



2005 Business and Education IdeaBook



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EDUCATION AND LEARNING



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of Canada publication
from Education
and Learning

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The sponsors believe that the organizations honoured through these Awards for business–education partnerships, community learning and workplace education exemplify the corporate investments necessary to create a well-educated, skilled workforce that will ensure a strong Canadian economy and competitive position in the global marketplace.

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The trophy is the product of a partnership between the School of Industrial Design of Carleton University and the National Research Council. Joanna Boothman, an industrial design student at Carleton, proposed the underlying concept for the award, and the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program completed the design and produced the trophy from Canadian aluminum.

NRC-CNRC

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Introduction

Introduction

Congratulations to the outstanding business and education award winners for 2005!

The Conference Board and sponsors of these awards are proud to honour employers, educators and a wide range of organizations that make a difference in their communities.

The Conference Board of Canada and its award sponsors believe that knowledge is the currency of our economy, and learning is a key to maintaining productivity, competitiveness and prosperity. Considering the demands of an innovative and changing society, we recognize the urgency to go beyond school and community partnerships to the upgrading of skills in the workplace—from basic literacy skills to digital literacy through e-learning and learning technologies, and additionally skills development within the small business environment.

Fifteen years ago, the Awards program focused on business and education partnerships, emphasizing proactive approaches to improving education and building skills through business–education partnerships in schools.

We expanded to recognize lifelong learning in the form of workplace literacy initiatives and more recently with community programs that regard information and communications technology as an important means of improving learning.

In 2005, we recognize the challenges of developing employees' skills in a small business environment. Hence a new award was launched to recognize small businesses that help their employees develop the skills and competencies that enable them to contribute to the success and growth of the small business in which they work.

The Conference Board thanks and applauds all leaders and practitioners for their commitment to the value of investing in a learning society and lifelong learners.

Michael Bloom
Executive Director, Strategic Projects and Initiatives
and Education and Learning
The Conference Board of Canada

Introduction

Félicitations aux grands lauréats des prix d'excellence affaires et enseignement de 2005!

Le Conference Board et les parrains de ces prix sont fiers d'honorer les employeurs, les éducateurs et la vaste gamme d'organisations qui contribuent à leur communauté.

Le Conference Board du Canada et les parrains de ses prix d'excellence estiment que le savoir constitue la monnaie de notre économie, et que l'apprentissage est essentiel au maintien de la productivité, de la compétitivité et de la prospérité. En raison des demandes d'une société novatrice et changeante, nous reconnaissons à quel point il est urgent de compléter le travail des écoles et des partenariats communautaires en favorisant le perfectionnement des compétences en milieu de travail — de combler l'alphabétisation de base avec une alphabétisation numérique au moyen de l'e-éducation et des technologies d'apprentissage, et grâce aussi au perfectionnement des compétences dans le milieu des petites entreprises.

Il y a quinze ans, le programme des prix d'excellence était fondé sur les partenariats affaires et enseignement, et mettait l'accent sur les approches proactives visant à améliorer l'éducation et à développer les compétences grâce à des partenariats affaires-enseignement dans les écoles.

Nous avons étendu nos activités de manière à reconnaître l'éducation permanente sous forme d'initiatives d'alphabétisation en milieu de travail et, plus récemment, avec des programmes communautaires qui considèrent la technologie de l'information et des communications comme étant un outil important pour améliorer l'acquisition du savoir.

En 2005, nous sommes conscients des défis que représente le perfectionnement des compétences des employés dans un environnement de petite entreprise. Dans cet esprit, un nouveau prix d'excellence a été créé pour reconnaître les petites entreprises qui aident leurs employés à développer les aptitudes et les compétences susceptibles de contribuer au succès et à la croissance des petites entreprises qui les emploient.

Le Conference Board remercie et applaudit tous les dirigeants et les praticiens pour l'importance qu'ils accordent à la valeur de l'investissement dans une société d'apprentissage et de formation continue.

Michael Bloom

Directeur exécutif, Initiatives et projets stratégiques
et Éducation et apprentissage
Le Conference Board du Canada

Judges

The Conference Board and sponsors acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of the people who gave their time and talent to serve as judges.

Brigitte Sharp-Ménard
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Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est

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Peter Walsh
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Alison Campbell
Senior Research Associate
Workplace Literacy
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The Conference Board of Canada

Juges

Le Conference Board et les parrains du concours désirent exprimer leur reconnaissance aux personnes qui ont généreusement consacré leur temps et leur talent, et agi à titre de juges.

Brigitte Sharp-Ménard
Responsable des programmes alternance études-travail
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Community Learning Awards

Recognizing community initiatives that help individuals develop skills and competencies enabling them to participate more fully in the community

Supported by:



Human Resources and
Skills Development Canada

Ressources humaines et
Développement des compétences Canada

Community-based Learning Opportunities

WINNER



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ESTABLISHED

1985

Frontier College

Overview

Beat the Street is a learning centre serving street-involved and homeless youth in downtown Toronto.

For street youth, information technology skills are an essential part of moving toward a more stable and healthy lifestyle. The learning centre, complete with a state-of-the-art computer lab, integrates computers and technology into its programs to enhance learning. All programs are specifically targeted to help street-involved and homeless youth improve their skills, develop to their full potential and become employable.

Centre programs include:

- a computer skills program, which includes certification in Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)
- a GED preparation program
- a literacy and basic skills program
- a digital arts program

Objectives

- to provide street-involved youth with broader opportunities for education, employment and personal development
- to provide a multi-faceted educational program to help youth transition from homelessness to being productive citizens

Innovation

- programs are flexible, supportive, effective and specifically tailored to the educational needs of street youth
- GED preparation program is the only one of its kind in Toronto; MOS certification is accessible only to enrolled youth

Benefits

- non-traditional learning environment motivates youth to complete the program
- positive outcomes such as improved self-esteem, a better attitude and enhanced skills help street youth make better choices about their future

Community-based Learning for Aboriginals

WINNER



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ESTABLISHED

1999

Sunchild First Nation E-Learning Community

Overview

The Sunchild First Nation E-Learning Community (Sunchild E-Learning) was established to provide quality learning for Aboriginal students. Designed to augment and support the conventional school program, this cyber school is an e-learning model that brings the teacher to each diverse classroom site through the collaborative technologies of computers and the Internet.

Some key outcomes of the program are student competencies in math, science and reading; enhanced computer literacy; stay in school (student retention); teacher development and retention; and cross-cultural learning.

Objectives

- to increase the successful retention of Aboriginal students
- to support the academic achievement of Aboriginal students at all levels of education
- to provide affordable access to comprehensive multi-faceted education choices

Innovation

- comprehensive education choices tailored to meet the specific needs of the Aboriginal communities
- program specifically designed for Aboriginal students in diverse classroom sites
- students receive instruction from online instructor, as well as in-class Aboriginal teacher
- positive results from tracking of student success and providing quality instruction

Benefits

- program encourages interest in higher education and career paths
- business contributes to a skilled workforce

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities

WINNER



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ESTABLISHED

2001

The Canadian Helen Keller Centre, Inc.

Overview

The Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC) is a not-for-profit organization that provides training opportunities for individuals who have acquired the dual disability of Deaf-Blindness. People who are considered to be Deaf-Blind have significant impairment of both vision and hearing. They may be hearing impaired and visually impaired, hearing impaired and blind, deaf and visually impaired, or deaf and blind.

The mission of the organization is to provide Deaf-Blind persons with access to information and training opportunities to achieve independence and self-reliance through maximizing their abilities.

Currently there are 15,500 Deaf-Blind people living in Canada, many of whom are underserved and dependant. The Canadian Helen Keller Centre, Inc. accepts and actively endorses the philosophy to provide services to Canada's Deaf-Blind youth and adult population.

Objectives

- to provide training and computer essentials to people who have become Deaf-Blind
- to provide technical devices to help increase independence, safety and employability
- to develop appropriate supports so that adults with Deaf-Blind disabilities can engage in the learning community
- to provide Deaf-Blind individuals with the right tools to become more independent and more involved in society and to meet their individual goals

Innovation

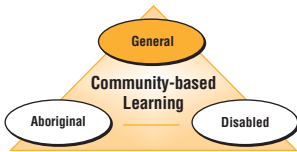
- CHKC is the only Centre in Canada to provide training to all Canadians who have become Deaf-Blind
- a residential component is available for non-locals
- students are trained on current technology and are prepared to adapt to and access future technological advances

Benefits

- students learn alternate ways to maintain current skill-set and to develop new skills in accordance with their disability
- IT offers an alternative form of communication that increases self-confidence, allowing students to be more visible and accepted into the community

Community-based Learning Opportunities

HONOURABLE MENTION



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ESTABLISHED

2003

WoodGreen Community Services: Homeward Bound

Overview

Recognizing the plight of mothers and children in the shelter system, in 2003 WoodGreen Community Services launched the Homeward Bound project. The first of its kind in Canada, this program provides low-cost housing, child care, after-school programs, life skills training and free college education to program participants. At the end of their stay, women obtain a two-year degree at Seneca College and are offered full-time employment in a career track matching their training.

A significant aspect of Homeward Bound's training focuses on developing computer skills that prepare participants for a wide range of career opportunities in business and technology.

Objectives

- to support women and their children to move into independent housing and employment within three years
- to provide key support to these families to ensure a successful transition

Innovation

- a unique and powerful vision to end the cycle of poverty for the families involved
- commitment and integrated support from all participants, including industry partners and community

Benefits

- improved hard and soft skills lead to success in participants control of their future
- improved lifestyle for participants and ultimate positive impact within the community

Community-based Learning Opportunities

HONOURABLE MENTION



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ESTABLISHED

2001

Surrey Public Library

Overview

The Surrey Public Library is a non-profit institution that provides computer access and training to Surrey residents, focusing on individuals and groups who are least likely to own or have access to computers or computer training.

Since 2001 the library has tripled its capacity to offer learning technology-based training and is now recognized for its computer literacy training through drop-in sessions and formal classes. The three fully operational electronic classroom facilities are strategically located to serve all areas of Surrey and are supported by the nine Surrey Public Library branches.

Objectives

- to provide affordable access to learning technology-based training and online government services to all community members
- to improve employability of residents and support career advancement
- to build community and corporate partnerships

Innovation

- integrates a computer literacy service into existing library services
- motivates and guides community partnerships by implementing the “train the trainer” model
- establishes a corporate community partnership by creating training programs with community and commercial training agencies

Benefits

- viewed as a key provider for computer literacy and a positive link to the community
- participants use facilities to improve job skills and employment opportunities

Community-based Learning Opportunities

HONOURABLE MENTION



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ESTABLISHED

2001

Calgary Public Library

Overview

In 2001, the Calgary Public Library became a partner in the Connect Calgary project, a community initiative focused on improving the delivery of community services to individuals at risk.

Under the banner of “Open for All” the Library’s contribution to Connect Calgary has provided an infrastructure consisting of public access to computer terminals and technology training for service providers, their clients and volunteers.

Objectives

- to design and implement innovative library programs and services for “at risk” residents, service providers, volunteers and the general public
- to develop web resources and enhanced training for Library customers
- to increase collaboration with community partners

Innovation

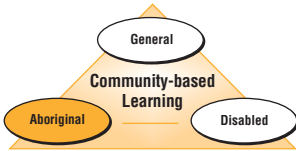
- support of library’s youth initiatives through Computer Buddies, Connect Teens and Building Your First Resumé programs
- CyberSeniors—a program geared to older citizens and first-time users of technology
- volunteer programs to help customers with special needs

Benefits

- integrates disenfranchised communities
- all learners benefit through an improved attitude toward learning, a positive lifestyle and healthy living

Community-based Learning for Aboriginals

HONOURABLE MENTION



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ESTABLISHED

2002

Manitoba First Nations Remote Access Initiative

Overview

An e-learning project aimed at improving the quality and delivery of health care in rural and remote First Nations communities. The Manitoba First Nations Remote Access Initiative began as a demonstration project in 2002 to implement and evaluate @YourSide Colleague[®], a web-based application that provides remote access to knowledge and health human resources. The project involved 35 First Nations communities, tribal councils and their health organizations; First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), Manitoba Region; the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs; and Saint Elizabeth Health Care.

Objectives

- to demonstrate the value of providing remote, dynamic access to knowledge and health human resources
- to create an environment enabling health program managers and providers to improve their skills, abilities and confidence
- to support and implement ongoing delivery of quality health programs and services

Innovation

- interactive web-based e-learning application known as @YourSide Colleague[®], developed to transform staff orientation and mentoring practices
- offers opportunities to interact with peers and experts within online communities of learning
- modules range from clinically focused topics to personal care and support modules for health care aides to program management modules

Benefits

- participants receive a certificate of completion after having successfully completed a module
- ongoing access to education and skills development without having to leave the community

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities

HONOURABLE MENTION



CONTACT

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ESTABLISHED

1996

Speech Assisted Reading and Writing Program—Bow Valley College

Overview

The Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) program at Bow Valley College is a community-based literacy program for adults with disabilities who read at or below a grade 7 level. The students are multi-barriered in that they have low literacy skills, are adults with limited incomes and are adults with limited educational backgrounds. In addition, these adults have a range of disabilities, from intellectual/development to brain injuries resulting from stroke and cerebral palsy.

Students are interviewed to access their prior learning skills and then a learning plan is developed. Partnered with a tutor, students attend class two days a week for a six-month period and are taught using computer-based training. Two key talking computer programs used are Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) and Speech Assisted Math (SAM).

Objectives

- to increase the use of computers in adult literacy programs
- to offer an accessible, computer-based learning opportunity for individuals with low literacy skills

Innovation

- combining the one-on-one student/tutor programming model with computer-based literacy software created specifically for adults with disabilities
- flexibility to focus on the learner's competencies through tailored lessons geared to each student's level and need

Benefits

- positive college learning experience for adults with disabilities
- increased ability for adult learners to pursue further education, job training and employment opportunities

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities

HONOURABLE MENTION



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ESTABLISHED

1997

WORKink™—The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

Overview

WORKink™ (www.workink.com) is a program of the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW). WORKink™ is Canada's lead, cross-disability career and employment portal for job seekers with disabilities, employers and employment professionals. It is an online career development and employment portal for Canadians with disabilities. The portal is innovative, informative and interactive, and provides career guidance.

WORKink™ provides cross-country regionalized information highlighting provincial and territorial employment/career resources. Developed in 1997 as a Toronto-specific employment initiative, WORKink™ has become a national success supporting a wide range of stakeholder groups including job seekers with disabilities (with youth, Aboriginal and newcomer subgroups), employers, employment professionals and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Objectives

- to bridge the gap between employers and skilled job seekers with disabilities
- to provide online resources that support the employment and career advancement of people with disabilities
- to provide self-employment resources to entrepreneurs with disabilities and remove geographical barriers in the dissemination of employment resources

Innovation

- rapid expansion over an eight-year period from local initiative to national success
- all-inclusive portal provides resources to a multitude of stakeholders

Benefits

- one-stop cross-disability employment portal benefits all stakeholders
- removes existing barriers to employment by job seekers with disabilities
- YOUTHink features self-assessment tools and e-learning options that are age-appropriate

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2001

The Learning Partnership

Overview

The Learning Partnership's Round Table on Technology (RRT) is described as an educators' forum, a think tank and an educational program incubator. Its two areas of note are its role as a community learning network (where innovators from education, technology and government formally exchange ideas) and joint venture initiatives that range from teacher e-learning to technology mentor projects.

The RRT makes significant changes in the community through the programs it initiates that directly impact skills and learning development in the education sector.

Objectives

- to cultivate a network of like-minded individuals, from different interest areas, to work together to transform public education through the innovative use of technology
- to develop partnerships that strengthen public education through programs, research and policy on technology in education
- to provide a national blueprint that uses technology for professional development for educators

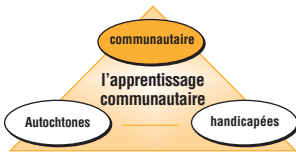
Innovation

- shares innovation and best practices and disseminates research to educators within the broader intention of affecting policy
- takes advantage of community members' knowledge to expedite program development

Benefits

- all stakeholders benefit from professional development and changes in attitude toward technology
- professional development that benefits administrators, teachers and ultimately students
- celebrates educator achievement and sharing of best practices within the education community

Occasions d'apprentissage communautaire



PERSONNE-RESSOURCE

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ÉTABLI
2002

Allô prof

Sommaire

Allô prof est un site Internet d'aide aux devoirs et leçons qui a su développer, au fil des années, une approche éducative et innovatrice pour venir en aide aux élèves du primaire et du secondaire.

Pour bénéficier des conseils des enseignants diplômés, les étudiants n'ont qu'à se rendre sur le site puis à se diriger vers l'un des services Internet et le tour est joué.

Trois ressources Internet sont disponibles :

- les Cyberclasses—des salles de classes virtuelles avec tableau noir
- la bibliothèque virtuelle
- le service de courriel

Objectifs

- lutter contre le décrochage scolaire en offrant un service d'encadrement aux élèves en difficulté
- favoriser l'autonomie et la réussite éducative des élèves
- fournir une aide supplémentaire ainsi que des conseils pour les travaux scolaires dans toutes les matières du primaire et du secondaire et ce, en lien direct avec les programmes éducatifs
- servir d'outil de développement pour les jeunes Québécois en les amenant à pousser plus loin les connaissances acquises dans le cadre de leurs cours

Caractère innovateur

- le site d'Allô prof permet aux étudiants de joindre l'utile à l'agréable en trouvant des ressources interactives sur le site tout en améliorant leurs connaissances scolaires
- le site a fait peau neuve — la page d'accueil est pratique et axée sur les services gratuits que sont offerts
- le site convivial et simple répond aux besoins des jeunes en matière d'aide aux devoirs

Avantages

- une expertise unique au fil des ans en tant que service d'aide aux devoirs
- répond à des besoins collectifs de support à l'apprentissage en répondant aux nombreux besoins académiques des jeunes

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2001

Tamarack—An Institute for Community Engagement

Overview

Tamarack's Learning Centre was created to develop and disseminate useful and timely information for individuals and groups collaborating to affect social change. At the core of the centre is an active and growing community of 4,000 people who subscribe to the Institute's newsletters and engage with Tamarack's tele-learning seminars and websites.

Tamarack assists the voluntary sector, and municipalities, government and community organizations by providing seminars, presentations and consulting services—helping them to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to build healthy, equitable and self-sustaining communities.

Objectives

- to develop and freely disseminate useful and timely information for individuals and groups collaborating to affect social change (by reducing poverty)
- to provide tailored support on a fee-for-service or sponsored basis

Innovation

- invests primarily in web ICT strategies as an effective means to engage community learners across Canada
- disseminates information through website, e-newsletters, online seminars, tele-learning

Benefits

- communities become more efficient and effective at their work
- inspires people to become fully engaged about learning, planning and building collaborative community partnerships

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

1996

The Business Link Business Service Centre

Overview

The Business Link Business Service Centre is a not-for-profit organization that assists the small business community throughout Alberta. Since 1996, it has provided timely and cost-effective learning opportunities to entrepreneurs, linking them to information, resources and core capacities available globally.

Objectives

- to promote and deliver new, creative and cost-effective models of support and intervention using information technology
- to improve opportunities for non-metropolitan entrepreneurs by linking them to various economic and business development agencies
- to provide timely and cost-effective access to small business education

Innovation

- IP-based videoconferencing introduced to bridge the “distance and time gap”
- “quick to learn, quick to use” philosophy linked with easy-to-understand format resulting in immediate use in the marketplace
- leading-edge technology bridging the needs of the entrepreneurs with information and resources

Benefits

- improved learning opportunities for entrepreneurs have positive economic impact for small business owner
- all stakeholders benefit from the joint collaboration

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2002

Pacific Community Resources Society: Passport to Work

Overview

The Passport to Work Project originated in 2002 as an initiative to provide unemployed, multi-barriered individuals with information and skills development to take advantage of employment opportunities.

The program includes life skills, job readiness assessments, essential job search skills and an introduction to computer skills for multi-barriered individuals, who face numerous challenges such as:

- limited education and financial resources
- limited life skills
- insufficient computer skills that limits access to information regarding employment opportunities

Objectives

- to provide multi-barriered persons with an opportunity to obtain skills necessary to succeed in the knowledge-based economy
- to assist clients to become job-ready using individual, tutorial and online-based learning methodologies

Innovation

- program has been instrumental in helping to develop unique partnerships between public education and private corporate sector
- web-based format incorporates online assessment resources; literacy and numeracy educational upgrading; links to job sites; and innovative job search tools geared to the needs of marginalized groups

Benefits

- improved skills lead to employment and career attainment
- multi-barriered individuals are empowered and take control of their lives

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2001

Community Outreach Group

Overview

In 2001, the Community Outreach Group initiated a project entitled "The Internet and Beyond—New Approaches to Accessibility." The objective was to work cooperatively with community partners to jointly explore solutions to problems that impact all agency participants. The joint Internet-based learning and mentorship project sought to strengthen each partner by providing a vehicle to share expertise with one another and to empower the clients.

Objectives

- to provide services to members of Canada's diverse communities that are geographically isolated
- to develop Internet-based classrooms to enhance skills through learning, exploration and communication
- to develop a cooperative partnership in which all partners can share the best of their products and services with one another

Innovation

- wide range of services provided via a real-time Internet-based classroom to persons of diversity throughout Canada
- innovative example of leadership as partners develop and share programming
- recognized as a best practice; international speaking engagements have led to replication of the program in Italy and in developing nations

Benefits

- increased skills development of individuals and groups within the diverse communities
- disenfranchised individuals become contributing members of the community

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2001

Toronto Public Library

Overview

Toronto Public Library (TPL) is North America's busiest public library and an important and respected part of the city of Toronto. TPL has long been engaged in supporting language acquisition and helping newcomers develop job-seeking skills. User education is the third and newest component in the support programs for newcomers.

In 2001, TPL formally launched its User Education Learning centres. Now in 13 locations, these centres offer patrons, particularly immigrants—many of whom are low income—the opportunity to use technology to increase access to the library and take advantage of its programs, expand their knowledge of the Internet, and gain valuable work-and education-related computer and life skills.

Objectives

- to increase accessibility to technology through training
- to develop education programs that support the use of TPL's resources by newcomers, to aid in educational and employment success

Innovation

- education programs have no user fees and are highly focused, practical and hands-on
- courses in Cantonese and Mandarin are available to students upon request
- successful results with over 20,000 registrants having completed TPL courses

Benefits

- accessibility and ease help overcome potential language and cultural barriers experienced by new Canadians
- enhanced skills and improved self-esteem for learners of all ages

Occasions d'apprentissage communautaire



PERSONNE-RESSOURCE

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ÉTABLI

2000

Le Réseau des Centres d'Accès Communautaire à Internet ruraux de l'Estrie

Sommaire

Depuis cinq ans, les Centres d'Accès Communautaire à Internet (CACI) comptent sur une ressource compétente pour la mise sur pied d'activités d'apprentissage communautaire en dispensant de la formation. Situés dans le territoire du Haut-Saint-François, les centres organisent des ateliers sur l'initiation à l'informatique, et, tout nouveau à travers le Réseau des CACI ruraux de l'Estrie, un projet d'apprentissage, ce qui permettait d'offrir, à l'ensemble de la population touchée par le réseau, des connaissances dans le domaine des technologies de l'information et des communications. Ces formations furent enseignées dans quatre MRC rejoignant ainsi douze municipalités.

Objectifs

- offrir l'accès public à Internet à la population touchée par le fossé numérique (i.e. les aînés, les personnes handicapées, les habitants des régions rurales, les personnes ayant un faible revenu et un niveau de scolarité inférieur)
- permettre à la collectivité de mieux comprendre les enjeux de l'informatique et aussi d'acquérir une ouverture sur le monde

Caractère innovateur

- les nouvelles technologies de l'information et des communications procurent une chance historique au monde rural d'abolir les effets néfastes de la distance et d'offrir de nouveaux avantages concurrentiels qui devraient être générateurs d'emplois et de développement
- l'intégration des partenaires et leur appui financier contribuent grandement à la réalisation des ateliers de formation

Avantages

- répond à des besoins collectifs de support à l'apprentissage en comblant les nombreux besoins académiques de la population rurale

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2002

North Eastern Ontario Communications Network Inc. (NEOnet Inc.): Resourcentral

Overview

Resourcentral is a project headed by the North Eastern Ontario Communications Network (NEOnet Inc.), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving communications infrastructure and technology awareness in Northeastern Ontario.

The Resourcentral project was conceived as part of the NEOnet's continuing efforts to bridge the existing digital divide in Northern Ontario. In addition to promoting the use of public Internet access throughout the region, Resourcentral has been instrumental in providing basic training to people interested in expanding their computer abilities.

Objectives

- to enhance the use of the Community Access Program (CAP) and public Internet sites dispersed across the region
- to provide new ways of accessing appropriate effective learning opportunities through the use of learning technologies

Innovation

- fully bilingual site offers services in both French and English
- partnering with key community stakeholders such as community groups, learning centres, English and French school boards, libraries and Native Friendship centres, guarantees maximum reach

Benefits

- access to employment links brings awareness of job opportunities offered locally and in surrounding communities
- creates a more technology-savvy community

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2002

Altruvest

Overview

Altruvest Charitable Services is a registered Canadian charity founded in 1994 by a group of business leaders with the objective to expand the talent pool and enhance the governance skills of charitable sector boards and senior leaders.

Acting as a bridge between volunteers and the charities, Altruvest offers two core governance programs:

- BoardMatch Fundamentals—a free, web-based “market-place” for charities to post governance positions and for interested candidates from the business sector to post their résumés. The site also offers e-learning modules on the Canadian charitable sector, as well as an online toolkit and learning modules for board and executive directors.
- BoardMatch Leaders—a fee-based service where candidates learn about effective board governance; coaching and mentoring to participants by senior business leaders and board volunteers.

Objectives

- to expand the talent pool and enhance the governance skills of charitable sector boards and senior leaders, with a goal of fostering more effective charities and stronger Canadian communities
- to act as a bridge between volunteers and the charitable organizations by offering two core governance programs

Innovation

- experiential leadership opportunities for senior employees
- actual experience in board governance and ongoing coaching by charitable sector experts

Benefits

- enhanced employee motivation, retention through innovative personal and professional development program
- enhanced reputation for corporate social responsibility

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2003

Newfoundland Science Centre: *Science to Go*

Overview

Science to Go is a unique and innovative program designed by the Newfoundland Science Centre (NSC) to deliver hands-on interactive science programs to students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Curriculum-based workshops, delivered via teleconferencing to classrooms in remote locations in Newfoundland and Labrador, involve relevant science demonstrations performed by a workshop leader in St. John's. This is followed by hands-on experiments for the students to try in their classroom using the educational kits provided. After a workshop booking, schools are shipped a kit including materials needed for the students' hands-on participation in the 60-minute program; a teacher's guide; a checklist of the materials provided; a list of the key curriculum areas covered; and evaluation forms. The interactive nature of the video-conferencing medium allows for instantaneous connection between the NSC workshop leader and the participants.

Objectives

- to spark curiosity and inspire interest and participation in science and technology
- to develop and improve scientific literacy in students

Innovation

- unique in that the programs can be delivered remotely from St. John's to other locations in the province
- innovative in that it uses the latest video-conferencing technologies to link school children throughout the province

Benefits

- makes science fun and engaging for both students and teachers
- gives students and educators in rural communities access to all resources of the science centre

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED

2003

Lester B. Pearson School Board

Overview

The Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB) is one of Quebec's largest English school boards serving almost 30,000 students. It is recognized for its leadership and innovative approaches to education and is at the forefront of the public education sector in Quebec.

LBPSB's objective is to provide teachers and students with a learning environment that enables them to learn anytime and anywhere, according to their goals, pace and interests in career knowledge and development.

Two strategies developed by LBPSB to help achieve this objective are:

- The Interactive Community Database—an online user-friendly database to link the business and education communities to the classroom. Technology, in and out of the classroom, provides a positive learning environment for students.
- Centre of Educational Excellence—a highly developed partnership with the community, the Centre links teachers and students directly with business partners in specialized areas of technology (such as space, robotics and aviation). The program takes teachers off-campus to learn from experts and brings experts and expertise to the classroom. Teachers return to the classroom with in-depth knowledge.

Objectives

- to help students acquire knowledge of the various careers associated with science and technology and the skills required for success in this field
- to establish and maintain strong links to the community and its partners

Innovation

- successful technology models and tools for educators provide them and their students with direct links to experts in the community
- has expanded the range of curricular and extracurricular activities through real-life applications

Benefits

- students motivated to stay in school, to enhance employability skills, and to develop career awareness and exploration
- community involved in building a better-trained and more highly motivated future workforce

Occasions d'apprentissage communautaire



PERSONNE-RESSOURCE

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ÉTABLI
2002

Regroupement provincial des maisons d'hébergement et de transition pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale

Sommaire

Créé en 1979, le Regroupement est un organisme sans but lucratif réunissant près de 50 maisons d'hébergement qui répondent aux besoins de plus de 10 000 femmes et enfants par an à l'échelle de la province.

Car il est devenu difficile de répondre aux besoins de formation et de perfectionnement des travailleuses en maison d'hébergement à cause de l'étendue du territoire à couvrir, de la pénurie de ressources, du manque de temps et d'argent. D'autant plus que cette formation spécialisée n'est plus offerte dans la plupart des collèges et universités au Québec. Dans le cadre d'un projet de soutien à l'apprentissage communautaire au moyen des TIC intitulé FADAFEM, le Regroupement a donc créé une formation sur support cédérom.

Objectifs

- accroître ses connaissances de la violence conjugale, des réalités et des besoins des femmes et des enfants qui en sont victimes
- perfectionner ses compétences au plan du savoir-faire auprès des femmes victimes par le développement d'habiletés d'intervention centrée sur les besoins des victimes et la situation sociale des femmes
- améliorer ses compétences au plan du savoir-être auprès des femmes victimes en incorporant les valeurs, principes et attitudes préconisés par l'approche féministe

Caractère innovateur

- le cédérom est novateur, ses contenus d'apprentissage sont uniques mais aussi pratiques
- le cédérom vise à pallier le manque de formation des futures intervenantes
- une approche utilisée qui met l'accent sur l'empowerment et la reprise de pouvoir

Avantages

- amélioration des compétences en matière de savoir-être et de savoir-faire des intervenantes de maison d'hébergement, en réduisant leur sentiment d'impuissance et en renforçant leurs capacités d'intervention
- un modèle de développement communautaire durable

Community-based Learning Opportunities



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ESTABLISHED
2003

Construction Sector Council

Overview

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) was established in April 2001 to address the skills shortage in the construction trades and other human resource issues facing the industry. Since its inception, the CSC has launched several initiatives, in partnership with a number of construction trade groups, in four key areas of work:

- Technology—to help train much-needed tradespeople and improve workers' mobility
- Career-Awareness Programs—to improve the image of construction trades and encourage youth to choose construction as a career
- Standards and Skills Development—to develop national occupational standards
- Labour Market Information—to enable industry and government to make effective human resource decisions

One of the activities developed from CSC's mandate was the development of a safety standard for pipeline construction to reduce workplace injuries and their associated costs. A standardized computer-based (CD-ROM and online at: www.csc-ca.org) health and safety course was designed for all workers involved in the pipeline construction industry. The course is accessible to the worker anytime, anywhere.

Objectives

- to become mandatory training for all people working in the pipeline industry
- to enhance health and safety awareness and help prevent injury to workers
- to produce a worker-friendly and accessible program at little or no cost to the user

Innovation

- online training is different from the traditional on-site orientation and classroom training
- industry stakeholders support efforts to reduce injuries
- national accreditation ensures employees have recognized credentials and qualifications

Benefits

- innovative and efficient approach to educating and training the new generation of highly skilled employees
- all stakeholders benefit from online training (i.e., accessible training for the learner; minimal cost to the employer with ultimate gains from an educated workforce; industry gets an accredited program; supports governments e-learning efforts)

Community-based Learning for Aboriginals



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ESTABLISHED

2004

National Screen Institute—Canada

Overview

The National Screen Institute–Canada’s NSI Aboriginal Youth Pilot Project (AYPP), launched in 2004, was designed to deliver a culturally sensitive, well rounded understanding of industry job requirements and inspire Aboriginal youth to explore employment opportunities in the film and television industry.

The project targets young Aboriginal Canadians ages 18 to 30. Applicants attend customized skills development workshops and seminars that provide career information relating to key employment areas in the film and television industry. Selected interns are then placed with broadcasters to gain work experience and sharpen their skills.

Objectives

- to deliver a culturally sensitive, well-rounded understanding of industry job requirements
- to inspire Aboriginal youth in urban centers to explore a variety of creative and challenging employment opportunities in a specific industry

Innovation

- original and innovative in both concept and design, as the program is based on the traditional concepts of respect and sharing that form the foundation of the Aboriginal way of life
- skills development program focuses on three key areas: skills enhancement work experience individualized career guidance

Benefits

- reintroduction of traditional storytelling through electronic mediums
- renewed community respect for Aboriginal traditions
- growth in the number of practicing and gainfully employed Aboriginal media artists

Community-based Learning for Aboriginals



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ESTABLISHED

1999

Vision Seekers: Strong Minds— Strong Spirits Initiative

Overview

The Vision Seekers Initiative arose in response to widespread issues of academic failure and transition to secondary education and employment in the Skownan First Nation community.

Since the creation of Vision Seekers in April 2000, relevant programs from kindergarten to the post-secondary level have been developed; integrated social and educational services now address community needs and mobilized partnerships, there by creating valuable resources within and beyond the community.

By addressing both the underlying personal and community issues, including skills development, Vision Seekers benefits the community through increased well-being and unity; increased capacity for parenting; employment opportunities; and education and self-governance.

Objectives

- to nurture personal growth and learning
- to increase employability skills through community-based learning
- to deliver accredited secondary and post-secondary curricula
- to provide a model for First Nations facing similar challenges

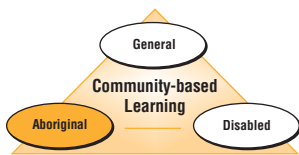
Innovation

- program focuses on relevancy to specific community needs, integrating social and educational services
- holistic approach centered on recognizing and honouring cultural values

Benefits

- measured success rate (40 graduates in both the secondary and post-secondary level in five years)
- positive peer and family relationships resulting from improved communications skills
- program has shaped community cohesion

Community-based Learning for Aboriginals



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ESTABLISHED

2001

The Montreal Fluency Centre/Centre de la fluidité verbale de Montréal

Overview

The Montreal Fluency Centre (MFC) is a non-profit agency dedicated to providing quality, bilingual speech/language services to children from birth to 18 years of age; and offers a treatment for a wide range of speech, language and language-based learning difficulties. All treatments include a partnership with parents, caregivers and educators, providing effective consultation within the child's school and community.

Two innovative programs incorporating learning technologies are the Oral Language Project and the Distance Managed Treatment of Communication Disorders for Remote Communities. These unique models utilize innovative techniques and a "low-tech" telehealth approach (video, e-mail, telephone and conference calls) to treatment resulting in positive benefits to all participants and their communities.

Objectives

- identification and testing of "at risk" students for oral language or other communication skills
- direct service to 25–30 "at risk" students daily in small groups
- distance model supports video-taped instructions, printed material, and telephone conferences

Innovation

- programme provides an alternative service delivery model allowing more regular contact to "at risk" youth
- Distance Learning Program helpful for contact with children in remote and/or rural communities
- successfully replicated in two Aboriginal communities and a School Board servicing a large multicultural/multilingual population

Benefits

- programme adapted to educational curriculum and to the culture of individual communities
- all students involved, regardless of age, have shown marked improvement in awareness and language skills
- techniques and materials introduced in the classroom benefit all students, including those "at risk"

Occasions d'apprentissage communautaire pour les Autochtones



PERSONNE-RESSOURCE

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ÉTABLI
2004

Wapikoni Mobile

Sommaire

Le projet du Wapikoni mobile a pris naissance pour répondre à un besoin urgent exprimé par les jeunes des communautés Atikamekw pour développer un scénario de long métrage. Le projet a été développé pour apprendre aux jeunes autochtones à maîtriser eux-mêmes les outils de création et de communication de l'univers numérique. Les outils technologiques nécessaires à la réalisation des oeuvres musicales ou visuelles sont entièrement installés dans le motorisé, ce qui en fait un véritable studio ambulancier. La légèreté des équipements, l'instantanéité des résultats et la possibilité de développer rapidement une expertise intéressante sont autant de justificatifs qui font de la technologie numérique un outil d'apprentissage par excellence.

Objectifs

- assurer un transfert de compétences et une utilisation maximale des équipements du domaine du cinéma numérique par les jeunes autochtones
- ateliers visant à compléter l'initiation aux principales technologies numériques et à donner une meilleure maîtrise des outils Web
- offrir une alternative aux jeunes en leur proposant des activités de création qui leur plaisent tout en étant susceptibles de réduire le décrochage scolaire, la consommation de drogue et la criminalité

Caractère innovateur

- un studio motorisé de formation et de création cinématographique et musicale conçu pour circuler dans les communautés autochtones du Québec
- le transfert du savoir-faire, le transfert des responsabilités de gestion et le transfert des équipements aux communautés participantes

Avantages

- le Wapikoni mobile offre aux jeunes une occasion de sortir de leur cadre de vie habituel et de rayonner dans leur communauté et à l'extérieur
- le Wapikoni mobile offre la chance de développer de nouvelles compétences

Community-based Learning for Aboriginals



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ESTABLISHED

1990

First Nations Partnership Programs

Overview

The First Nations Partnership Program is a community-based learning initiative that responds to requests from First Nations communities on reserves for culturally relevant, community-based training in child and youth care. It is conceived as a community capacity-building initiative that increases economic and employment opportunities by training professional child and youth care workers for employment; and by providing community members with access to licensed, high-quality and culturally appropriate early childhood learning programs.

The First Nations partners in delivery seek an approach to training that ensures continuity of cultural concepts and practices in children's services, and that also harness knowledge and technology from mainstream, Euro-Western traditions that have been effective in human resources development including adult education and education for young children.

Objectives

- to strengthen community development through employment opportunities
- to revitalize and sustain positive cultural practices, identity and language
- to strengthen the capacity of community leaders to negotiate and sustain constructive partnerships and involve community

Innovation

- Program graduates receive credentials from their provincial Ministry of Health or Children and Family Development
- over 15 years, innovative learning applications have enhanced the learning and skills development of 140 First Nations individuals in on-reserve Aboriginal communities

Benefits

- with more self-confidence and a better skill-set, graduates see themselves as community leaders
- enhances social cohesion for all community members

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

2001

STRIDE/YMCA Career Development and Learning Centre

Overview

STRIDE is a non-profit, community-based vocational rehabilitation program founded in 1983. STRIDE is the only Halton-based organization whose primary purpose is to serve the employment needs of residents who are living with a mental illness. STRIDE is committed to creating opportunities for people in the Halton community facing mental health issues and helping them gain meaningful employment. To this end, employment together with improved skills contribute significantly to a person's sense of dignity, independence and quality of life.

The YMCA Career Development and Learning Centre (CDLC) has partnered with STRIDE to increase the literacy and employability skills of the STRIDE employees. A workplace reading, writing and mathematics curriculum has been developed. Classes are offered at two different times during the day in order to maximize the participation. The inclusion of computer training has allowed the employees to break down imagined barriers.

Objectives

- to provide further education at the workplace and during working hours for all STRIDE employees
- to increase vital computer skills that, combined with better literacy and basic skills, will benefit employees
- to increase awareness of the importance of health and safety in the workplace

Innovation

- program targets "at risk" population (i.e., youth who have not attained a high school diploma and/or those relying on government subsidies)
- employees prepared for specific employment through literacy program and training for the workplace

Benefits

- employment opportunities for persons with low literacy levels including those with disabilities
- three-way partnership strengthens employer-employee-community relationship

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

1985

Employ-Ability Program: Neil Squire Society

Overview

The Neil Squire Society is a Canadian not-for-profit organization that, for the past 20 years, has used technology, knowledge and passion to empower Canadians with physical disabilities. The programs offered by the Neil Squire Society help the target group remove obstacles and barriers for persons with disabilities to support independent living and to help them become more active members of society.

Established in 1985, the Employ-Ability Program has helped more than 1,200 participants reveal a new reality and gain independence in their lives. Through this program, persons with disabilities, from across Canada, are offered a unique learning opportunity where they will discover their many capabilities and develop new employment skills enhanced by technology.

Learning modules consist of personal wellness, career development, technology, and employment liaison and work experience.

Objectives

- to provide individuals with disabilities an opportunity to acquire independence and gainful employment
- to identify barriers to labour market participation and assist in overcoming these challenges

Innovation

- objectives of the program are driven by the nature of the participants, who fall into many different disability categories including multiple physical disabilities
- Enhanced Education Opportunities—higher education offered to participants who have completed Employ-Ability program
- program includes distance education, aboriginal relations, and technology

Benefits

- opportunity for independence and employment for disabled
- improved self-esteem and self-confidence
- disabled feel part of the community

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

2002

Canadian Abilities Foundation

Overview

The Canadian Abilities Foundation has always had a core activity communicating with, and providing information to, people with disabilities through its various publishing projects, as well as the development and maintenance of the Access Guide Canada website (www.abilities.ca/agc).

The Access Guide Canada (AGC) project was launched in 2002 and grew from a smaller Ontario-based pilot started in 2000 called the Community Information Access Project. AGC is now a large online database of businesses and services accessible to people with disabilities in communities across Canada. Essentially a web-based cooperative, AGC enables people with disabilities to develop their communication, research and Internet skills through finding and posting detailed information on local accessible facilities.

Having all interested communities maintain their own web page, this participatory model helps to bridge the digital divide as it allows an opportunity for community-based learners and volunteers to enhance their skills and competencies. The project provides opportunities for learning and skill development that is of relevance to people with disabilities, and allows everyone to participate and determine their own level of commitment.

Objectives

- to facilitate an increase in the ease and efficiency of community participation and travel for Canadians with disabilities
- to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to learn new skills
- to develop content relevant to those with disabilities

Innovation

- accessible to the public and available at no cost
- website developed and maintained by target group
- guide offers web-browsing technology used by people with disabilities

Benefits

- win-win-win situation between individuals, businesses and community stakeholders
- change in public perception of disabled helps support their right to equality

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

2000

SCI PILOT: Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation

Overview

The Spinal Cord Injury Peer Information Library on Technology, or SCI PILOT, serves to fill the gap between theory and practice, both for consumers of assistive technology and professionals who prescribe and work with it.

SCI PILOT provides a unique, web-based opportunity for information-sharing among people with a need and interest in assistive technology for people with spinal cord injuries. The original goal was to provide virtual peer support on getting and using assistive technology to people with recent spinal cord injuries. During development, it became clear that the described experiences could be of benefit to anyone who had a role in research, design, funding, recommendation or policy making on assistive technology.

Because the resource is web-based, it is an interactive document that evolves with developments in research and service delivery. SCI PILOT recently launched an area for product reviews by consumers. Readers with spinal cord injuries are encouraged to write in with their experiences using specific products so others with similar situations can better weigh their own needs. In addition, discussion guides have also been developed—one for occupational therapy students and one for use in peer support settings.

Objectives

- to provide virtual peer support on getting and using assistive technology to people with recent spinal cord injuries
- to provide information to fill the gap between theory and practice

Innovation

- unique opportunity for information-sharing among people with a similar need and interest in assistive technology
- website contains personal situations that make the stories engaging and accessible
- interactive web-based and concept of a living document keeps the information current

Benefits

- first-person accounts provide newly disabled with practical and current information
- right technology has the potential to level the playing field and provide equal opportunities for people with spinal cord injuries

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

2001

NorthEast Community Online

Overview

NorthEast Community Online: A Virtual Learning Community for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and their families (www.ne-community.com) provides a model for community development in a rural setting. Integrating information and communication technology in an accessible website, it creates a learning community for adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Users of this website are introduced to web-based information and communication technology as resources for informal learning, as tools for decision-making and networking, and as a means for achieving a fuller and more satisfying life.

Objectives

- to develop an accessible website that provides high-quality information about developmental disabilities, community inclusion and associated issues for all community members
- to develop appropriate supports so that adults with developmental disabilities can engage in the learning community

Innovation

- content, function and structure of the website developed in consultation with the community
- one of the first websites worldwide designed primarily for adults with developmental disabilities

Benefits

- accessibility and ease help overcome barriers experienced by disabled persons and family members
- enhanced skills and self-esteem for disabled users
- website viewed as a vehicle for community development and capacity building

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

2003

Audio Tactile Network

Overview

Audio Tactile Network (ATN) is a non-profit charitable organization utilizing the most up-to-date hardware and software to assist people with disabilities prepare for employment, help them realize their goal of attaining further education, or improve their quality of life. ATC provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to gain access to employment through a variety of assessment, skills upgrading and personal development services.

In 2003, ATN opened the Tanys Quesnell Living Learning Centre (TQLLC)—a drop-in computer lab that provides opportunities for individuals to learn about assistive technology and explore the value of computers in their lives. A six-computer facility, the Centre is a ground-level “store-front” location in a neighbourhood with a large population of senior citizens and people with disabilities. In addition to computers, printers and fax machines, it also has a wide variety of specially adapted software programs and hardware used by people who are physically unable to use “regular” keyboards and mice, or who cannot see or read the normal screen output.

The Centre serves a relatively small population of individuals who, because of any number of disabilities and/or barriers, are either not presently employable or not looking to become so in the near future, such as the seniors.

Objectives

- to provide a place where people with disabilities and seniors can work, play and learn in an accessible and inclusive environment
- to offer an accessible and supportive environment for learning and recreation

Innovation

- successful partnership between various levels of government
- offers assisted-living facilities for clients

Benefits

- role of volunteer and mentor boost confidence and employability
- community members find a place to learn and grow

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

1993

Assistive Technology Centre Society

Overview

The Assistive Technology Centre Society provides services and supports for people with disabilities, of all ages, through technology. The Centre was developed and is sustained with three community partners:

- Nova Scotia Community College—Lunenburg Campus
- South Shore District School Board
- Assistive Technology Centre Society

This innovative partnership ensures that ATC is self-sustaining and addresses the needs of people with disabilities across an age continuum (from early intervention to school age and to the workplace).

Objectives

- to provide services and support for people with disabilities, of all ages, through technology
- to offer an accessible and supportive environment for learning and recreation

Innovation

- successful partnership between community college, school board and registered charity
- provides support in seeking accessible learning, leisure and employment solutions through technology for people with disabilities locally, regionally, provincially and internationally

Benefits

- community members with disabilities are able to engage in their education more successfully carry out a job and pursue alternate leisure activities
- community members find a safe place to learn and grow

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED

1996

Honeywell Airframe Systems

Overview

The primary objective of Honeywell's Work Experience Program (WED) is to provide deaf participants with the opportunity to learn hands-on skills that prepare them for work in the field of electronic assembly. Since the program's inception in 1995/96, more than 44 students have participated in this internship program; 20 deaf employees are gainfully employed at Honeywell—three of whom have 15 years of service with the company.

In 1998, as part of the company's Total Quality Movement, members of the WED program created a deaf team with the intent to improve communications amongst deaf workers. Part of this team strategy was to teach sign language to willing hearing employees. Seven years after the first company-sponsored sign language class was conducted, more than 200 hearing employees have taken the Beginner's course and several employees have become proficient. All Honeywell employees (hearing and deaf) are proud of the Work Experience Program as it creates a mindset within the entire workforce proving that challenges can be overcome.

Objectives

- to provide deaf participants with the opportunity to learn hands-on skills that will give them the experience, expertise and knowledge to work in the field of electronic assembly
- to offer an accessible and supportive environment for learning deaf employees

Innovation

- students are paid by the employer throughout the year-long program
- not only does the program offer deaf people the opportunity to learn lifelong skills, it also enriches the lives of the hearing/speaking workforce

Benefits

- program enhances employee morale and improves community awareness
- offers employer an opportunity to draw from an untapped resource for talent

Community-based Learning for Persons with Disabilities



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ESTABLISHED
2002

BUILT Network—Building Up Individuals through Learning and Teamwork

Overview

The BUILT Network Customer Service Representative program originated in May 2002. The program was developed specifically to provide persons with disabilities the opportunity to come together as a team to increase workplace skills and ethics. BUILT Network provides services to persons with mental health issues nationally. Persons taking the program have been out of the workforce for longer than three years and have all identified with having personal experience in dealing with issues ranging from low self-esteem, low self-confidence, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder and other mental health issues.

In 2004–05, more than 100 persons across Canada gained employment and/or returned to post-secondary education after having enrolled in the seven-week program. Program areas covered include: Personal Development, Customer Service, Personal Sales, Computer Fundamentals, MS Office and Professional Development.

Objectives

- to provide skills development opportunities for persons with mental health issues that lead to employment
- to increase self-esteem and self-confidence
- to provide a caring peer support network for participants

Innovation

- humble beginnings—disabled held car washes as fundraising efforts to purchase the technology needed for start-up of skills development program
- disabled empowered to help promote inclusion in Canada

Benefits

- positive lifestyle changes as disabled are now unemployed and contributing to the community
- increased self-esteem and confidence and improved mental health
- program reduces stigma and promotes inclusion in the workplace



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Secrétariat national à l'alphabétisation

Small Business Literacy Initiatives

WINNER



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Stedfast Inc.

Overview

Stedfast Inc. was founded in 1930 as a supplier to the shoe, book-binding and travel bag sectors. In 1979 it became a specialized manufacturer of high-tech fabrics. Today it employs 100 people and is a leader in the development and manufacture of highly specialized barrier textiles using multiple coating and laminating technologies.

In partnership with the Textiles Human Resources Council, Stedfast has developed an innovative on-site learning facility available to its staff 24/7. The company's Skills and Learning Site is a focal point for skills development. By supporting on-the-job training to develop essential, technical and business skills, Stedfast is making a major investment in lifelong learning for its staff, while supporting personal training goals and activities.

Stedfast has a mature labour force, with historically low turnover and a competitive wage rate. The Skills and Learning Site provides Stedfast with the ability to offer training to update the skills of its existing employees and secure their buy-in as the company prepares itself for a workforce turnover. Flexibility of the program and blended learning creates a continuous learning environment for the reluctant older worker and a welcoming atmosphere for the new employee. The use of job-specific content engages users with little of no formal education, enhancing understanding and retention of technical subject matter.

Objectives

- to invest in the current workforce through training
- to enhance workplace performance
- to provide new and ongoing skills development and knowledge management
- to support on-the-job training to develop literacy, numeracy and academic skills

Innovation

- one of the smallest companies of the participating 30 sites being developed in Canadian textile workplaces
- unique industry-wide delivery available to employees 24/7
- active involvement from both the management and union representatives

Benefits

- 24/7 e-learning allows employees to learn and develop skills at their convenience
- more innovative and flexible workforce
- positive return on investment

Small Business Literacy Initiatives

HONOURABLE MENTION



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i³DVR International Inc.

Overview

i³DVR International is a manufacturer of digital video recording systems. With over 80 employees in Canada and approximately 30 worldwide, i³DVR is committed to innovation and employee development. i³DVR's high quality and service standards have ensured the exponential growth of the company and have contributed to the winning of various prestigious awards.

From its inception, i³DVR has recognized the social and economic importance of employing newcomers to Canada. Therefore, the company continues to actively seek out and hire a significant number of immigrants. In many cases, obstacles such as language barriers, racism and little knowledge of workplace culture impede advancement. i³DVR has established a number of training initiatives that are designed to help its employees adjust to working life in Canada.

Objectives

- to provide quality training and support to its employees
- to enhance workplace performance by improving employee skills
- to provide new and ongoing skills development and knowledge management
- to support on-the-job training to new immigrants

Innovation

- in-house mentoring program
- ESL language training offered to all employees
- e-learning (www.i3onlinetraining.com)

Benefits

- improved skills development
- enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- opportunities for career advancement

Initiatives d'alphabétisation au sein d'une moyenne entreprise

LAURÉAT



PERSONNE-RESSOURCE

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Technocell Inc.

Sommaire

Technocell Inc. est une compagnie allemande, leader mondial en fabrication de papier décor, un papier destiné à l'ameublement.

En 2001, Technocell a fait l'acquisition d'une usine située à Drummondville, seule usine fabriquant ce genre de papier au Canada. À ce moment, les gestionnaires ont vite constaté que le segment de marché couvert par Technocell requérait des connaissances et compétences en fabrication de papier allant au-delà des qualifications habituellement rencontrées dans les papeteries traditionnelles. De surcroît, certains des employés ne possédaient pas la formation académique de base requise (DEP ou DEC en pâtes et papiers).

Afin de maintenir des standards de qualité élevés et d'améliorer la rentabilité et la productivité de l'usine, Technocell a mis sur pied un projet de formation échelonné sur quatre ans pour l'ensemble de ses 150 employés.

Objectifs

- accroître la rentabilité et la productivité de l'usine
- améliorer les compétences techniques et génériques des employés
- préparer les employés à des changements technologiques futurs
- modifier la culture d'entreprise
- développer une expertise locale, voire canadienne, en papier décor

Caractère innovateur

- les besoins de formation sont évalués et mesurés à l'aide de tests de compétences
- un plan individuel de formation est établi pour chaque employé
- la formation se donne sur les lieux de travail, sur les heures de travail, sans perte salariale et sans arrêter la production
- à la fin de leur programme de formation, les opérateurs se verront décerner un diplôme reconnu par le Ministère de l'éducation (AEC papier spécialité)

Avantages

- plus grande motivation des employés et meilleure rétention de personnel
- amélioration des relations de travail
- plus grande participation des employés dans l'innovation
- transférabilité des connaissances acquises sur le marché du travail

Large Business Literacy Initiatives

WINNER



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Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.

Overview

Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. operates the Diavik Diamond Mine, which is a remote worksite approximately 300 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife. Diavik and the major on-site contractors employ over 700 people, with 70 per cent of the workforce being northerners and approximately 40 per cent are Aboriginal persons. Many of the workers have only rudimentary literacy and numeracy skills and some are non-readers.

Diavik has made a strong and sustainable commitment to the ongoing upgrading, training and advancement of its employees. One of the cornerstones of this commitment is the on-site Diavik Workplace Learning Centre (WLC), which provides a wide range of literacy, numeracy, academic and computer programs to Diavik employees and contract staff.

Objectives

- to enhance and improve the literacy, numeracy and academic skills of employees at all levels
- to provide employees with the tools and competencies necessary to improve their workplace performance as they relate to workplace safety and operations
- to provide training on computers and computer programs and access to computer-based training programs
- to foster a lifelong learning environment

Innovation

- the Centre is specifically designed to accommodate workers at a remote and isolated worksite
- the Centre is staffed by fully trained and qualified personnel
- support and buy-in of managers and supervisors

Benefits

- improved literacy and numeracy skills needed to work more effectively and efficiently
- increased safety and operational effectiveness within the workplace
- builds relationships among co-workers, instructors and team members

Small Business Literacy Initiatives



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Canderm Pharma Inc.

Overview

Canderm Pharma Inc. is Canada's largest independent skin care company, with nearly 50 years of service to Canadian health-care professionals and consumers. The company strives to bring the best skin care technologies to the community. The company has built its reputation with a portfolio of innovative products, acquired through organizational commitment and partner sourcing.

To maintain a skilled and capable workforce, Canderm implements scheduled training for its employees, as well as regular formal and informal job performance evaluations. The company also encourages lifelong learning and has an educational allowance for employees' who wish to take courses for personal growth leading to corporate advancement.

Objectives

- to better equip employees to do their job
- to enhance workplace performance
- to guide better decision-making through corporate values
- to deliver and offer in-house training on company time

Innovation

- building on success and leveraging the results of one project to set the stage for achieving impact in the next phase
- value system serves as a guide in key decision-making
- corporate and monetary rewards for personal achievement and corporate knowledge

Benefits

- employee loyalty has increased
- employees work more independently

Small Business Literacy Initiatives



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MindWare Educational Services

Overview

MindWare Educational Services started in 2000 with a small team of tutors to help children with learning disabilities. Since that time staff has grown to include 20 teachers and tutors, each of whom receive support, training and materials essential in helping these children.

MindWare was founded on the belief that all children deserve the help they need to reach their full potential; therefore all staff are trained to help the students reach this goal. This includes an online training module available to all teachers and tutors.

Objectives

- to develop and implement a training and development program tailored to teaching children with learning disabilities
- to ensure tutors and teachers are prepared for special needs students

Innovation

- employees researched, designed and organized customized program for specialized teaching
- share knowledge outside of the community through MindWare Tutor Affiliate program

Benefits

- greater job satisfaction and increased contribution by empowered employees
- staff are better prepared to help students with learning disabilities

Medium Business Literacy Initiatives



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Keyera Energy

Overview

Keyera Energy is the largest independent midstream company in Canada, with over 400 employees, 19 processing plants and associated pipelines, and the capability to process over 100 million cubic metres of gas.

In 2000, the company undertook to develop a training capability system that would meet the needs of the company. The system was designed to be competency-based, online, skill profile-oriented and third party-audited to meet the requirements of “due diligence.” Evaluation of employees’ capabilities was developed on prior learning assessment and supervisor validation of work covered by the competencies, with remedial training, and if required to become part of the worker’s professional development plan.

The Capability Development System consists of a software assessment tool sanctioned by the Canadian Technologies Human Resources Board (the keeper of the National Standards) and jointly by Keyera Energy and the end-users.

Currently the system serves 3000+ employees across Canada in 16 major energy companies, including several multinationals. The program has been accepted by a number of post-secondary institutes in Canada with certificate and diploma development being led by Lakeland College. In addition, First Nations groups, as well as other exploration sectors, are expected to increase their involvement.

Objectives

- as a validation agent, to ensure training is extended to all categories of employees
- to prepare skill profiles for every company member
- to ensure the program accommodates shift work

Innovation

- skill inventory of the employee is portable to other companies
- customized program content for individual learner
- training to all employees, including those in remote sites
- accreditation allows workers to receive post-secondary credentials

Benefits

- fulfills corporate training requirements and due diligence
- safer work environment and improved worker productivity

Large Business Literacy Initiatives



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Cavendish Farms Learning Centre

Overview

Cavendish Farms is a quality producer of frozen potato products for retail, restaurant and quick-service markets. Since 1980, Cavendish Farms has been growing, processing and selling potato products throughout Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, Europe and Asia. The New Annan production facilities employ approximately 850 people. With a large contingent of labourers, skilled tradespersons, technicians, administrative and managerial staff, Cavendish Farms is contributing to the development of an educated and competent workforce by providing employees learning opportunities through its Learning Centre.

A cornerstone of Cavendish Farms' employee development efforts has been its on-site Learning Centre. The Learning Centre was initially conceived in 2002 and became operational on a full-time basis in January 2003. The Centre provides employees with individualized instruction in basic literacy, General Educational Development (GED), secondary school level English and mathematics, post-secondary refreshers, post-secondary tutoring and facilitation, computer literacy, professional and creative writing, communications and assistance with Red Seal—an interprovincial standard that enables skilled tradespeople to work anywhere in Canada where their trade is designated.

Objectives

- to improve basic literacy, numeracy and academic skills of employees at all levels
- to improve employees' understanding of their contribution to the organization
- to provide employees with the skills and competencies necessary to improve workplace performance and to increase their opportunities for advancement
- to provide apprentices assistance with skilled trades training and
- to increase employees morale and confidence

Innovation

- Centre conceived and designed for and by the employees
- safe, confidential and flexible learning environment that accommodates learner's needs and shift work
- increased enrolment and completion of high school equivalencies and Red Seal certification

Benefits

- increased opportunities for employee advancement
- improved relationships between employees and management
- improved employee satisfaction and increased employee retention

Large Business Literacy Initiatives



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Terasen Inc.

Overview

Terasen Inc. is a 100 per cent shareholder-owned company in the businesses of energy distribution, energy transportation, and the provision of utility and energy products and services. The company's head office is located in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The company started out as "Inland Gas" over 50 years ago, and currently has 2,553 employees who provide service to approximately 880,000 people.

To create an opportunity for high-potential leaders, Terasen Inc. developed the Succession Planning program for executives to network and learn from each other, with a goal to foster relationships for future development.

Objectives

- to provide an environment for senior executives to spend time sharing their own leadership stories and teach high-potential future leaders
- to foster a mentoring and coaching relationship between high potential future leaders and current Executives
- to encourage knowledge transfer, career growth and retention of high potential employees

Innovation

- specifically designed to develop potential employees
- building on success and setting the stage for the next generation of executives
- learning environment, content and delivery designed to built trust

Benefits

- employees recognized and valued for their contribution
- streamlined succession planning

Large Business Literacy Initiatives



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Teck Cominco Metals Ltd.— Trail Operations

Overview

Teck Cominco Metals Ltd.'s Trail Operations is a company that has had a decade of rapid change. New technologies and highly competitive markets demanded that this newly merged company move forward and respond effectively to dynamic and exigent business conditions. It decided to focus on the creation of a culture of learning that would revitalize and engage the company's newly downsized employee group. With an older and experienced workforce (average age 48; average service 24.5 years), the company recognized they needed to allow these employees to achieve, improve and renew basic skills development to adapt and succeed in this changing work environment. Therefore, The Learning Centre was created to hone literacy, numeracy and computer skills through a curriculum tied to employee interests, personal development and the outside educational goals of its employees.

Objectives

- to meet the needs of both the employees and Trail Operations
- to enhance workplace performance through a learning culture
- to offer classes scheduled around barriers of shift work

Innovation

- recent partnership with community colleges offers employees an opportunity to learn with family and friends
- distance learning expands learning opportunities for all workers
- organization continues to value workplace education and supports innovative learning opportunities for its employees

Benefits

- employees experience personal achievement and growth
- all stakeholders benefit from a learning, active and engaged workforce

Large Business Literacy Initiatives



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Palliser Furniture

Overview

Since 1994, Palliser has been offering ESL and Essential Skills classes to its employees. Currently, there are 10 language upgrading classes in addition to computer training, leadership skills, mentorship and math modules.

Palliser is committed to removing any barriers that might hinder employees from being promoted to other positions within the company.

Objectives

- to better equip employees to do their job and meet the changing needs of the workplace
- to enhance workplace performance and improve morale and self-confidence
- to demonstrate and encourage lifelong learning

Innovation

- January 2003—first On-site Mature High School Diploma Program created
- in partnership with Workforce Manitoba, developed a "Manufacturers Binder" on literacy, leadership and communication skills that is available to other industries

Benefits

- employees empowered and take ownership of their skill development needs
- employees become more professional and independent
- improved quality, productivity and teamwork

Large Business Literacy Initiatives



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Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation

Overview

The Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation is New Brunswick's largest multi-facility accredited Regional Health Authority. It is comprised of 12 hospitals and health centres extending 200 kilometres, serving a catchment population of 200,000. In 1996 the Nutrition and Food Services Department went through a major change, from food prepared on-site to an advanced meal service where food is prepared by manufacturers and heated and serviced on-site. Unexpected problems arose from this move, primarily regarding performance expectations and employee skill-set.

It quickly became evident that the current hires were not successfully trained for their new job tasks. The issues identified were an ineffective recruitment process, inconsistent orientation process, no clear performance expectations, and lack of ongoing skills training and development. The traditional performance management system was primarily ineffective due to the employees' limited literacy and skill levels.

In early 2000, Nutrition and Food Services set out to design and implement a performance management system that used competency-based training and clearly identified performance expectations.

Objectives

- to design and implement a successful performance management system
- to better equip employees to do their job and meet the changing needs of the workplace
- to provide ongoing skills development for all employees

Innovation

- designed and created new "SUCCESS" program that could be used for all sites and with various job descriptions
- program is easy to use, recognizing the low literacy levels and lack of computer skills of some front-line staff
- training journal helps employees stay on track regarding performance expectations

Benefits

- employees empowered and take ownership of their skill development needs
- improved attitudes and behaviours
- improved quality, productivity and customer service

Large Business Literacy Initiatives



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Aliant

Overview

In 2002, Jay Forbes became President and CEO of Aliant, an industry-leading information and communications technology company based in Atlantic Canada with 8,400 employees. Through his internal website, *jayexchange*, Jay Forbes established an online book club to encourage Aliant employees to read books and to improve their business acumen through reading suggestions and literary feedback. In addition, this online book club supported and demonstrated the CEO's commitment to one of Aliant's corporate values—knowledge-building—by providing employees with the chance to become more engaged in the company's direction.

Objectives

- to engage employees and expand their literacy skills
- to leverage the knowledge learned through a workplace literacy program
- to develop a positive working relationship with the CEO

Innovation

- opportunity to share educational resource through online medium
- reinforces corporate values, supports knowledge-building and improves business acumen
- CEO seen as a mentor for other employees

Benefits

- promoted and enhanced effective literacy skills, as well as improved business strategy skills
- improved relationship between management and unionized employees
- reinforces the notion of professional development and personal education



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Recognizing
outstanding achievement
in developing employees'
skills in small business
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SPM Group Ltd.

Overview

SPM is a leading management consulting boutique focused on Strategic Project Management. The company works closely with clients to formulate and implement powerful business strategies that deliver results.

As a firm whose long term growth and sustainability depends on its ability to innovate and bring fresh thinking to its clients, the company acknowledges it is critical to have a development plan for its people both as individuals and as a team. In addition, one of its long standing core competencies has been the ability to transfer knowledge, informally and formally, to its clients, either through on site engagements or through in class training. It is for these reasons that SPM developed its learning solutions model for its employees. Evolving through the years, it was founded on a belief that to be the best one must continually evolve one's skills and knowledge.

Objectives

- focus on using the unique portfolio of skills, experience and education of each employee to maximize their contribution to the organization
- customized learning programs provide tangible and practical bottom line results through the development of people assets

Innovation

- three pronged program translates into a stream of learning interactions
- individual assessments show strengths of the individuals, as well as the gaps
- learning program customized to provide tangible outcomes

Benefits

- successful tool to hire, retain and promote individuals
- recognized by its peers as a thought leader and for its team of highly qualified professionals

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HONOURABLE MENTION



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Corbin Partners Inc.

Overview

Corbin Partners Inc. is a knowledge innovation company. It conducts market research and business analysis for corporation, boards of directors, governments, not-for-profit organizations, courts and regulators. The corporate vision is to be the country's most trusted provider of precise and reliable market intelligence, directly focused on reducing risk and facilitating action.

Being entrepreneurial by disposition, the company's ambitious goals are supported by an active, value-driven program of professional development and skills training.

The Corbin Partners Inc. Skills Development program is embedded in its corporate values and culture, supporting continuous learning and innovation. It increases the odds for sustaining that culture by hiring people who have compatible ambitions.

Objectives

- quality control standards to maintain stringent demands of corporate "due diligence"
- maintain high ethical corporate standards
- communicate and sustain a corporate culture that values learning

Innovation

- hiring practices oriented to learning and growth
- employees determine how their own education budget will be spent
- company supports employees' ideas for new services by investing in product development and client research

Benefits

- employees continually increasing skills and knowledge
- pro bono work has allowed both employee and employer to expand knowledge base

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HONOURABLE MENTION



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Greater Trail Community Skills Centre: The Right Stuff

Overview

The “Right Stuff” is a small business that has a contract to provide the collating of flyers into the local daily paper and the delivery of collated papers to the paper carriers. This program is operated as a social enterprise under the umbrella of a non-profit organization, the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre.

The “Right Stuff” employs a frontline supervisor, 7 collators and 5 contract drivers—typical circulation volumes are 5,500 papers daily and 200,000 flyers per week. However, the program has two major often opposing objectives: to meet the contractual requirements of the service; and to provide employment for the collators, whose skill levels have led to marginalization within both employment and social sectors.

Objectives

- to provide employment, training and life skills to 6-8 marginalized youth who do not qualify for either federal or provincial programs
- to create Human Resource tools to address the specific needs of a marginalized worker

Innovation

- programs developed from scratch as concept of social enterprise relatively new
- program designed to generate positive outcomes and influence future, not measure failures
- Personal Growth Plan (PGP) helps marginalized worker develop necessary skills for future employment

Benefits

- to date 70% success rate in PGP program
- youth successfully integrated into the community and become productive citizens

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MRSB Chartered Accountants

Overview

The MRSB Group of Companies is a progressive consulting and accounting firm located in Charlottetown, PE. Over its 27-year history, the company has expanded to a work force of over 40 trained and skilled professionals, providing the highest quality service to its clients and has expanded its initial chartered accounting services to a broader field.

In addition to the regular training programs, the owners and staff of MRSB have created, implemented and benefited from a program called, MRSB—A Great Place to Work™.

The key to the Great Place to Work program is that it is very broad in scope, having something for everyone and is flexible enough that all requests for skills upgrading are viewed as an opportunity and beneficial to both employee and employer.

Objectives

- to offer skills upgrading and new skills training to meet the needs of clients and the general public
- to financially support employees who wish to continue their education
- to offer an opportunity to enhance personal skills, indirectly providing better service to clients

Innovation

- creation of the Career Skills College (www.careerskills.pe.ca) responds to need for skilled workers in the local economy
- sponsor accounting students to begin and successfully complete their education through ASCA
- programs modified to match corporate and individuals' goals

Benefits

- employees learn skills and tools to be more effective
- corporate growth and high level of employee retention indicators of success

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National Silicates

Overview

Established in 1931, National Silicates is a small chemical company with 90 employees across Canada. The Toronto location employs 18, nine of whom are enrolled in the Chemical Process Operators program.

In 1995, National Silicates, along with four other industrial chemical companies, realized there was a significant need to update the skills of existing employees. Upon discovering that similar training needs were required, the group decided to join efforts to develop a unique training program that would allow for transferable skills throughout the industries. Hence, the Chemical Process Operators program was developed.

Objectives

- to upgrade the skill level of existing plant operators
- to develop a workforce with the skills, knowledge and motivation to respond to continuous changes in the workplace

Innovation

- skills learned are transferable to similar jobs in the chemical industry
- training is flexible, self-paced and interactive
- program has been replicated by other large organizations

Benefits

- multi-skilled, highly motivated employees with transferable skills
- certification means higher earnings for employees

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Houser, Henry & Syron LLP

Overview

Houser, Henry & Syron LLP is a medium sized-law firm, comprised of six lawyers and eleven full-time staff. The company is headed by three Partners who recognize the importance of customer service and encourage staff development.

Staff turnover is minimal, with the majority of employees having between ten and thirty years of seniority.

The firm is committed to staff advancement, both personally and professionally, and offers opportunities for growth.

Objectives

- to empower employees to successfully reach their objectives
- to provide employees with the skills and tools to be more effective

Innovation

- enhanced skills through active participation in learning programs, mentoring and self-directed plans
- tag-team implemented for external training (i.e., two employees take a course, then hold Lunch and Learn for other employees)
- staff cross-train exchanging knowledge with job-sharing when required

Benefits

- corporate growth and high level of employee retention
- performance bonus linked to learning and skills development

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Print Audit

Overview

Print Audit has been developing print-tracking and copy-auditing solutions since 1998 and its products are in use around the world. Print Audit's products enable their customers to analyze, reduce and recover their printing and photocopying costs.

The company is very proactive in its training. Employees are encouraged to seek and complete, at Print Audit's expense, courses that fit personal and corporate advancement.

Print Audit ensures all employees maintain an updated job description that evolves with the employee's job level. Special training programs are in place for new employees, and all employees are mentored and coached in an open-minded and safe environment.

Objectives

- to ensure all staff are given the tools, education and empowerment to successfully reach their objectives
- to provide employees with the skills and tools to be more effective

Innovation

- training is relevant to the employees' career path and future goals
- inventory of employee accomplishments and goals helps achieve objectives
- maintains a fun and family-oriented environment

Benefits

- empowered employees take initiative and are encouraged to be part of corporate decision-making
- performance bonus linked to learning and skills development
- business and community awards recognize corporate success

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Valley Communications Ltd.

Overview

Valley Communications Ltd. is a 24/7 message centre serving a diverse client base in Western Canada. The Award-winning service offers messaging, monitoring of oil facility and security alarms, working alone safely and escalating levels of emergency response.

As an employer of choice, Valley Communications Ltd. supports numerous charitable and community organizations and staunchly creates a flexible and growth-oriented atmosphere.

Training consists of Emotional Intelligence, Call Answer Techniques and Computer Skills.

Objectives

- to create a safe, fun, flexible and growth-oriented work environment
- to provide employees with the skills and tools to be more effective

Innovation

- training programs ensure personal and professional growth
- inventory of employee accomplishments and goals helps achieve objectives

Benefits

- employer sees success levels rise from investment in training
- employees feel empowered

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Acton Consulting Ltd.

Overview

Acton Consulting Ltd. is a management consulting firm, comprised of five professional staff, that helps organizations develop strategies for improving their operations. Founded in 1995, the company has since achieved success in both the public and the private sector, improving efficiency and saving its clients money.

The key to Acton's training strategy is that learning and work are synonymous. In order to respond to corporate challenges, the company needs to continually learn about and expand its understanding of management techniques. To achieve this, Acton's training is designed to encourage everyday learning through both formal and informal methods. Informal methods centre on mentoring, believing that building relationships provides the foundation for mutual learning. Mentors learn by teaching as students learn from mentors. Formal training brings new opportunities and new learning back to the office.

Objectives

- to develop a culture of learning through mentoring
- to improve skills for career advancement

Innovation

- training programs ensure personal and professional growth
- cohesive training program encompasses individual learning and transfer of organizational knowledge

Benefits

- awards, recognizes and acknowledges team efforts and success
- increased employee and corporate capacity, including strong succession planning

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Product Management Corporation

Overview

Product Management Corporation (PMC) is a privately held company, founded in 1997, currently employing 21 people (16 at the Brampton facility and five at the Calgary facility). PMC believes a growing company needs good employees, hiring the right people at the right time, with the right skills for the job. This represents a major challenge in an increasingly knowledge-intensive economy, where frequent retraining and skills upgrading is required. Small businesses face an equally difficult challenge in developing the management skills required to grow and remain competitive.

The industries that PMC services demand high moral and ethical standards, and these standards are used by PMC to manage employees.

PMC realized it could best resolve the challenge of limited resources for training needs by partnering with other industry associations to develop appropriate training programs for its employees.

Objectives

- to improve skills and provide growth and opportunity to all employees
- to ensure both short-and long-term career interests are supported

Innovation

- promotes personal and professional training, covering all costs
- employees are encouraged to take initiative and motivated to practice leadership skills

Benefits

- management tasks become easier and more effective
- overall improved corporate performance

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Dempsey Corporation

Overview

Since 1954, Dempsey Corporation has evolved into a unique family business in the global chemical additive, food ingredient and promotional gift item distribution business. The company attributes its longevity, diversification and growth to its talented staff. Dempsey believes that giving its employees the right tools and support system to help them succeed ultimately results in the shared success of the company. Dempsey's management subscribes to its own Corporate Employee Life Cycle program, which translates into finding, hiring and managing a pool of enthusiastic employees. Dempsey also believes that a positive work environment furthers confidence and innovation.

Employees have the opportunity to take appropriate courses both during work and after work hours. In many instances staff have traveled throughout Canada and other countries to participate in job-related training. Formal and informal training consist of internal and external classes, e-learning, reverse job-shadowing, and other professional and personal development activities. Dempsey covers the cost for all training needs.

Objectives

- to secure long-term, energetic and contributing employees
- to foster a work environment that promotes the freedom to "think outside the box" and view mistakes as learning opportunities
- to recognize and reward employees who contribute to the success of the organization (staff receive annual monetary dividends on every previous year's reward they earned—for as long as they are employees)

Innovation

- Employee Life Cycle model reviewed and amended regularly to ensure it evolves with corporate changes
- company embraces the "healthy body, healthy mind" philosophy
- virtual suggestion box and corporate newsletters offers staff an opportunity to be heard
- investment in an exclusive online Information Management System that enables real-time information exchange to staff worldwide

Benefits

- initial investment in recruiting process ensures employee retention
- improved relationship with customers and suppliers and overall corporate performance

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DeltaWare Systems Inc.

Overview

DeltaWare Systems Inc. is a Canadian-based information technology consulting company that specializes in the management, development and delivery of cost-effective solutions for the Canadian public. Since its inception, DeltaWare has consistently demonstrated the ability to deliver leading-edge, value-added IT solutions to a wide variety of customers of varying complexity and size. In 1999, the company developed a Professional Development Program (PDP) to assist all employees to attain personal objectives for professional growth as well as increase the knowledge and skills from a business perspective. The model incorporates personal development, technical training and an education allowance.

DeltaWare acknowledges that by encouraging employees to increase their skill levels, the quality of work rises, leading to fewer errors, increased product quality, greater adaptability to stress and change, higher success in team environments and an increased employee retention rate.

Objectives

- to improve skills and provide personal growth and employment opportunity to all employees
- to provide training that is in line with corporate objectives
- to create knowledgeable and marketable employees

Innovation

- promotes and covers cost of all personal and professional training
- skill levels (technical and non-technical)—maintained in a Skills Database
- in addition to funding employee learning, also offers bursaries and scholarships for high school and post-secondary students

Benefits

- overall improved performance for both employee and business
- higher standard of work ethics and professionalism

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Alberta Medical Association

Overview

The Alberta Medical Association's Practice Management Program (PMP) was created to meet the business management needs of Alberta physicians entering into a Primary Care Network with the regional health authorities. PMP consultants assist physicians with legal and financial issues, change management, organization reviews, business process redesign, developing and implementing business plans, business relationships and other business issues.

The Consultant Competency Development Program meets the specific competencies identified by the PMP. All PMP staff participate in the development program. To ensure that the consultants and other staff have an opportunity to develop or build their competencies to meet those required in the PMP, a leadership competency development model was initiated.

Objectives

- to develop and deliver training programs for all PMP consultants
- to build a PMP team that has both complementary and common skills to deliver exceptional performance with self-confidence
- to provide a safe, honest and constructive educational forum for PMP staff for their professional growth and development where they can exchange knowledge
- to develop and deliver training programs that clearly follow the competency model developed for the PMP and result in a defined curriculum for all consultants

Innovation

- ongoing needs assessments facilitate continuous improvement
- all PMP stakeholders are involved in the development, delivery and evaluation training modules
- knowledge competency component develops the consultants' business and physician office practice knowledge

Benefits

- well-trained, competent staff
- coordinated approach to professional development

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Alpha Child Care Ltd.

Overview

Alpha Child Care Ltd. was created in 1981 out of concern for the lack of quality care for young children in the Brampton area. Alpha's philosophy is that each child is a unique individual and develops at his/her own pace. It is the responsibility of early childhood educators to set up an interesting and exciting environment in which the children build on what they are already capable of doing. It is therefore necessary to keep Alpha's employees motivated, excited and committed to the children and their families.

In response to this need, Alpha provides ongoing in-house training on a regular basis, a network link for staff to interact with other colleagues, and a list of monthly local workshops offered within the community. Additional activities include coaching and mentoring for staff. The company believes in investing in its staff in order to maintain the high-quality child care programs it offers.

Objectives

- to be motivated and obtain higher achievements
- to develop and initiate training sessions that are pertinent to the different positions within the organization
- to continue to maintain a high-quality program by reinvesting in its employees

Innovation

- content of formal training sessions relevant to the day-to-day operations
- supervisors collaborate on strategies and corporate direction
- all staff have input into long-term goals for the organization

Benefits

- supervisors are better equipped to deal with daily challenges
- training empowers employees to take ownership and contribute to corporate goals and success

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