk international affairs and business.

It's a lifelong passion for her.

If women can get help the right way, she said they might not have to return to the low-income grind, and their success also means they can pass on generational wealth to their children.


"Just bringing the spirit and the drive," she said. "If you have that, along with the faith of a mustard seed, right — you'll get it done"

For more information on the center located at 599 N. Arrowhead Avenue, San Bernardino, see <https://www.timeforchangefoundation.org>

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