



FALL 2021

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"HUNGRY HEARTS" HELPS OUR WORKPLACE



A portion of the \$176,000 raised during this year's "Hungry Hearts" fundraiser on behalf of Our Place Society was directed to OurWorkPlace. The money was raised through culinary contests, auctions, sponsorships, and donations. Our staff and volunteers are incredibly grateful to all the donors and supporters who made this year's event such a great success.

To learn more about Hungry Hearts, visit
<https://www.ourplacesociety.com/hungry-hearts-2021/>

NEW GOVERNMENT-FUNDED "PEOPLE IN PROGRESS" SET TO LAUNCH

Our WorkPlace has been delivering a People in Progress program for some time. However, In November 2021, we will start a one-year project with the same name funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

The new funding will cover 4 intakes between November 2021 and November 2022 of a 12-week program with 6-8 participants per intake.

The program will consist of 20 hours a week of workshops/training for 6 weeks, a work experience for 4 weeks, and a follow-up period of 2 weeks.

In order to deliver this expanded offering, Our WorkPlace will be hiring a dedicated facilitator to develop, facilitate and organize all aspects of the employability skills portion of the program. We will also be continuing to offer the computer program as well with the current facilitator, Fran.

Each participant will receive \$300/week in exchange for taking part in the new program, and that stipend will continue for the full 12-week period.

People in Progress

Our WorkPlace is proud to offer People In Progress, a program designed for people receiving PWD to develop employability skills and acquire meaningful employment

We are only accepting 8 clients maximum
Workshops run:
Monday - Friday - Followed by a four week work experience

We cover topics such as:
communication, interview skills, working with others, job searching, basic computer skills and much more

These are in-person sessions and COVID safety protocols will be observed

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Currently unemployed or precarious employment
- Receiving BCEA PWD benefits
- Wanting to find sustainable employment

PROGRAM INCLUDES

- People in Progress certificate
- 4 week work experience
- Occupational First Aid Level 1
- WHMIS
- Serving it Right
- World host
- Digital Job Hunters certification



Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA

This program is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia

OUR WORKPLACE • 1627 QUADRA STREET 778-817-0354

VOLUNTEER PROFILE - FRAN, OUR DIGITAL JOB HUNTERS FACILITATOR



When Fran was at university, she spent summers working as a heavy equipment operator in the (then) Northwest Territories! But that isn't what brought her to Our Workplace.

Fran first heard about Our Place, and subsequently about Our Workplace, when she was introduced to program manager, Ashley, by the Executive Director of Victoria Literacy Connection where she was a volunteer English tutor.

Since January 2021, Fran has been facilitating the Digital Job Hunters course at Our Workplace. She is a teacher and adult educator, as well as a Community Support Worker, and brings her combined expertise to the course to ensure that basic computer skills are accessible to participants, no matter their education level or past experience with computers.

"It isn't possible to thrive in today's society without basic computer skills, especially if you are looking for work," Fran says. "Even before the shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, most job vacancies were posted online, and employers still expect job seekers to send their applications and résumé to them by email." Gone are the days when we could just show up at the door with a paper copy of our résumé!

With Fran's guidance, participants have been able to improve their confidence using basic computer pro-

grams to do what they want to do, whether it is writing a resume, sending emails with attachments, or surfing the 'web for job opportunities. According to Fran, "computers can seem so daunting, with all the inexplicable icons and alarming tendency to "swallow" documents, so once someone has learned to navigate through basic processes and feel in control of what they're doing, they feel much more optimistic about their chances of finding work."

Fran believes that to be a successful instructor, she needs to be flexible in the way she presents the Digital Job Hunters course. Each group is unique, and each participant has their own learning style and interest. Using a variety of strategies to meet the needs of each person, while still getting through the program, is key. Fran says she has learned so much from the participants themselves, both about what the computer can do and about how important life experiences are to the way we all learn. "I will never forget the person who told me that the computer is her portal to another world; one that she thought she would never be able to go to," Fran says. "I think of her every time I open my laptop."

We are grateful to Fran for all she does for the clients of Our Workplace.



VEE'S CORNER

We often think of Fall, or Autumn, as the end of Summer and a season of letting things go. However, I like to think of it as a time when we can adopt a fresh new outlook on life and find enjoyment in the little things. I hope you'll stop for a moment and marvel at the changing colours around you, or take pleasure in re-connecting with friends you haven't seen in a while. Or maybe, just maybe, this is the time you'll find the path that leads you forward.

Vee



UPCOMING EVENTS

PEOPLE IN PROGRESS (PIP)

NOVEMBER 15TH, 2021 - FEBRUARY 4TH, 2022
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY
(10 AM - 3 PM)

DROP-IN MONDAYS

(10 AM - 3 PM)

To register for the groups,
please contact: Leighann at ourworkplace@ourplacesociety.com

Leighann will make an initial 'intake' appointment with you
and tell you more about the groups and what to expect.

PORTRAITS OF SUCCESS: MIKE L

Mike L. will tell you that his mental health, specifically OCD, got in the way of him having a productive life and resulted in him spending 17 of the last twenty years in the prison system. Happily, those days are now behind him, and Mike is focused on creating a promising future for himself – one that is elevated by working and having an income.

Enrolling in the Digital Job Hunters program at Our WorkPlace helped Mike to adopt a new attitude and the motivation to go online to find work. “Taking the course was an awesome experience,” Mike says, “and Fran who taught the course and the rest of the staff at Our WorkPlace helped me so much.”

When we asked Mike how his life has changed since he came to Our WorkPlace, his response was, “a total 180!”. He’s been working steadily since August of 2021 in 5 different jobs and is still working at three of them. “Having work is super fantastic”, he said.

Among the jobs Mike has right now is as a fish grader. That’s him standing at the dock in Victoria’s upper harbour waiting for the fishers to hoist their loads of fresh and frozen fish off their boats to be sorted and shipped off to their final destination. “I work hard and smart,” says Mike, “and I have a great relationship with my bosses.”

One of the many rewards from working for Mike is his ability to buy clothes. He’ll tell you that he wore the same pair of pants for 10 months. “Clothes make the man feel good,” he told us.



Mike with Leighann, the new Job Coach at Our WorkPlace

He also told us that earning money has definitely changed his life. He’s always made sure he had money to pay for his daily cup of Tim Hortons coffee, but now he can afford to buy premium cigarettes and can help some of his friends out too.

And what of the future? While Mike is realistic about what he can handle now, he is focused on eventually finding full-time employment.

When not working and spending time with family and friends, Mike loves to play Cribbage and improving his card-shuffling skills!

Congratulations, Mike, on all you’ve achieved. We’re with you all the way!

NOTE TO READERS:

This newsletter is produced by Our WorkPlace volunteers, with input from staff, clients, and supporters.