

A Conversation Who's Time Has Come

Think Local First DC hosts 8 distinguished local business leaders to engage in a timely conversation about our communities at their annual Builder's Dinner

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 7, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Think Local First DC](#) hosts 8 distinguished local business leaders to engage for a timely conversation about our communities at their annual Builder's Dinner sponsored by Pepco Exelon.

Washington, D.C. August 1, 2018 – Think Local First DC announced their 2018 The Unplugged Series: The Builder Dinner was held on July 24th. Executive Director Michele Molotsky opened this year's event sponsored by Pepco Holdings, City First Bank, Truss, Access Green, New Columbia Solar, and DC Brau. MC's for the evening, Stacie Banks of Lee's Flower Shop and Ed Tuvin of City First Bank. Starting in 2015 with our Developer Dinner Series, these sit down dinners ignite conversations that explore the impact of physical and economic development in Washington, DC. We seek to open up the lines of dialogue between government, local business owners, developers, real estate companies and cultural leaders who are helping shape the urban fabric of DC and explore the intersections at which they collide while shaping a better DC business landscape. The Builder Dinner will unveil transforming stories and fruitful discussions from DC small to mid-sized businesses and developers on how they are growing and scaling in business with the community in mind.

[Eddie Tuvin](#) opened the ceremony by greeting the audience with, "Welcome to the revolution where our choice as consumers and business persons in who and where we do business is a vote of our conscious effort to promote Business as a Force for Good." "The time has come for the bad actors to not only get the message but also to feel the strong and unified message from our collective efforts to support both local business and those who truly are "good" for our communities. Our collective impact is huge. We vote and do business with our pocketbooks by supporting those we believe are following the practices of thinking locally and conducting business ethically. This is true conscientious capitalism at its best."

Jay Klug of JBG took the podium supporting localism quoting a recent NYTimes opinion written by David Brooks saying, "Localism is also thriving these days because many cities have more coherent identities than the nation as a whole. It is thriving because while national politics takes place through the filter of the media circus, local politics, by and large, does not. It is thriving because we're in an era of low social trust. People really have faith only in the relationships right around them, the change agents who are right on the ground."



Ed Tuvin of City First Bank and Stacie Banks of Lee's Florist co-host the evening and moderate the conversation.

Klug added, "While David Brooks' comments were offered through the lens of politics, we see a similar trend of localism in retail establishments in Washington. As a mixed-use real estate company whose roots in Washington date back over 60 years, we're thrilled to actively participate in this trend by supporting local retailers in our projects. For instance, 13 of the 18 tenants at our Shay project in the Shaw neighborhood in NW D.C. are locally owned and of those 13 local operators, 6 are owned by women. Connecting back to Mr. Brooks' comments, we believe supporting local retail helps build stronger relationships through increased trust and thus stronger places."

Raj Aggarwal, Think Local First DC Board Chairman and President of Provoc added: "Brooks' article refers to what we've been doing for 11 years. It then it led to a seminal article in the New York Times about the BALLE organization, where we are a network leader. "BALLE network of leaders work on many of our country's most difficult challenges — economic inequality, racial animosity, partisanship, and rural vs. urban divides. BALLE Fellows work tirelessly to shift economic control to communities adversely impacted by radical wealth inequality and environmental degradation" writes Courtney E. Martin in <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/31/opinion/business-investment-localism.html>

City First Bank

As City First Bank's SVP, Tuvin is responsible for the on-going execution of mission-centric business development activities for the Bank to drive growth in commercial loans, deposits, and ancillary banking services. City First Bank of DC is a nationally chartered commercial bank with a mission to provide financial and other services in low and moderate income communities opened 1998 on U Street. City First Bank is Washington D.C.'s first bank solely dedicated to community development finance.

City First was among the Inaugural 2017 Local First Awards Builder recipients given to: A local community developer, investor, or lender with deep roots in the community and known for positive investments in DC's people, culture, and future. Tuvin is also a member of the board of directors and the treasurer of the B Local Mid Atlantic organization promoting and educating our DMV community about best practices for B Corp certifications and alignment as well as spreading the message of Business As A Force For Good. City First, a certified B Corp, was awarded Best For the World 2018 Overall Honoree by B Labs.

Lee's Flower and Card Shop was established in 1945 and is still family owned and operated. A staple of the U Street corridor since 1969.

Stacie Lee Banks is the proud co-owner of Lee's Flower and Card Shop, Stacie has spent her entire professional career growing her family business. A native Washingtonian and third generation small business owner, Stacie's professional and personal roots run deep and wide throughout the DC Metropolitan community. Lee's Flower Shop is the 2017 Inaugural Local First Awards Community Champion Winner – A local business owner who makes a significant and noticeable impact in the community.

The 2018 Think Local First Builder's Dinner Think Tank List

Jay Klug, JBG Smith

As Executive Vice President for Retail Development at JBG Smith, Jay Klug is responsible for the acquisition, entitlement, financing, construction, and asset management functions for specific retail and mixed-use development projects. Specifically, he is leading JBGS's Tysons West development and entitlement project near the Spring Hill Road Silver Line metro station in Tysons.

Klug oversees a team of financial analysts and acquisitions/development associates who underwrite and help execute JBGS's many retail mixed-use projects. With a focus on placemaking, JBG Smith drives synergies across the portfolio and create amenity-rich, walkable neighborhoods.

Michael Babin, Owner, Neighborhood Restaurant Group

Michael Babin founded the Neighborhood Restaurant Group (NRG) in 1997 with the goal of creating unique, distinctive and exceptional restaurants and food-related businesses that reflect and enrich the communities in which they are located. Before entering the restaurant business, Michael worked in the political arena, first as a Legislative Aide handling Budget and Finance issues for US Senator J. Bennett Johnston, and then as a lobbyist and business consultant for Charlie McBride Associates.

Michael founded and serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture and serves on the Board of Director of Think Local First DC.

Bo Menkiti, The Menkiti Group

Bo Menkiti is the Founder and CEO of The Menkiti Group, an integrated real estate services company focused on the strategic development, management, and disposition of real estate in urban markets. He is also the CEO and Founding Partner of Keller Williams Capital Properties one of the fastest growing real estate brokerages in the Washington, D.C. Metro area.

Mr. Menkiti has been personally honored as a Minority Business Leader by the Washington Business Journal, by the National Association of Realtors as the District of Columbia Realtor of the Year in 2014, and in 2017 he was named an EY Entrepreneur of the Year® for Innovation for the Mid-Atlantic region and received the ICIC Marcia Lamb Award for Innovation.

Paul Ruppert, Warehouse Industries

Owner Paul Ruppert has been active in Washington's cultural and hospitality fields for over 20 years. His projects have included Warehouse Theater, Passenger & Columbia Room, Room 11, Crane & Turtle and Petworth Citizen.

Since our opening on November 1, 2014, owner Paul Ruppert and the Upshur Street booksellers have been invested in Petworth and in promoting DC culture – from literature to food, music, theater, and art. We get to know our customers well, and our selection reflects both our booksellers' and our community's taste.

Paul Ruppert is the recipient of the Inaugural 2017 Local First Awards Ripple Effect Award – A business that supports the local economy by purchasing supplies and services from other local businesses, creating a “ripple effect” as money circulates within the local community.

Lisa Banusiewicz, Vice President of Retail at Truss Holdings, Inc.

Lisa Banusiewicz has worked with several well known commercial real estate companies in Washington, DC including Street Sense and Real Living | At Home. She recently became Vice President of Retail at Truss Holdings, Inc – a commercial real estate leasing platform helping tenants find the perfect space for their business. Truss is a licensed real estate broker and acts as a tenant representative. Truss saves clients time and money through using their 3D virtual tours to check out spaces.

Jerri Evans, Owner Turning Natural Juice Bars

Jerri Evans is the owner and founder of Turning Natural Juice Bars. The mission of Turning Natural is to bring better choices to communities that are underserved, making healthy foods affordable, cool, and ultimately taste like magic! Community and integrity being are their main core values. Turning Natural prides themselves on educating, reconnecting cultures and providing juices made with love and precision.

Jerri has worked in the health wellness and fitness industry with experience in Nutrition Education, Customer Service, Wellness Coaching, Fitness Training, and Holistic Health.

Virginia Arrisueño, Founder, Steadfast Supply

Virginia Arrisueño is a founder of Steadfast Supply, a conceptual retail store providing a platform for independent brands and designers from around the country to share their goods and their stories with the denizens of The Yards. Steadfast Supply is a store with deep roots in creative entrepreneurship that celebrates the triumphs of small businesses by serving as an incubator to independent designers and brands, inspiring them to grow and thrive.

Virginia is also the owner and lead designer of DeNada, an emerging accessories line, specializing in handmade knits for women and men.

Think Local First DC will be opening up the Early Bird ticket sales for the 2018 Local First Awards on August 1st, 2018. The Local First Awards will be held at The Showroom DC on October 18, 2018. Inquiries about tickets and further participation in the Think Local First DC can be made to Michele Molotsky at michele@thinklocalfirstdc.com.

Michele Molotsky
Think Local First DC
202-540-7405
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases. © 1995-2018 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.