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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FIFTY LEADING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS HONORED FOR THEIR COMPANIES' RAPID AND THRIVING GROWTH**

*The Women Presidents' Organization and American Express Name 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies at Ceremony in Baltimore*

Baltimore, MD (April 8, 2016) – The [Women Presidents' Organization](#) (WPO), in partnership with [American Express](#), today released the ninth annual ranking of the 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies. The 50 Fastest generated a combined \$4.96 billion in 2015 revenues (mean of \$99.2 million) and collectively employed 44,744 in 2015 (mean of 1,028). The top three honorees are:

- **S'well, a New York City-based beverage bottle manufacturer**, is the fastest growing women-owned business and newcomer to this year's ranking. Over the past two years, the firm's revenue (\$2,517,155 in 2013 to \$47,245,079 in 2015) and employment (3 employees in 2013 to 40 in 2015) skyrocketed. Sarah Kauss, chief executive officer, who owns 100% of the firm, attributes business success to a sheer dedication to her company, hard work and belief in the product and the brand.
- **Pinnacle Group, an IT workforce solutions firm based in Dallas**, moves down to #2 from holding the top spot in 2015. Nina Vaca, president and chief executive officer, saw her 20-year-old company break the billion dollar barrier (\$1,159,815,799 in 2015, up from \$201,493,192 in 2013). The entrepreneur, who still owns 100% of the firm she founded at age 24 with \$300 of startup capital, accredits "putting people first" as her number one strategy for her company's Texas-sized growth.
- **Fitness studio franchise Orangetheory Fitness**, another newcomer to the list, is the third fastest-growing company. The six-year-old Fort Lauderdale, FL-based firm, led by Ellen Latham, saw its revenue escalate from \$3,147,199 in 2013 to \$47,537,711 in 2015 and added 56 employees during that time span.

"This year's 50 Fastest list represents our most diverse ranking ever, with an immense geographic reach covering 20 states and one international winner in Turkey, as well as industries ranging from energy

efficiency services to cybersecurity and engineering,” said Marsha Firestone, Ph. D., president and founder of the WPO. “We are once again so very pleased to partner with American Express in paying tribute to these influential women and recognizing the vital role that women-owned/led companies have in boosting the economy and enhancing overall job growth.”

“According to our recent State of Women-Owned Businesses report, the number of women-owned firms grew at a rate of five times faster than the national average since the recession,” said Susan Sobott, president, Global Commercial Payments, American Express. “We are thrilled to showcase the successes of these fifty honorees in order to inspire other women to build high-growth businesses.”

Each of the honored business owners will be offered a congratulatory prize from American Express.

Applicants do not have to be WPO members. All eligible companies were ranked according to a sales growth formula that combines percentage and absolute growth. From this list, the 50 Fastest were selected. To be qualified for the ranking, businesses are required to be privately held, woman-owned/led companies and have reached revenue of at least \$500,000 by the first week of 2011 and \$2 million in 2015.

More about the 2016 50 Fastest:

- Average Age: 49
- CEOs that founded the business: 92%
- Listed companies that do business globally: 44%
- Provide health insurance: 92%
- Plan to continue to grow their company: 90%
- State hiring the best talent as their biggest business challenge: 44%

All 50 companies will be honored at a special event hosted by American Express at the 2016 WPO Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland on Friday, April 8, 2016. The dinner and awards ceremony will take place from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront.

Each attendee of the WPO conference will receive a new handbook, 50 Fastest Women-Owned/Led Companies Guide to Growth, sponsored by American Express. It includes past honorees’ tips to achieve rapid company growth and focuses on five areas that change significantly when a business scales: HR, branding, financing, sales and innovation.

The 2016 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies Include:

	<b>Entrepreneur Name</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>City, State/Province/Country</b>
1	Sarah Kauss	S'well	New York, NY
2	Nina Vaca	Pinnacle Group	Dallas, TX
3	Ellen Latham	Orangetheory Fitness	Fort Lauderdale, FL
4	Dr. Rebecca Thomley	Morning Star Financial Services	Golden Valley, MN
5	Kristi Alford	E2 Optics	Englewood, CO
6	Britnie Turner Founder	Aerial Development Group	Nashville, TN
7	Therese Tucker	BlackLine	Woodland Hills, CA
8	Kristina Roth	Matisia Consultants	Seattle, WA
9	Shelly Sun	BrightStar Franchising LLC	Gurnee, IL

10	Lacy Starling	Legion Logistics, LLC	Florence, KY
11	Kay Ivie	Ivie & Associates, Inc.	Flower Mound, TX
12	Claudia Mirza	Akorbi	Plano, TX
13	Zeynep Erkunt Armagan	Erkunt Tractor Industries, Inc.	Ankara, Turkey
14	Staci L. Redmon	Strategy and Management Services, Inc.	Springfield, VA
15	Liz Elting	TransPerfect	New York, NY
16	Phyllis Newhouse	Xtreme Solutions Inc.	Atlanta, GA
17	Victoria L. Vasques	Tribal Tech, LLC	Alexandria, VA
18	Rebecca Cenni	Atrium Staffing	New York, NY
19	Stephanie Point	Point 2 Point Global Security, Inc.	Addison, TX
20	Jamila Stanford	NuGate Group, LLC	San Jose, CA
21	Ronia Kruse	OpTech, LLC	Troy, MI
22	Kara Trott	Quantum Health	Columbus, OH
23	Michelle Baker	Swoon Group LLC	Chicago, IL
24	Denise Legg	MegaCorp Logistics	Wilmington, NC
25	Christina Seelye	Maximum Games	Walnut Creek, CA
26	Nancy Stango	Blink Reaction dba FFW	Princeton, NJ
27	Paloma Bilson	Protea Group International	North Hollywood, CA
28	Veronica Edwards	InGenesis, Inc.	San Antonio, TX
29	Diane Astley	Xclusive Staffing	Westminster, CO
30	Shavila Singh	Zero Waste Solutions, Inc.	Concord, CA
31	Dee Hays	Excellence Engineering, LLC	Tulsa, OK
32	Molly Gimmel	Design To Delivery Inc.	Bethesda, MD
33	Britt Whitfield	The Revel Group	Chicago, IL
34	Kathy Benson	ORI	Herndon, VA
35	Pamela O'Rourke	ICON Information Consultants, LP	Houston, TX
36	Lily Sarafan	Home Care Assistance	Palo Alto, CA
37	Marilyn Grabowski	Atlantic Infra	Wall, NJ
38	Tana Greene	The Greene Group	Davidson, NC
39	Anita Emoff	Boost Technologies dba Boost Rewards	Dayton, OH
40	Anjali "Ann" Ramakumaran	Ampcus Inc.	Chantilly, VA
41	Mary Kariotis	Merrimak Capital Company	Novato, CA
42	Susan Frech	Social Media Link	New York, NY
43	Cordia Harrington	The Bakery Cos.	Nashville TN
44	Amy Dresser	J Curve	Atlanta, GA
45	Mary Ellen Franz	Imagine Technology Group	Chandler, AZ
46	Natalie Davis-Runyan	Anserteam Workforce Solutions	Dallas, TX
47	Carla Walker-Miller	Walker-Miller Energy Services	Detroit, MI
48	Heather Sanderson	Overture Promotions	Vernon Hills, IL
49	Lenora Payne	Technology Group Solutions, LLC	Lenexa, KS
50	Debbie James	Vivere Health, LLC	Franklin, TN

### **About the Women Presidents' Organization (WPO)**

The WPO is the ultimate affiliation for successful women entrepreneurs worldwide. In monthly meetings across the world, women from diverse industries invest time and energy in themselves and their businesses to drive their corporations to the next level. Local WPO chapters are coordinated by a professional facilitator and meet monthly to share business expertise and experience in a confidential setting. For more information, call 212-688-4114 or visit [www.womenpresidentsorg.com](http://www.womenpresidentsorg.com). Follow WPO on Twitter (@womenpresidents) and like us on Facebook.

### **About American Express Global Commercial Payments**

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