



BUFFALO STATE

The State University of New York



Meet the Entrepreneur Ahmed Saleh



Ahmed Saleh, escaped his native country, Eritrea, (East Africa) in 1993, and landed in the US, without family, friends, or resources. He found shelter in Buffalo's Viva La Casa – a center that helps refugees to transition into life in both the US and Canada. Armed with humility, unwavering determination, and a very winning smile, Ahmed began his life in America. He secured employment, completed studies in a community college, transferred to Buffalo State, and graduated with a degree in computer science. He continued to work two jobs, plus served as an immigration interpreter in Buffalo and New York City. All along, he was saving as much money as possible.

While participating in a seven-week course in entrepreneurship, Ahmed was introduced to Cindi Thomason of the Buffalo State Small Business Development Center. Cindi recalls their first meeting and how enthusiastic Ahmed was about his dream of opening a convenience store within Buffalo's inner city. For the next 18 months, Cindi worked closely with Ahmed assisting him in all aspects of developing his business plan – including market studies, financial analysis, and human resource and management strategies. The planning went very smoothly, but major challenges were ahead. Cindi would guide and encourage Ahmed through some very rocky waters.

That was 12 years ago. Today, Ahmed's original store is thriving, and he has opened a second state of the art location on Broadway. Serving downtown, the East Side and commuters using the Broadway corridor, Mandela Market on Broadway represents a huge investment in a community that has been neglected for too long. Expect more great things from Ahmed and Mandela Markets soon!

