



Rural Development • Rural Business Service • Rural Business Development Grant

## Business Incubator Gives Entrepreneurs Access to Expertise, Growth

For a starting entrepreneur, having a mentor or expert within reach on an as-needed basis to help answer questions, pitch ideas, and test theory may seem like a very expensive luxury. At one business incubator in Park City, Utah, however, it's standard.

At Pandolabs, those involved in business ideas and start-ups pay a monthly fee to use the physical co-working space and have regular meetings with and assistance from mentors. It's a collaborative environment where entrepreneurs, coaches, and other groups gather to share their knowledge and work toward achieving business venture goals. Establishing an organization like Pandolabs isn't easy and takes some investment. To help make it possible, USDA Rural



*Marielle Pariseau, founder and CEO of Teeth First, is a member of Pandolabs where she is working to grow her business ideas.*

Development provided two grants over two years through the Rural Business Development Grant program. The first grant, made in 2014, was used to support the programming of Pandolabs and fill an unmet need in the area. In 2015, Pandolabs received another grant to support a training program and further improve business success.

Marielle Pariseau is a social entrepreneur who joined Pandolabs in 2015 and is the founder and CEO of Teeth First. Marielle has been a dentist for four decades and has a strong conviction that the incidence of dental diseases throughout the globe is unacceptably high. Teeth First is her answer to poor oral hygiene. It is currently a program and product which will make oral hygiene as accessible as hand hygiene. For now she works with local high school students to implement an early-intervention oral hygiene program. "The bigger vision for me," she says, "is to create a new model for communities embracing oral health." Marielle has been working with Pandolabs to grow her idea and create a business model for Teeth First.

Though Marielle hasn't reached her ultimate goals yet, she is confident that she's in the right place to meet the right people who will help her achieve them. "As a social entrepreneur it's a tough job," she says, "It's hard to remain committed, it's hard to keep the energy level high enough, and Pandolabs is a place where the energy is. Pandolabs has been a great place for me to work from and to establish new connections."

**Obligation Amount:** \$99,000 (2014), \$28,196 (2015)

**Date of Obligation:** September 2014, August 2015

**Congressional District:** Representative Bishop, UT-1; Senators Hatch and Lee

**Partners:** N/A

**Demographics:** Park City, UT population: 7,962

**Impact:** Small businesses receive training and access to professional experience to help them grow their business and expand opportunities for those living and working along the Wasatch Back region.