



“AMERICA IS THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY. I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO START MY BUSINESS AND BE SUCCESSFUL. BRIDGEWAY, THROUGH THE ERIE URBAN ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM, GAVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY THAT HELPED ME FULFILL MY DREAM.”

- CRAIG HEIDELBERG  
DAPPER DON'S STYLING LOUNGE



**BRIDGEWAY  
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ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

### **Dapper Don: Dreaming in Style**

Leaving a nine-to-five job behind to pursue a dream takes courage, determination, and drive. Donald Craig Heidelberg, aka *Dapper Don*, was at a crossroads in his career when he decided to put his skills as a barber, leader, mentor, and teacher to work and open his own business. It was a risky move that changed the course of his career and his life.

Moving a home-based business to bricks and mortar would require more than a business plan and a dream to get it off the ground – it needed funding. Through the Erie Urban Entrepreneur Program, Craig connected with T.J. King at Bridgeway Capital to secure his funding for *Dapper Don's*

***Styling Lounge*** – his 26<sup>th</sup> and Peach Street barber shop serving clients with comfort, style, and heart.

“America is the land of opportunity. I should be able to access the resources necessary to start my business and be successful. Bridgeway, through the Erie Urban Entrepreneur Program, gave me an opportunity that helped me fulfill my dream,” said Craig Heidelberg, Owner of **Dapper Don’s Styling Lounge**.

The Erie Urban Entrepreneur Program, financed by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA) and managed by Bridgeway Capital, is generating economic activity among Erie’s African American entrepreneurs, while spurring community development.

“African American owned small businesses are often businesses working out of the house, like an at home day care or barber shop that the Erie Urban Entrepreneur Program can help turn into a legitimate storefront space, hiring people, and enhancing the communities they live in,” said Dale Barney, ECGRA Board of Directors.

Since opening its Erie office in 2012, thanks in large part to ECGRA’s initial \$100,000 investment, Bridgeway Capital has offered 62 loans totaling more than \$10 million in Erie County; twelve of those loans totaling \$718,000 (15%) were made through the Erie Urban Entrepreneur Program helping launch and grow minority owned businesses.

For more than one year now, Craig has successfully navigated the entrepreneurial waters and grown his clientele and the styling lounge. He found a partner with Bridgeway Capital and others in the Erie Community that helped him achieve this dream and his one-year milestone. Each day brings a new set of challenges that he has the skills and finances to meet. His future is his own and the growth potential for his business is limitless.

“The key revitalizing factor is small urban businesses beginning to provide jobs for the neighborhood, particularly young people; an entrepreneur providing fresh baked goods for his community, a barber inspiring young people to continue their education, a high-quality child care center within walking distance of home—that’s the community development we are trying to spur,” said Perry Wood, Executive Director, ECGRA.

Craig continues his lifelong work with Erie’s youth by providing barber training, coaching, and mentoring. And beyond the barber chair, he works with the Erie Blue Coats, an anti-violence initiative working with at-risk youth to create safer schools. He is an active member in the community professionally and personally and is making Erie more stylish one hair cut at a time.