

THE Forum

The Forum Celebrates Three Women-Founded Businesses as Prize Recipients of The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch Finale 2023

New this year, The Forum has expanded its Pitch program to award more Canadian women entrepreneurs with prize funding and capital

Vancouver, BC, May 3, 2023 - [The Forum](#) - a Canadian charity that mentors, educates and empowers women entrepreneurs, is pleased to announce the three finalists of this year's [The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch Finale](#) who each walk away with a \$37,750 grand prize package to fund and fast-track their business goals.

The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch Program 2023 recipients are:

- Carlyn Loncaric, Founder & CEO, [VodaSafe Inc.](#)
- Mehwish Panjwani and Kelly Thomson, Co-Founders, [QUIL](#)
- Mehrsa Raeiszadeh, Co-Founder & COO, [MintList](#)

“We congratulate the recipients and all participants of this year’s The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch program as we continue to raise the bar for what it means to invest in women entrepreneurs today,” says Paulina Cameron, CEO of The Forum.

In The Forum's pursuit to 'leave no woman behind', the pitch program introduced a new prizing format this year that awards not one but three finalists with prize packages, enabling even more women entrepreneurs and their businesses to thrive. Prize packages include financial, social and knowledge capitals - from monetary funds to coaching and services such as legal, marketing and social media. The audience also voted and selected VodaSafe Inc. to receive an additional prize package valued at \$20,000 thanks to the generosity of Capital Sponsor Wheaton Precious Metals and Community Impact Partner, Good Eggs & Co.

“Being selected as a finalist in this year’s The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch program is an honour and a game changer for VodaSafe,” said Carlyn Loncaric, Founder & CEO, VodaSafe Inc. “The mentorship provided by Melanie Ewan, who is Co-Founder of Volition, and the access to community and capital provided by The Forum has been invaluable as we continue to transform water rescue to save lives and keep first responders safe.”

“This experience marks a milestone for QUIL and our growth as founders,” said Mehwish Panjwani, Co-founder, QUIL. “My co-founder, Kelly Thomson, and I built QUIL to empower brands to make the switch to reusable packaging, and we are thankful to our mentor Genevieve Pinto, Partner at Renewal Funds, and The Forum for their efforts in providing women-led businesses like ours with opportunities to truly innovate and thrive.”

“Sharing MintList’s vision at this year’s The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch Finale alongside fellow emerging women-led founders exemplifies what this program is all about,” said Mehrsa Raeiszadeh, Co-Founder & COO, MintList. “I want to thank my mentor, Rebecca Johnson, Investment and Operations Associate, BKR Capital, for her incredible guidance throughout this process, and look forward to MintList’s next phase of growth as we scale our AI-powered online marketplace and help consumers take the stress out of selling their cars.”

To celebrate this year’s program and participants, The Forum hosted its annual The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch Finale event on April 27, 2023 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver where the three finalists presented their business visions to a sold-out crowd of entrepreneurs, business leaders, investors and The Forum community, as well as viewers from across Canada who tuned in virtually.

The evening was hosted by television personality Sonia Mangat, with a special video message by the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, and a silent auction. The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch Finale is The Forum’s largest fundraiser, with this year’s event raising over \$861,000 in total. The event is not only a celebration of the finalists, but an opportunity to raise critical funds to ensure all women entrepreneurs in need can access The Forum’s programming.

The Forum thanks long-time supporter and Title Sponsor, Odlum Brown Limited. This year’s prize packages were generously donated by Capital Sponsor Wheaton Precious Metals, and Community Impact Partners Amazon Web Services, Crisp Media Inc., DLA Piper, Jelly Academy, Nectar Yoga Retreat, Talk Shop Media, and The Corker Collective. The evening was made possible by numerous talented partners, including women-owned Countdown Events.

The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch is a national program that addresses the barrier of access to capital and helps self-identified women entrepreneurs navigate and fast track their funding journey. Since launching in 2016, The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch has received over 1,800 applications. More information about The Forum and The Odlum Brown Forum Pitch program can be found at theforum.ca and theforumpitch.ca

About the Forum

The Forum is a national, registered Canadian charity with a mission to help women entrepreneurs access the resources and community they need to thrive in business. As The Forum marks its 21st year, the organization continues to see a rise in the need for programming across the country as more women turn towards building businesses. In the last year, The

Forum supported 1,600+ program participants, across 12 provinces and territories in Canada, and reached 44,000+ people with education, resources and inspiration across 219 unique communities. To date, the charity has supported over 11,500 women entrepreneurs across Canada through its programs and events including [The Odium Brown Forum Pitch](#), [The Forum Mentor Program](#), [The Forum E-Series program](#) and more. Visit theforum.ca for more.