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## MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT

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### **Simply Grace LLC Named Microenterprise Business of the Year** **Springfield-based company supporting renaissance of Downtown Springfield**

**BOSTON** – The Small Business Administration (SBA) has named Simply Grace LLC the 2018 Microenterprise Business of the Year for Massachusetts.

Simply Grace LLC earned the recognition for their part in the revitalization of Downtown Springfield. The company offers retail products and wellness experiences at their Simply Serendipity Boutique, Dharma Yoga Studio and collaborations with other business owners at The Shops at Marketplace.

*“The transformation of Downtown Springfield is being driven by dynamic women business owners such as Mikki and Nancy of Simply Grace,”* **SBA Massachusetts District Director Robert Nelson said.** *“For over 12 years, their Main Street location was vacant until they started a microbusiness that turned into an anchor for a vibrant business district. “*

Mikki Lessard and Nancy Feth are catalysts for collaboration and partnerships with other businesses and the community at large in the city of Springfield. They are helping drive the renaissance happening in Downtown Springfield and transforming it to a "retail-tainment" district – connecting people to a vibrant and contemporary retail shopping experience.

Simply Grace LLC received an **SBA guaranteed loan through Berkshire Bank** in 2016 to support growth. They were referred to Berkshire Bank and learned about the SBA loan during counseling with Samalid Hogan at the MA Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) at the Scibelli Enterprise Center in Springfield. Simply Grace worked with Samalid Hogan upon opening their retail operation in Springfield, after previously operating an online e-commerce business.

*"We passionately believe in the renaissance of downtown Springfield. The Shops at Marketplace is our collective contribution to this amazing, inspiring, unfolding story in the city. We embrace a contemporary solution of sustainable retail business through collaborative partnerships and experiences,"* **said Mikki and Nancy, Owners of Simply Grace LLC.** *“There is a different way to live life and be in business. Mindfully, our tagline supports our values and purpose. ‘...discover and experience a little local goodness downtown.’”*

Over the past three and half years since the launch of Simply Grace, the business has been expanding exponentially and creating jobs for the region. In addition to the two owners working in the business, they have employed: part-time staff to support the Downtown Springfield Holiday Markets; several different yoga teachers; and also hosted interns from Mt. Holyoke College.

The company was nominated by Samalid Hogan, Regional Director at the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Western Regional Office.

Michelle Lessard and Nancy Feth, Co-Owners will be honored at the annual SCORE Boston / SBA awards luncheon along with other 2018 Massachusetts Small Business Week winners at the Sheraton Needham Hotel on Friday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

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### **About the U.S. Small Business Administration**

The U.S. Small Business Administration makes the American dream of business ownership a reality. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start and grow their businesses. It delivers services to people through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).

