

# CANS 159<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting - September 29

## Agenda

**11:30 am - 12:00 pm** | On-site delegate check-in

**12:00 - 1:30 pm** | Luncheon and Speaker, Ballroom 1  
Luncheon Speaker: Denika Coakley, DC Woodworks

**1:30 - 2:15 pm** | Coffee & Networking Break

**2:15 - 4:30 pm** | AGM / Business Session, Ballroom 2 & 3

**5:30 - 8:00 pm** | Keynote Dinner and Awards, Ballroom 1  
Keynote Speaker: Tareq Hadhad, Peace By Chocolate

## Speakers' Bios

### Denika Coakley (Luncheon Speaker)



Denika Coakley has been an artist her entire life. She is a professional carpenter, self taught YouTuber, DIY expert, and isn't afraid to not fit 'inside the box'. Denika's favourite medium is painting but she's got a handle on every tool in the box and her skills and creativity shine.

If you follow Denika's instagram stories you know she shines on camera. In the last year, she has produced two seasons of her own house flipping show on YouTube called 'Too Tacky Taranaki' and 'Poplar Drive Dive'.

With a steady growth of social media followers, Denika was selected to be the face of Bailly, a fragrance company that represents the power for women. She has also been a spokesperson for Rust-Oleum, a worldwide leader in the paint industry.

As a skilled tradesperson, Denika has built over 50 pieces for the QEII Dream Home Lottery homes in Nova Scotia. She has designed furnishings for several local businesses and has formed partnerships with key building brands like Dewalt, Kent Building Supplies, Craftsman and Sico paints.

Denika has been curious about her ancestry her entire life. She has been researching her native heritage for the last few years to understand more and to teach her two young daughters more about the culture of where they come from.

Denika graduated from the carpentry program at Nova Scotia Community College in 2014 and since graduation was selected to be featured in the college's recruitment marketing campaign. She is passionate about lending her skills and donates time and materials to Blxckhouse Community Centre for youth in North Preston, Nova Scotia. With a growing platform on social media and in the business world, her sites are set high for opportunities to give back and help others get 'outside the box'. Denika Coakley, She just did.

## Speakers' Bios

### Tareq Hadhad (Keynote Speaker)



Tareq Hadhad is telling his story. He was a Syrian refugee and now living his new life with his entrepreneurial family in Canada's east coast. He is the founder and CEO of Peace by Chocolate, the recipient of Start Up Canada's National Newcomer Entrepreneur Award, named one of the Top 25 Immigrants in The Maritimes and selected by Google as the National Hero Case for 2018, and was awarded RBC's top Immigrant Award and Entrepreneur of the Year in 2020. All of this has happened since Tareq's arrival on Canada's East Coast in December 2015 as a Syrian-Canadian newcomer.

In 2012 the Hadhad's home and factory that housed the family chocolate-making business were destroyed which forced them to seek safety in other countries. A former medical student at Damascus University and long-time peacekeeping advocate, Tareq joined medical relief efforts after arriving in Lebanon. A new life began when Tareq and his family were welcomed to Canada on a community-based sponsorship.

Passionate about peace and entrepreneurship, his family relaunched the family business to recreate the chocolates they once exported across the Middle East and their story turned into an international inspiring phenomenon.

Tareq and his family have a focus on job creation, utilizing a network of local community members and refugees from across Nova Scotia and Canada to help support the local economy. Now that their chocolates are distributed across Canada they look to offer more employment opportunities as their business grows.

In September 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau opened his speech to the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Refugees detailing the family's success story. In January 2020, Tareq became a Canadian citizen, an honour he says is the greatest of his life. The book *Peace by Chocolate*, by Jon Tattrie was released in October 2020. The book outlines the remarkable journey of the Hadhad family from Syria to Canada and has become a best seller. In June 2021 we see the release of *Peace by Chocolate*, the movie.

Tareq has spoken at Amnesty International's Human Rights Conference, TEDx events, Chambers of Commerce Dinners, keynote presentations in Jamaica and London England and spoken to several corporate and government organizations. He has done over 500 interviews with different news teams across the globe. Tareq speaks on the compelling story of his family, the positive impact of Syrian newcomers and the spirit of entrepreneurship.