

## PRESS RELEASE

### Innovation fund to power shop local on The Eglinton Way

One of Toronto's most fashionable neighbourhoods is leading the way on a Gift Card initiative to rejuvenate local businesses.

Led by The Eglinton Way Business Improvement Area (BIA), the new Eglinton Way Gift Card can be spent with multiple participating businesses on the Eglinton Way, including stores, salons, services, restaurants and more.

The Eglinton Way Gift Card has been made possible with a \$50,000 grant from the City of Toronto's Main Street Innovation Fund, which gives BIAs the chance to test innovative and creative solutions to local challenges.

The Main Street Innovation Fund is funded by the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. The Eglinton Way Gift Card is powered by fintech Miconex in association with international payments technology solutions provider EML Payments and is the first of its kind in Toronto, with similar Downtown Gift Card programs running across Canada, including in Ontario.

**Maureen Sirois, Chair of The Eglinton Way BIA, said:** "We're proud to be taking the lead in Toronto with this brand new Gift Card initiative to drive local shopping and put dollars back into the community. Many of our businesses on The Eglinton Way are independently owned and family run.

The Gift Card is a simple and easy way to encourage even more people to experience the wide range of businesses on The Eglinton Way, and can be used for occasions all through the year, from Mother's Day to Christmas, teacher gifts to employee appreciation. We'll also be using the Gift Card in our own events and promotions, showcasing The Eglinton Way offering to an even wider audience."

#### **Bike shop Go Dutch is part of the new Eglinton Way Gift Card. Owner Bas de Beer said**

"Go Dutch is Eglinton's local neighbourhood bike shop. Because they are upright, our Dutch bikes offer high comfort and low maintenance. But as well as selling bikes, we're a community hub with group rides and servicing for all types of bikes. Community is everything, and that's why we're joining the Eglinton Way Gift Card. It is a great thing for our area as it creates a whole rotation of support."

"We've been in business for three years now, and finding new ways to attract new customers can be tricky, especially with small marketing budgets. I think the Gift Card could bring new people to Eglinton and it could also give people the opportunity to try new things, such as biking. Our mission is to enable more Canadians to give biking a go."

"As well as people using the Gift Card for gifts, I can also see it being useful for organizations to use in promotions, keeping dollars here in Eglinton. We have to help each other through the good times and the tough times too."

**A salon that accepts the new Eglinton Way Gift Card is beauty and lifestyle studio B.Beautiful, who specialize in everything brows, lashes, beauty and lifestyle. Owner Brittini Alexandra, known as the Brow Queen of Toronto, said:**

“I grew up in the area ‘The Eglinton Way’ and even though I’ve traveled all over for work, primarily LA, I knew I wanted to open my business here. Eglinton was always the place for cool stores and the Gift Card is great because it will encourage new people to the area and help bring Eglinton back to what it used to be.”

“The Eglinton Way Gift Card is an amazing incentive to keep the support on Eglinton and make it great again. Why not make a day out of it while you are here? Stop for a coffee first then come to B.Beautiful for everything you and your brows need! When people shop local, it means everything to small business owners who in turn give back to our communities. Shopping locally helps to keep our city alive; small businesses are what make Toronto.”

**Another business which accepts the new Eglinton Way Gift Card is Rimini Rimini Restaurant, run by husband and wife team Marsida and Melsi Lazimi. Marsida Lazimi said:**

“We opened the restaurant about 7 months ago, and serve Italian food, cooked the way we cook in Italy, fresh and in season. Customers say that we’re different from other Italian restaurants and the way we have been welcomed into the neighbourhood is beautiful.”

“As a new business, accepting the Eglinton Way Gift Card will be good for raising awareness of our restaurant and as a way to support all of the small businesses here. It’s vital that we bring new customers through the door, who will then hopefully become regular customers.”

“On the Eglinton Way, it’s going back to how it used to be, when people lived, shopped and dined more locally. It’s good for the customer, because they get better service, and it’s good for the business, because they can stay open, adapt and improve. I look forward to accepting the new Gift Card at the restaurant.”

The Eglinton Way Gift Card can be purchased online with delivery direct to the recipient, and in person from the Eglinton Way BIA office or at the BIA’s events.

The Eglinton Way Gift Card is issued by Peoples Trust Company. Card funds are not insured by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC) or any other government deposit insurer or agency. Funds do not expire, non-reloadable and no cash access. For Cardholder Agreement or Customer Service: [www.getmybalance.com](http://www.getmybalance.com) or 1-833-558-1108.

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