



Pete Young

PHOTO: WAYNE NEWTON

London's new potpreneurs

BY WAYNE NEWTON

LONDON'S FIRST LICENSED medical marijuana producer has its roots in defiance, advocacy and compassion.

Indiva, located in a southside industrial park, is relying heavily on Pete Young and his decades of growing experience.

If the name sounds familiar, it's because of the dreadlocked former Fanshawe photo student's prominent role in taking marijuana from the black to the grey and finally the white market.

In 1995, Young founded the London Compassion Society to make medicinal marijuana available. He's since traveled the world as a cannabis cultivation consultant and, in addition to his role with Indiva, continues to own the Organic Traveller, through which he's a member of the London Downtown Business Association. He opened the head shop in 1996.

Chances are he never envisioned being part of what is already a \$30-million company listed on the TSX Venture Exchange.

Capital to launch Indiva was raised by its president and CEO, Niel Marotta, whose curriculum vitae includes managing a \$1-billion U.S. mutual fund and being vice-president of a resource company.

The company's name, Indiva, is a com-

bination of indica and sativa, the two main types of cannabis grown at the 36,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility. The plants are grown in an indoor, controlled environment using a specially formulated, peat-moss based, soil.

When staffing is complete - Indiva has been recruiting through local job fairs - there will be approximately 40 employees in categories such as cultivation, sales, and security.

Planting took place in September after Indiva received its cultivation license in July. The company was listed on the TSX Venture Exchange in November and expects its sales license in the first quarter of 2018.

Already, a search for a second growing location has started. Marotta anticipates it will also be in London or area.

The plants are clones acquired from other licensed producers and are initially from Afghanistan and Mexico. Indica is used for issues such as insomnia and pain, while sativa is used for depression and fatigue. Both were categorized in the 1800s.

Indiva is also talking with suppliers in Europe, Central America and South America as part of a search for new and proven genetics.

Growing cannabis in a controlled indoor

environment instead of repurposed greenhouses is part of Indiva's business plan to put product quality and the patient first, Young said.

"There's more and more science going into medical cannabis," Young said.

Medical marijuana is frequently prescribed instead of opiates for a variety of health situations, including epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, glaucoma, and the effects of chemotherapy. Prescribed marijuana can provide relief from pain and tremors or be used to stimulate appetite.

Indiva cannabis will be sold in plastic, child-proof jars placed in tubes.

"At the moment Health Canada does not let us offer edibles, but we are in the process of producing oils that can be used in a multitude of manners," Young said. "We do understand that medical cannabis through inhalation is the fastest way to get cannabinoids into one's system, but feel there are healthier options out there, i.e., vaporization and/or sublingual administration."

As the recreational market opens, Indiva hopes it can follow the craft beer model where a product can be sold on site and consumers are attracted by quality.

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