



For Immediate Release

Contact: Jeff Blumb
Office: 920.328.5454
Email: media@blumbcc.com

New North, Inc.

600 N. Adams St. | Green Bay, WI 54307
920.336.3860 | www.thenewnorth.com

COVID-19 CEO Leadership Series continues Thursday with Microsoft's Schuler

*Will be joined by Joe Kirgues of gener8tor for conversation on **The Future of Meaningful Work** and results of the Upskilling partnership*

NEW NORTH, August 26, 2020 – The COVID-19 CEO Leadership Series of webinars continues this **Thursday, August 27**, from 11 a.m.-12 noon with the perspective of a community leader from the New North, Michelle Schuler of TechSpark Wisconsin at Microsoft. She will be joined on the webinar by Joe Kirgues of gener8tor. Along with New North President and CEO Barb LaMue and Lew Erwin, a graduate of the gener8tor Upskilling program, the conversation will center on **The Future of Meaningful Work** and an update on the recently launched Upskilling partnership.

The partnership builds on Microsoft's TechSpark program. The company most recently announced its global skilling initiative that seeks to help 25 million people worldwide who have lost their job due to COVID-19 by learning new skills pertaining to jobs that are available in their community. New North brought together partners that could leverage Microsoft's learning platform to very quickly get people in the region trained and employed.

Nationally ranked startup accelerator gener8tor leveraged its proven accelerator playbook, which provides individualized mentorship and coaching to startups across the country. In addition to the intensive and personalized coaching, individuals in the first cohort had access to the region's employers who have expressed the need for these skills and are interviewing the participants for job placement.

"We are excited to feature New North's partners in this exciting upskilling initiative," says Barb LaMue, president and CEO of New North Inc. "While Microsoft made the online learning available across the country, our region was first to partner with key organizations to provide the necessary support that allowed graduates to have access to equipment, technology, training coaches, mentors, access to employers and, ultimately, job offers to those displaced by the pandemic."

Michelle Schuler has served as manager of TechSpark Wisconsin at Microsoft for the past three years, a role which sees her spearhead technology-related initiatives focused on job creation and skills development. Prominent among these programs are gener8tor Upskilling, a free accelerator curriculum for individuals to learn digital skills needed for in-demand jobs, and TEALS (Technology Education and Literacy in Schools), which connects high school classroom teachers with tech-industry volunteers to create sustainable computer science programs. Schuler is a member of the New North board of directors and executive committee. **#NewNorthProud**

Joe Kirgues co-founded the gener8tor program, which invests in high-growth startups. in 2011. He manages its efforts, which include (1) startup accelerators in several Midwest cities; (2) the gBETA program, consisting of a free, seven-week accelerator; (3) corporate programming such as its OnRamp Conference series in insurance and manufacturing; (4) cultural accelerators, including Backline for musicians and Fellowship.art for artists; and (5) the gener8tor Upskilling program. More than 100 graduates of the gener8tor accelerator have raised \$400-plus million in total follow-on financing and created thousands of jobs.

The webinar is made available through a collaboration among the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC); the state Regional Leadership Council, comprised of the nine economic development organizations which includes New North Inc.; and Aurora WDC.

—more—

PAGE TWO

The event invitation is at <https://www.thenewnorth.com/media/585844/CloseTheDistance-August-27-Promo-.pdf> and registration is at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/263541248546202637>.

###

New North, Inc., is a 501(c)3 non-profit, regional marketing and economic development corporation fostering collaboration among private and public sector leaders throughout the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, known as the New North region. The New North brand unites the region both internally and externally around talent development, brand promotion and business development, signifying the collective economic power behind the 18 counties. The counties include Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Waupaca, Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Marinette, Door, Kewaunee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Florence, Menominee and Waushara. To find out more information about New North, Inc., please visit our website at www.thenewnorth.com.