



# Urban Spirit

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

*Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society  
Administrative Office: 108-100 Park Royal  
West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2*

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By Richard Shorty*



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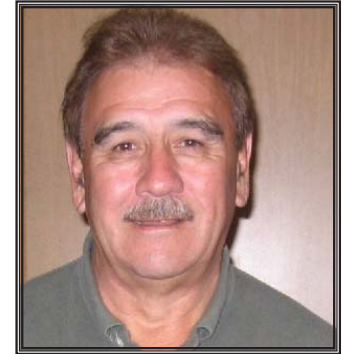
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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



In 1992, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC) launched the *Pathways to Success* Strategy, a five-year pilot program to address the chronic under-participation of Aboriginal people in the management and delivery of their employment programs. Aboriginal representatives working through national, regional, and local boards, coordinated with federal government departmental officials at each level to make determinations on the expenditure of designated Aboriginal training dollars. Then in 1996, to further the “devolution of authority from the department to Aboriginal people,” Pathways was replaced by a series of *Regional Bilateral Agreements* between the First Nation, Inuit and Métis political bodies. The third phase of this process, the *Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy*, commenced April 01 of 1999. ACCESS was created as one of Canada’s first urban-based AHRDAs: two successive five-year Agreements with HRSDC have provided the core funding that enables ACCESS to provide programs and services to Greater Vancouver area urban Aboriginal people.

On March 31, 2009, the current mandate of the AHRDS is scheduled to sunset. The lack of a secure future is naturally of paramount concern to all existing AHRDA’s (including ACCESS). Despite the proven success of urban AHRDAs across the country in providing superior and efficient services, the current federal government has still not produced a plan for the continuation of Aboriginal controlled employment programs and services.

Since February of this year, ACCESS has been highly active working with a committee of Urban Agreement Holders and urban-focused National Aboriginal organizations. Urban AHRDA representatives from across the nation met on four (4) separate occasions in Montreal, Vancouver and twice in Ottawa to collaborate on the development of a post-2009 Aboriginal Human Resource Strategy that will support the main objective: to ensure that urban Aboriginal people find and keep jobs.

Last month, the Committee completed an *Issues Paper*. This document, *An Urban Perspective on Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements* was sent to the office of The Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. The group has requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss the *Issues Paper* and the future of self-determined, self-managed urban Aboriginal employment and training programs in this country. Nationwide, urban AHRDA holders are focused on securing Agreements for the continuation of services, but we also see a greater opportunity - a window of time in which to introduce positive change and create a new and better Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy.

## MOU signing between ACCESS, MNBC and SAFEWAY

### Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures (ESAF)

There is a new Essential Skills and Training and Employment Program in partnership between ACCESS, MNBC and Service Canada. ESAF's vision is to deliver an innovative Essential Skills program to the Aboriginal community through employer partnerships and customized training that supports employment success and retention.

The official signing of a Memorandum Of Understanding with the first employer partner, Canada Safeway Limited was on August 29, 2007. It was an exciting launch for this new project to partner with a strong national company that focuses on the development of long-term careers for their employees.

There are 10 students currently in the essential skills training phase of the program. These students will soon enter the next phase of the program where they will be interviewed by Safeway for employment in entry level positions.

There will be a second intake for Safeway starting October 29, 2007 and ending on December 21, 2007. Orientation for this second program starts October 2 and ends October 18.

For more information about the ESAF/SAFEWAY Training and Employment Program please contact:

Shannon McConaghy,  
Program Coordinator  
604-521-5929 ext. 222





## ACCESS Success Stories

When I first walked into ACCESS on East Hastings, I wasn't expecting the response that I received from the people there. As soon as I started my first interview, my Aboriginal Employment Counsellor had about 4 four different paths I could go down and she showed me the opportunities that each path offered me. After that, I picked the plumbing program because it was a more mechanical trade.

The ACCESS Trades Program has made a huge difference in my life. Now that I'm in the plumbing trade I have something to look forward to. After I get my Red Seal I would like to continue to advance in construction or start my own independent business.

I would definitely refer someone to the ACCESS Trades Program, because I found it to be very helpful and I know ACCESS has also helped other Aboriginal People.



“ACCESS has made a huge difference in my life. After I get my Red Seal I would like to continue to advance in construction or start my own independent business.”

*Vidal Bruyere – Level 1 Apprentice Plumber  
August 29, 2007*

*See more Success stories on Page 6*

## Formula One Grand Prix



On Sunday, September 9, 2007 BladeRunners invited the community to attend a Woodwards Formula One Grand Prix on West Cordova Street, between Cambie Street and Abbott Street, Vancouver, BC.

This race was co-ordinated and delivered by Friends of Ferrari whose mission it is to raise funds, using the enthusiasm of Formula 1 and Ferrari fans, to assist the most needy organizations in our communities and to help the medical research centre to help find cures for childhood diseases.

Local community children played a key role by driving the Ferrari miniature replica racecars. All funds raised at this event were donated to the Strathcona Health Society and Vancouver ACCESS BladeRunners.

## ACCESS EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SITES AND OTHER COMPUTER ACCESS SITES

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
110-1607 East Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V5L 1S6  
Phone: 604-251-7955

Aboriginal Connections to Employment  
390 Main Street  
Vancouver, BC V6A 2T1  
Phone: 604-687-7480

ACCESS/Metis Essential Skills Lab  
735 Carnarvon Street  
New Westminster, BC V3M 1E6  
Phone: 604-521-5929

Helping Spirit Lodge Society  
3965 Dumfries Street  
Vancouver, BC V5N 5R3  
Phone: 604-872-6649

Native Youth Learning Centre  
Urban Native Youth Association  
1324 East Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V5L 1S3  
Phone: 604-254-5620

## ACCESS TRADES

The new "ACCESS TRADES" will provide Aboriginal people with entry to trades and apprenticeship training programs, apprenticeship registration and counselling, and connections to employment.

For more information about trades and training programs or apprenticeships, please contact Helen Boyce, Director Trades Training and Apprenticeship  
email: [helenboyce@buildingfuturestoday.com](mailto:helenboyce@buildingfuturestoday.com).

New Address as of Novemer 29, 2007  
Suite 104 - 100 Park Royal  
West Vancouver V7T 1A2  
Telepone: 604-922-4077  
Fax: 604-922-4088

\*ACCESS trades training programs are co-funded by VanAsep Training Society.

## ACCESS SUCCESS STORIES



Robin

Nanaimo Youth Services Association BladeRunners Program

Robin is a 24-year-old Aboriginal woman. Robin certainly fits the BladeRunners profile of disadvantaged youth. At 14 years old, she moved to Edmonton and ended up on the streets shortly after. She has been on her own since and became pregnant at 17. Robin was introduced to crystal meth at 18 and for the next 6 years had a \$200/day addiction. She was in and out of jail for the last 4 years prior to joining the BladeRunners program. Now, with the support of the BladeRunners Coordinators, has been able to overcome her major hurdles and has turned her life around. Robin was placed with NUR

Developments and enjoyed the heavy construction work. She has now been clean from drugs for 10 months! In her personal life, she is now in a stable relationship and doing very well for herself.



I.P.

Vancouver ACCESS BladeRunners Program

Before joining BladeRunners I.P., an Aboriginal woman, faced multiple challenges and barriers on a daily basis. Some of her struggles included homelessness, poverty due to being on income assistance, addictions, and worst of all, the apprehension of her only daughter into foster care. All of these factors compounded her addictions and contributed to multiple incarcerations. I.P.'s turning point came when she was facing a 3-month incarceration and her daughter was facing the possibility of being placed in permanent care by the Ministry of Children and Families. She made the life-altering decision to include BladeRunners as part of her action plan.

In May 2004, I.P. was placed at the Annacis Island worksite of Bastion Development, a major industry partner that has been consistent in contributing to the success of BladeRunners. Bastion Development staff were extremely supportive to I.P., recognizing her true potential and providing encouragement and opportunities to advance in her career. The early morning wake ups were difficult for I.P. but she motivated herself by reminded herself of her goal to become financially secure. She soon became a dependable, hard working and efficient worker. As a result, Bastion has offered I.P. another position and she is now free of financial worries that used to overcome her. In fact, she now earns \$120/day.

## ACCESS SUCESS STORIES

Contintued from Page 6

I.P. has been living in sobriety since July 2003. She is no longer homeless or on income assistance. She is in a long-term stable relationship and is able to provide a home for herself and her daughter! Her file with the Ministry and Children and Families has been closed. I.P. has also been able to reunite with family members whom she lost contact with during her addiction. I.P. continues to work and believes that her success is a direct result of her commitment to being determined, self-motivated and maintaining a positive attitude.



Niki  
Vancouver ACCESS BladeRunners Program

Prior to joining BladeRunners, Niki was an Aboriginal youth who grew up in foster care and already had an abundance of adult responsibility. She was a single mother of two young children who had unstable housing and was living on income assistance. She was also challenged with Alcohol & Drug use and abuse.

Niki, with the help and support from BladeRunners, was able to start finally turning her life around when she was placed with industry partner First In Fire Seal. She worked hard and soon became a highly regarded employee. Her strength of character and commitment led to a referral for an opportunity with Bastion Development, which is a very supportive industry partner renowned for its career support for women and its education and skills training opportunities. After proving herself, Niki became a certified site safety officer. Niki has been so responsible that she has been placed in charge of three different worksites and is soon on her way advancing to a site co-ordinator! Niki is currently registered to complete her grade twelve Dogwood and has future plans to register in BCIT for Construction Management.

Niki has achieved financial security and stability that enables her to have secure housing. “Achieving financial stability has been the most empowering and my confidence is through the roof,” said Niki. Her learned patience helps her make it through each day and she attributes her success to her commitment to herself and her children.

## 2007 ACCESS Funded Programs

- ACCESS Trades
- Choices - Helping Spirit Lodge Society
- Tree of Life- Aboriginal Self Employment Program
- Aboriginal Connection to Employment
- BladeRunners
- Joinery Program
- Kla-how-eya EAS Program
- Native Education Centre-West Coast Jewellery Arts Program
- UNYA Tutor Mentor Program
- UNYA Native Youth Learning Centre
- Circle of Eagles Lodge Pre-Employment Program
- Various trades skills training programs
- Summer Student Program

## ACCESS Joinery Program



The Aboriginal Joinery Program is a partnership between BCIT and ACCESS to deliver a 25-week Cabinetmaker (Joiner) Foundation Program at the BCIT Campus. The course began on October 1, 2007 and is scheduled to complete on March 28, 2008.

There are 15 Aboriginal students enrolled in the Joinery course. The students are to attend 6-hours per day of classroom and shop instruction at BCIT under the guidance of BCIT instructor Doug Smith.

Successful graduates of the Aboriginal Joinery Program will receive a certificate and technical credit for level 1 of the cabinetmaker (joiner) trade. The cabinet (joiner) trade is a four-year apprenticeship with Inter-Provincial Red Seal endorsement.

## 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](mailto:elaine@buildingfuturestoday.com) Fax 604-913-7938

ACCESS Website:  
[www.buildingfuturestoday.com](http://www.buildingfuturestoday.com)

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