

2013 ABORIGINAL PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

ERASMUS APPAREL, NT



Erasmus Apparel is an Aboriginal-owned company that embodies the hard-working and adventurous spirit that makes the north and its residents the most wonderful place and people on this planet. Creativity, passion, hard work, risk taking... these are just a few of the terms that can be used to describe this successful new business. Erasmus Apparel is 100% Aboriginal-owned and an ideal example of how to become successful in the northern business world. Despite still being very young herself, Sarah Erasmus is already an inspiration and role model for current Aboriginal youth and future generations on how hard-work, perseverance and dedication can make your dreams come true.

In January of 2011 Sarah Erasmus was fresh out of design school, full of ambition, hopes and a vision for a successful northern business, when she decided to take a huge risk. She decided against the safety of taking her talent to an existing business and instead took a chance, followed her dreams, and created Erasmus Apparel with the intent to fill a gap that existed in the northern marketplace.

Erasmus Apparel was created to produce original clothing and products, designed and produced by a northerner for northerners. The business started on little more than a dream and some support from her family. Working out of her parents' house, Sarah used the inspiration of her family and put her creativity to work making designs that would inspire all northerners. The designs she has come up with speak to all northerners but particularly to the Aboriginal community. The ingenious "Got Diamonds? Thank a Dene." shirts, the child's traditional vest shirts, and even the iconic Erasmus Apparel moose logo itself are all a tribute to her Aboriginal roots and the pride she has in her culture.

While the Erasmus Apparel designs are inspired by Sarah's upbringing and the influence of her close family, they touch all northerners, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike. Walking down the streets of Yellowknife you are likely to see Erasmus Apparel products worn by any member of our diverse northern population. From the native elder sporting an Erasmus Apparel cap, to the MLA wearing an "I Am From Yellowknife" t-shirt, to the baby in a stroller sporting a Giant Mine onesie, to the snowboarder wearing a Movember neck warmer, Erasmus Apparel has infiltrated all facets of our society. If you want to look good, and look like you belong, Erasmus Apparel is the easiest way to do it.

Sarah is very proud of her Aboriginal roots and looks to give back to the community at any opportunity she can find. A prime example of this is her ongoing support of local students through sponsorship of the "Outstanding Student Award" at Kalemi Dene School. Each year, one deserving student is recognized with an award, a gift and a plaque at the school. Sarah recognized the benefits that the school provides to Aboriginal youth and took it upon herself to provide a little recognition of this through the award. She fully funds the award and shows up to the Kalemi Dene School's award ceremony every year to present the award to a deserving student. The students love the ceremony and the award, and it would not be possible without Sarah's support.

The creativity and generosity that have been instilled in her also take center stage during the Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer Awareness months (October & November). Every year during the autumn months, the Erasmus Apparel Breast Cancer Awareness and "Movember" merchandise are among the hottest items in town with a portion of the profits from their sales being donated to support these wonderful causes. The entire Erasmus Apparel family embraces this generous spirit as well, entering a team into the Run for the Cure and both donating and raising money during this event. These are just a few of the ways that Sarah gives back to the community with her time, effort and financial support.

Despite being a relatively new business, Erasmus Apparel is successful and growing with each passing season. Sarah has proven to be a savvy businesswoman and role model to all Aboriginal youth by showing that with a little hard work and dedication you can achieve your dreams. She has provided future aspiring entrepreneurs with a blueprint of how to successfully pursue your dreams while remaining true to your roots.