

Salute to Brooklyn Women

Internet Travel Business Grows with Support From Community Capital Bank

Caylin Sanders is the first to admit that her Internet travel business *EscapeMaker.com* wouldn't have gotten its start five years ago without the loan she received from Community Capital Bank.

"No other bank would have given a dot com company like mine a chance in September 2000, but Community Capital Bank believed in us," said Ms. Sanders, of Park Slope. "The bank gives small business entrepreneurs hope and it really makes a difference in the community."

Ms. Sanders met John Tear, senior vice president of Community Capital Bank, after he spoke one evening in 2000 at an entrepreneur training course she was taking at Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation. She approached Mr. Tear and after reviewing her application for a \$100,000 start-up loan with a Small Business Administration (SBA) guarantee, the bank approved it. Later Community Capital Bank approved two additional loans Ms. Sanders used to expand her business.

"Community Capital Bank has been with me every step of the way," she said. "I couldn't ask for a better banking relationship."

"Caylin had a unique idea, a great business plan, 30 percent equity invested in the business, and a lot of enthusiasm," Mr. Tear said. "It's been gratifying to watch her business succeed and grow during the last five years."

Community Capital Bank was the 16th largest SBA lender in the New York City area in 2005, and in recent years has been a leader in SBA lending to women- and minority-owned businesses.

Ms. Sanders developed the idea for *Escapemaker.com* after becoming frustrated trying to plan trips outside of New

York City using public transportation. As a result, the Web site features vacations and weekend getaways that are accessible by both car and public transportation. The Web site gives users seeking vacation spots the option of searching for locations that can be reached by train and bus.

Based in Brooklyn and operating with a full-time employee, part-time employee, and two freelancers, *EscapeMaker.com* promotes vacation packages, last minute travel deals, and restaurants, lodging, events, cultural and historical sites, and outdoor activities such as skiing, snowboarding, and golf in 12 states: New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey as well as Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.

New York State's Department of Tourism recognized *EscapeMaker.com* as an ideal place to advertise its "I Love NY" campaign and is now using the Web site to promote different regions of the state. In February, the "I Love NY" section of the Web site encouraged readers to enter a contest for a Girlfriends' Getaway to the Hudson Valley featuring two nights at a local bed and breakfast, dinner, a massage, a tour of a local vineyard and other amenities.

The next step for Ms. Sanders is to highlight the neighborhoods of Brooklyn as part of Borough President Marty Markowitz's efforts to promote Brooklyn tourism. *Escapemaker.com* will soon begin featuring Brooklyn's cultural and historical institutions, events, and Borough Hall's new Brooklyn Pass, which offers discounts at the borough's tourist destinations.

"I feel so honored to be promoting my adopted hometown," said Ms. Sanders, who is originally from California and graduated from Drew University in New



All Aboard. Caylin Sanders, founder of *EscapeMaker.com*, at Grand Central.

Photo by Gregory P. Mango

Jersey in 1995.

EscapeMaker.com is frequently featured in the media, and Ms. Sanders, now an expert on e-marketing, has begun making presentations at tourism conferences to encourage hotels and others in the industry to promote their businesses using the Internet.