



Urban Spirit

ACCESS envisions an urban Aboriginal community empowered through culture, wellness, achievement and self sufficiency.

Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society
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*Northwest Coast Jewellery Arts Participants
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*“Abstract Design bracelet”
by Chrystal Sparrow*



*“Thunderbird bracelet”
by Ivan Hackett*



*“Killer Whale bracelet”
by Landon Gunn*

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first 2008 ACCESS newsletter. I am happy to report on the successful year of 2007. ACCESS continues to grow in the areas of trades training and apprenticeships and is currently offering the following programs: Carpentry Level 01, Joinery Level 01, Pipefitting Level 01, IP, Carpentry Red Seal IP Refresher, and Metal Fabrication Level 01.
(See back page for more projects)

ACCESS has gotten “on board” by opening an Essential Skills Lab in New Westminster, an initiative between ACCESS and Metis Nation and Service Canada.

The following highlights some of ACCESS’ Milestones from 2001 to present:

2001 -2002 Previously a Community Management Committee overseeing the Vancouver urban AHRDA, ACCESS formally incorporated in January 2002.

ACCESS was awarded the province-wide BladeRunners contract by the provincial government which provides multi-barriered youth with access to the construction trades.

ACCESS launched a website featuring the Job Gateway-an interactive job/resume bank as a tool for job seekers, employers, and fellow AHRDA holders that can be found at www.buildingfuturestoday.com

2003 Partnerships with Destinations to provide training in tourism and with Istonish to provide customer service or call centre skills training. Signing of another 5-year AHRDA agreement. Other projects funded by ACCESS were digital film, web design, culinary arts and summer projects at Museum of Anthropology, summer tourism and trailblazer programs.

2004 John Webster President and CEO joins the ACCESS team.
MOU signing between ACCESS, Metis Nation and

First Nations Employment Center to reduce overlap in services to Aboriginal people and to develop a single window approach to the Aboriginal labour supply in the Lower Mainland.

2005 First issue of ACCESS newsletter, URBAN SPIRIT
ACCESS and Vancouver Agreement and MEIA form a case coordination project as part of the Vancouver Agreement.

2006 Partnerships with BCIT and NEC to deliver Pipefitting, Painting, Carpentry Level 1.
Partnership with Hyatt Regency to deliver Banquet Server Program.

ACCESS continues to fund Aboriginal organizations to deliver programs such as Aboriginal Residential Care, Culinary Arts, Choices Women’s Bridging program, and an HIV/AIDS pre employment program.

2007 ACCESS Trades formed.
Essential Skills Lab Grand Opening in New Westminster, in partnership with Safeway.
Partnership with CITI to provide Aboriginal women an opportunity to discover the world of trades.

2008 Launching of new website-Spring 2008
BladeRunners Program moves to a new location at Four Corners Bank. They are granted a 4-year lease with an option for 4-year renewal by City Council. ACCESS continues to show steady results in successful employment placements.

We are approaching the completion of the 5-year AHRDA contract with Service Canada. This could mean a possible restructuring of the AHRDA agreement. We are confident that ACCESS will secure a renewal contract and will continue to meet the employment and training needs of Aboriginal people in the Vancouver and GVRD area.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR ABORIGINAL FUTURES

Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures (ESAF) More Partnerships

The ACCESS Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures Lab in New Westminster has just completed a third Intake on March 7, 2008 with employer partner, BC Housing. Fifteen participants completed the program and ten were hired, nine in janitorial positions and one as a groundskeeper. The remaining students are to continue with upgrading their Essential Skills while receiving strong individual support and coaching from the ESAF staff.

The BC Ferries intake for Essential Skills training commenced on March 17, 2008. There are fifteen participants in the program. The process involves seven weeks of specific training tailored to the employment positions being offered, on-board customer service and terminal attendants.

Employer partners have worked closely with staff to ensure that the training includes authentic workplace documents that the students utilize for improving their reading and document use. ESAF incorporates training required for entry-level employment with the employer partner with certification in WHMIS, FoodSafe, and radio operations. The Justice Institute training along with work site visits, and close interaction with the employer Human Resource representatives helps to augment the training. Individuals prepare for success with the interview process and then secure employment with the employer partner.



Northwest Coast Jewellery Arts Program

The first Northwest Coast Jewellery Arts Program at Native Education College was offered from September 2007 to February 2008 and funded by ACCESS. This was made possible through funding by Service Canada. Dan Wallace who designed and instructed the program is a Kwakwaka'wakw-Haida artist. Dan and established engraver Kevin Thompson worked with the students individually throughout the six month program. Courses within the program included Form-Line Drawing, Metalwork Techniques, Jewellery Design and Studio Management.



Most of the participants were established carvers and artists and attended the program to enhance and expand their skills. By attending the program it helped to increase their repertoire for the upcoming 2010 opportunities and the demand for Aboriginal artists. On March 29, Lattimer Gallery hosted an opening exhibition displaying the student's pieces. A catalogue titled *Contemporary Coastal Reflection* was created, and features individual biographies of the participants and their work.

ACCESS Success Stories

“ACCESS has helped me by providing good support, they don't give up on the students, and they give a lot of positive encouragement. I had good instructors and teaching, and support in and out of class”.

“The ACCESS training program has changed my life because I'm more confident, self-motivated, and have a more positive outlook on my future. I've talked with young adults about the ACCESS program and encouraged them to enroll in it, and how it will change their outlook on their future.”

Steven Wilson – Level 3 Plumbing Apprentice, employed at Olympic Oval, Richmond for Georgia Mechanical



ACCESS JOINERY GRADUATION

ACCESS once again partnered with BCIT to deliver a 25-week Cabinet/Joinery program from October 1, 2007 to March 28, 2008 to ten Aboriginal participants. The graduation ceremony was held at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre on Friday, March 28, 2008. Up to seventy-five family members and friends of the participants were in attendance to honor the ten students as they accepted their completion certificates.

The graduation began with a lunch that was prepared by Helping Spirit Lodge Society followed by a variety of speakers who congratulated them for participating and completing the program.

The list of speakers included:

Susan Tatoosh, Chair of ACCESS

Dave Dunn, Acting Associate Dean of Building Design and Construction, BCIT

Susan Mussell, Aboriginal Affairs Unit, Service Canada

Val Karpinsky, VP of Student Services, BCIT

Doug Smith, Joinery Instructor

Joe Laminski, Industry Training Authority

Robert Macdonell Architectural Woodwork Manufacturers Association of Canada

Joe Thorne, BC Construction Association

Rose Point and Celeste Dunstan from Aboriginal Student Services of BCIT presented an award to the top student Cassandra Puckett.

The room was filled with laughter and good natured jokes throughout the ceremony as everyone enjoyed hearing the students and instructor reminisce about hilarious antics from the past 25 weeks. They all agreed that even though the program was tough, they all got through it together by helping each other and by providing support to each other. All ten students are registered as Cabinet/Joinery apprentices and four of the graduates are currently employed in the Joinery trade as apprentices.



Joinery Program graduates 2008



BCIT's Celeste Dunstan (Left) and Rose Point (right) present top student award to Cassandra Puckett.



Doug Smith and Eileen Thomas



Doug Smith congratulates Michael Wong

Photos by Scott McAlphine

BLADERUNNERS LONG TIME SERVICE HONOREES GLENN BOYDA AND GARRY JOBIN



The BladeRunners Annual General Meeting was held this year at the Empress Hotel in Victoria on March 20, 2008. Glenn Boyda, BladeRunners Coordinator from Duncan's Coast Salish Employment and Training Society was honored for nine years of service and dedication to the program. Coordinators from around the province gathered to share information and provide updates on their individual BladeRunners sites. Many of them have worked with Glenn over the years and spoke highly of his contributions to the program.

Three BladeRunners participants were in attendance and spoke of how the program has affected their lives. They each gave an emotional thank you to Glenn for his ongoing support and encouragement both during and after the program.

Toward the end of the day a ceremony was performed in Coast Salish tradition with Glenn accepting a blanket pinned over his shoulder by Darcy Castaneda, BladeRunners Provincial Coordinator, in appreciation for his dedication and commitment to the program. She repeated to the attendees a quote often used by Glenn, "No BladeRunner will be left behind."

Another honoree and recipient of the Long Time Service Award is Vancouver BladeRunners Manager Garry Jobin who was not able to attend the AGM. Garry has been referred to as the "working man's hero" mainly because of his tireless devotion to the BladeRunners program. The fact that Garry is highly regarded by his peers was evident by the accolades bestowed upon him by the likes of Jim Green, founder of the BladeRunners program, and ex BladeRunners Coordinators Al Laird and Joe Thorne.

Garry did send a heartfelt letter thanking everyone for attending the meeting and for honoring him. His letter expressed gratitude toward his friends and co-workers, past and present and most importantly the BladeRunners youth, adding that if it were not for them the program could not be delivered.

Garry has been with BladeRunners for 12 years. He can often be found roaming the streets in the wee hours of the morning, escorting a youth to work or looking out for BladeRunners who have missed work. Whatever he may be doing, you can be sure that he is living the BladeRunners motto by providing 24/7 support to Vancouver's DTES youth.



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Left to right: CSETS BladeRunners Marty Big-child, Dean (Champ) Manson Jr, Leonard (Shae) Point, and Robin Good

Photo by Marianne van Toor

2008 ACCESS Funded Programs

- ACCESS Trades
- Aboriginal Connections to Employment
- Anderson Lodge Pre-Employment Program
- BladeRunners
- Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures
- Helping Spirit Lodge Society -Visions and Decisions Pre-Employment Program
- Kla-how-eya EAS Program
- Native Education College-West Coast Jewellery Arts Program
- Summer Student Program
- UNYA Native Youth Learning Centre
- UNYA Tutor Mentor Program
- Various trades skills training programs

Anderson Circle Pre-Employment Program

Circle of Eagles Lodge Society in partnership with Anderson's Women's Healing Lodge is a 30-week pre-employment program that provides training for Aboriginal men and women that may be homeless, have little or no work experience, have minimal education, in recovery from addictions issues, disabilities, or have a history with the law.

The participants will receive certification in WHMIS, Hilti power-actuated tool safety, drivers test, cashier training, computer training in Excel, keyboarding, and Word as well as life skills training and assistance with job search. After the program ends, the participants are placed in a targeted wage subsidy for four months and are often hired on at their work placement.



"Everyone that comes through this program is their own success story. If we can help at least one person; this has a positive ripple effect for their future."

Wendy S. Jimmie
Program Coordinator



Mission Statement

To provide training and human resource development opportunities that inspire, nurture & encourage urban Aboriginal people on their journey to success.

If you would like to subscribe to ACCESS newsletter, submit an article, or provide general comments, or artwork please contact: elaine@buildingfuturestoday.com Fax 604-913-7938



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