

# Entrepreneurship *The Tiny Business Model*

One universally accepted definition of entrepreneurship is: **the activity of setting up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.** However, ConNECKtedTOO's definition expands beyond the goal of profitability to include community advancement and neighborhood improvement. This adjusted definition could be described as having a social component. Without question, it is impossible to sustain a business if it is not profitable but, consider those enterprises that do not provide its owner(s) great wealth but can serve as a valuable resource to its community/neighborhood.

ConNECKtedTOO has collaborated with a number of varied types of *TINY Businesses (TB)* and currently we are focusing on barbering (barbershops) through the **CHARLESTON CUT** project. The art of barbering provides an entrepreneurial opportunity that truly encompasses our definition. Neighborhood barbershops have not changed their services, viability, connections to the community and in many cases location, for generations. These *TBs* provide grooming services that are timeless, (haircuts, shaves, etc.). The CHARLESTON CUT project has also highlighted a social service aspect to barbering that is provided through barbershops. Stories have been presented during events which tell of occasions when self-esteem was restored and how there is just a good feeling of self-worth after leaving the barbershop. Customers sometimes visit between haircuts just for the comraderies. After all, it is common knowledge that "All of the world's problems are discussed and solved at the barbershop".

Barbershops are viable because neighborhood people, young and elderly, can walk to the shops alleviating transportation issues. Also, barbers have been able to support their families and have taught the skill/trade to their offspring who become entrepreneurs able to support their family. Barbershops connection to the community is such that, many times fathers are having their young son's hair cut by the same barber they patronized while growing up. Another factor associated with barbershop ownership is that these entrepreneurs are in a unique position to provide apprenticeships, and employment opportunities for persons who are able to acquire the necessary skills and have had difficulty gaining employment sometimes due to a criminal record or maybe are new to a city.

The CHARLESTON CUT project has also exposed us to a number of women barbers/stylists, something almost unheard of a generation ago. I would venture to state that women have historically always cut men's hair in the home. However, the number of women using the trade or skill to become entrepreneurs has grown considerably in recent times. Barbershops are an example of entrepreneurship as a *TINY BUSINESS* which not only seeks to be profitable but also can serve as a valuable resource to the community/neighborhood.