

Edinburgh Startup wins Theo Paphitis Small Business Sunday Award

In 2010, small business champion and retail entrepreneur Theo Paphitis, of Dragons' Den fame, started up his Small Business Sunday initiative. In a weekly competition, small business owners can pitch their businesses to Theo via social media, and he hand picks six winners and shares these with his 500,000 followers. This culminates in an annual exclusive networking event, where all winners receive their award certificate from Theo himself. In Theo's own words "We are thrilled to welcome new #SBS members every week and highlight just how important it is to support our small businesses here in the UK. My vision is that everyone who has ever won #SBS becomes part of a friendly club; like-minded individuals who can share successes and learnings."

Jenni Fuchs from Edinburgh, who started up her unisex children's clothing brand Awsm Street (<https://awsm.st/>) during lockdown, was one of the lucky winners to attend the most recent event at the ICC in Birmingham last week. Finding herself out of working during the pandemic, following a career of over 15 years in the cultural sector, Jenni was inspired to launch Awsm Street after being frustrated at the lack of clothing choices on the High Street for her two boys. She says "Everything was either very gendered towards the stereotypical pink or blue, of increasingly colourless the older my boys got. But they love to live life colourfully, so I decided to make our own clothes and show that unisex clothing doesn't have to mean monochrome. We believe that all colours are for everyone!"

While Jenni owns and runs the business, behind the scenes it's very much a family affair. Although her husband has a full time job in tech, he pitches in with the designs and helps out with the artwork. Their two boys are entrepreneurs in the making too, not just modelling the clothes but also contributing their own designs. On being an #SBS winner, Jenni says "Starting up a business during lockdown and gaining visibility has been tough. That's why being picked by Theo Paphitis as one of his six weekly winners. And being profiled on the #SBS website (<https://www.theopaphitissbs.com/>) which is exclusive to all Small Business Sunday winners, has been such a great boost to raising our profile. Attending the awards ceremony in Birmingham last week has been the absolute highlight of my business journey so far."

About Awsm Street: Edinburgh-based independent business specialising in colourful unisex clothing for children.

About Theo Paphitis: Greek-Cypriot British retail magnate and entrepreneur, best known for his appearances on the BBC business programme Dragons' Den.

28/02/2022