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PRESS RELEASE

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MicroSkills Honours Women Entrepreneurs

Toronto - Community MicroSkills Development Centre today announced the recipients of the 2008 Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

"We are always very proud," says Lynda Shultz, Chair of MicroSkills' Board of Directors, "to celebrate these women and their wonderful accomplishments. Many have come to MicroSkills from difficult circumstances, and the establishment of their own business is proof of their strength, determination, and capability is the face of adversity."

ELENA ESPINOZA, Studio Espinoza

Studio Espinoza specializes in creating original Canadian abstract-expressionist landscape murals for home, office, and interior public spaces.

Elena Espinoza came to Canada from El Salvador. She studied art at the University of Windsor and later graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto. Elena says her inspiration comes from the beautiful Canadian landscape and its seasons. For the past 10 years, she's been exhibiting her art and working on commission murals. Elena has finally reached her dream of launching STUDIO ESPINOZA, a successful art business.

Elena's award has been sponsored by three past graduates of MicroSkills' Self-Employment Training Program for Women: Sophia Daley of Kinky Creations, Marcia Francis of Freedom Support Services, and Rina Rovinelli of Maximum Woman.

YVETTE JOSEPH, Matrix Staffing

Matrix Staffing provides employment opportunities by matching unemployed clients with employers in the manufacturing, transportation and administrative fields.

Yvette Joseph came to Canada from St. Vincent and the Grenadines seeking a better life for her children. For many years she struggled financially and suffered with health problems. Determined to turn her life around, Yvette opened Matrix Staffing Solutions. She is passionate about customer service and committed to helping clients embrace diversity as a competitive competency.

Yvette's award has been sponsored by Alterna Savings.

HOYAM H. ABBAS, Sudanese House

Sudanese House is a company that specializes in authentic Sudanese products such as perfume, henna tattoos, and traditional clothes and fabrics.

Hoyam Abbas came to Canada as a refugee from Sudan. It took more than nine years for her to obtain permanent residency. Her university degree and extensive work experience were not recognized. Frustrated with low paying factory jobs, Hoyam decided to start a home-based business geared to her community. With SUDANESE HOUSE, she imports many desirable products from Sudan.

Hoyam's award has been sponsored by Toronto Hydro.

Entrepreneur of the Year Awards are presented annually to successful graduates of MicroSkills Women's Enterprise and Resource Center's self-employment program. These women have achieved their dream of starting their own

business. They are being honoured for demonstrating exceptional entrepreneurial spirit in bringing their dynamic business ideas to life.

The awards will be presented at MicroSkills Annual Gala Celebration on Thursday, May 22nd, 2008, 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Pearson Convention Centre, 2638 Steeles Ave. East (Airport Rd. & Steeles Ave.), Brampton.

About Community MicroSkills Development Centre:

MicroSkills is a multicultural, non-profit, community based organization, providing settlement, training, employment and self employment services in North Etobicoke. For over twenty years, MicroSkills has empowered women, youth and newcomers to build better lives and careers. With an innovative and holistic approach unique in its sector, MicroSkills trains, guides and mentors over 20,000 adults and youth annually – one life at a time.

Proud sponsors of the MicroSkills Gala include:

The Co-operators, Toronto Hydro Electric System, Alterna Savings, Enbridge Gas Distribution, Margot Franssen, Credit Union Central of Ontario, SYSCO Food Services of Toronto, Woodbine Entertainment Group, Certified General Accountants, Scotia Bank, and OMNI Television.

For further information:

MICROSKILLS website: www.microskills.ca

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Portia Branford, Gala ticket sales: telephone 416-247-7181 x 2254, or e-mail: pbranford@microskills.ca