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**Samantha Wiley Receives National Recognition as American Small Business Champion from SCORE and Sam's Club**

**[Charleston, SC]**— Samantha Wiley of [Chancey Charm Weddings](http://chanceycharmweddings.com) has been chosen as a winner of The American Small Business Championship hosted by [SCORE](http://score.org), a national nonprofit dedicated to mentoring small business owners, and generously supported by Sam's Club, a leading U.S. membership club serving small businesses since 1983. The Championship awarded the title to 103 small businesses for their dedication to the success of their businesses. The American Small Business Champions will each receive a \$1,000 Sam's Club gift card, an all-expense-paid trip to a regional training event, SCORE mentoring for one year and publicity throughout the year.

Samantha Wiley earned the title of American Small Business Champion by submitting an online application answering the question "*What dream would you be able to achieve if you were to win this Championship?*" Nominations, which garnered at least 100 votes, were then presented to a judging panel of small business experts that determined 103 winners including Samantha Wiley.

Here is an excerpt from her application: "Just over a year ago, I was getting out of the hospital from ACL surgery and stuck at an uninspiring job. I never thought I'd walk again, let alone fulfill my dream of becoming a wedding planner. I knew this was a pivotal moment in my life & I needed to make a change. I took a leap of faith and joined [Chancey Charm](http://chanceycharm.com), a luxury planning & design studio looking to expand to Charleston. Leaving a salaried position wasn't easy. But it was what my physical therapist said to me that truly solidified my decision. He asked me if I ever failed before. I replied, "no". He then said, "Then why would you start now?" That exchange has kept me going through the anxiety of starting a new business. Fast forward, and I'm a 24-year-old small business owner, planning and designing in one of the top wedding destinations in the US. With the grand prize, I'd be able realize my dream having a studio space in Charleston. I pride myself in truly getting to know a couple, and allowing their personalities to shine through on their big day. Having a space that is warm and inviting will permit my clients to feel comfortable, and allow me to create events that reflect the uniqueness of each couple. By having a studio space that will give me a brick-and-mortar presence in the competitive wedding industry, a welcoming spot for my clients, and a inspired space to work with wedding professionals, I will be able to continue to flourish not only a wedding planner, but as a young, female small-business owner." You can read more of her application here: <http://championship.score.org/entry/9973822>

"I am so grateful and humbled. Thank you so much to all my friends, family, and supporters for helping me achieve this recognition! I truly couldn't have done it without you!" says Samantha.

"We are honored to work with Sam's Club for the second year in a row to recognize these Champions' efforts," said Ken Yancey, CEO of SCORE. "Our hope is that winning the American Small Business Championship will help them envision and achieve the next dream for their companies. These Champions embody the passion, determination and drive of America's small business owners."

"Each Champion represents the passion and dedication it takes to own and manage a small business. We saw stories from wide variety of businesses and each one was truly unique and inspiring – from bakery owners to photographers to financial advisors," said Tracey Brown, Senior Vice President and Chief Member Officer for Sam's Club. "Sam's Club is committed to helping small business owners overcome obstacles by providing resources and helping them save money and time. We look forward to seeing all of the Champions take their business to the next level so they can grow and realize their dreams."

Samantha Wiley is also eligible to win an additional \$25,000 grand prize by being named Grand Champion. A judging panel of small business experts will select one Grand Champion from the group of Small Business Champions this summer. Selection is based on how effectively Champions utilize the Sam's Club gift card and the SCORE regional training events to grow business revenue, as well as how effectively the winners promoted the Championship in the media and social media.

To learn more about The American Small Business Championship and to view the complete list of Champions, visit [www.championship.score.org](http://www.championship.score.org).

### **About SCORE**

Since 1964, SCORE has helped more than 10 million aspiring entrepreneurs. Each year, SCORE's 10,000+ volunteer business experts provide free and low-cost small business mentoring, workshops and education to 500,000+ clients in more than 300 chapters. In 2015, SCORE volunteers provided 2.2+ million hours to help create over 45,000 jobs and 55,000 small businesses.

For more information about starting or operating a small business, call 1-800-634-0245 for the SCORE chapter nearest you. Visit SCORE at [www.score.org](http://www.score.org). Connect with SCORE at [www.facebook.com/SCOREmentors](https://www.facebook.com/SCOREmentors) and [www.twitter.com/SCOREmentors](https://www.twitter.com/SCOREmentors).

### **About SAM'S CLUB**

Sam's Club, the nation's eighth largest retailer and a leading U.S. membership club, offers savings and surprises to millions of members in 653 U.S. club locations and at [SamsClub.com](http://SamsClub.com). The Sam's Club Giving Program, established by the Walmart Foundation in 2008, is dedicated to micro- and small business prosperity. Sam's Club and The Sam's Club Giving Program have invested more than \$11 million in national and local programs dedicated to improved training, education and increased access to capital for small business owners. For more information on national or local giving by Sam's Club or The Sam's Club Giving Program, visit [SamsClub.com/giving](http://SamsClub.com/giving).



Samantha Wiley with SCORE President, David Bobbitt