

CAREER FOCUS PROGRAM WRAPS UP

FINALLY! gives new grads first taste of community economic development

For the last six months, three regional youth development officers have been working for FINALLY! across the province. Maresa Moyles worked in Labrador (West), John Mercer worked in Grand Falls-Windsor (Central) and Jennifer Strowbridge was in Clarenville (East).

Each of them was hired under the Career Focus program of Service Canada, which endeavours to provide career-related job opportunities for recent graduates.

The three youth development officers hired by FINALLY! were tasked to plan and implement two youth development workshops each in their respective regions.

The first of these workshops focused on leadership skill development, labour market information and career development. The second focused on entrepreneurship as a career option for youth.

Each workshop was designed, organized, promoted and run by the youth development officers, and supported by a local committee.

Each event helped network youth with various youth-serving organizations, government departments, economic development organizations, businesses, and other employment, educational, and career-oriented sectors.

These workshops strove to offer as much information as possible to the youth of the province so that they will be able to build a viable future for themselves in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Labrador City, Maresa partnered closely with the Hyron Youth Development Council for each of her workshops.

The first focused on resume building and personal values in life and career planning. The workshop included fun activities such as a "Values Auction" which allowed for bidding on items with monopoly money. Presenting a workshop in such a fun and interesting format provided a great experience for those in attendance.

Maresa's next "workshop" was Youth Opportunities, an overnight conference attended by 66 area high school students. The event focused on leadership skills and career development and included a scavenger hunt, ice breakers, skits, and

activities emphasizing the importance of trust, confidentiality, communication, team work, and self-esteem.

One highlight of the Youth Opportunities conference was the Amazing Agency Race that simulated real-life interaction between the participants and professionals representing youth service and/or business start-up agencies.

In Central, John presented his first workshop in Harbour Breton. Entitled Building Futures, Harboursing Success, the event focused on career development. Twenty-five high school youth were in attendance and picked up important tips on resume preparation and interview skills.

In partnership with ACE Memorial, John's second workshop was entitled *S.T.E.P.S. (Shifting Towards Entrepreneurial Power and Success)* and was held at the Youth Centre in Grand Falls-Windsor.

The workshop was attended by 35 youth who participated in interactive presentations by ACE Memorial (How to save a mock community), Red Indian Adventures, and Getting the Message Out (Creative Thinking).

In partnership with the Random North Development Association and Youth Employment Services, Jennifer coordinated three Youth Career Fairs in Chapel Arm, Clarenville and Bonavista as part of Canada Career Week last October.

These fairs focused on education and employment opportunities in trades and were well attended by area youth.

Jennifer took a completely different and innovative approach when planning her second "workshop." Instead of utilizing a more traditional approach, Jennifer came up with the idea of a rock concert to help deliver the themes of leadership and youth engagement.

Rock the Vote was held in Clarenville in March. This free event focused on the themes of politics, leadership, engagement and activism by showcasing personal stories from community and political speakers.

Speakers included the mayor of Clarenville, Fred Best; deputy mayor Lisa Browne; OceanNet representative Justin Dearing; Larry Reid from the Discovery Regional

Development Board; and representatives from Katimavik.

Their messages of inspiration and success helped demonstrate how youth can help build a bright future for our province through getting involved in their communities.

The event was hosted with high spirits by Chan Wiseman, chair of FINALLY!, Rhonda Tulk-Lane, our executive director, and Chad Griffiths, from Taking IT Global.

The highlight speaker for the event was The Honourable Ross Wiseman, Minister of Health and Community Services and MHA for Trinity North. Attendees were invited to write down questions for the Minister and drop them into the "ASK ROSS" box.

Minister Wiseman answered questions openly and thoroughly for the audience on topics such as outmigration, gas prices, and the "spending scandal." Those in attendance were impressed with his candor and his engaging words.

Three awesome young rock bands headlined the event – Roundelay, Ben Trovato, and The Soft Intelligence. The event was a blast and a really wonderful new way for FINALLY! to connect with youth.

As our Career Focus Program wrapped up, the development officers had a chance to reflect on their experiences of the last six months:

"Being a part of the Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador's Youth family, has been an experience of a lifetime," said Maresa. "I have thoroughly enjoyed every moment of my job, even the tough moments! I've gotten the chance to be a mentor and role model for youth in my community and province."

"The biggest plus I've gotten from the internship is the experience I can now add to my resume," said Jennifer. "The money also allows me to save up enough to pay for my own RCMP cadet training, so I don't have to take out anymore student loans."

"I learned a lot from this position, too much to list," said John. "When I started this job, I was planning to go to law school, but now I am thinking about going to school for Social Work or community building studies. This job has inspired me to do more for the community in which I live. " ■

FINALLY! Rocks the Vote in Clarenville



1 - Submitting a question for Minister Ross Wiseman
 2 - Kaelynn from Katimavik Clarenville addresses the crowd
 3 - Roundelay guitarist rocks it out
 4 - Roundelay drummer

5 - FINALLY! chair Chan Wiseman
 6 - Roundelay
 7 - The crowd enjoying the bands
 8 - Staff member Shelley sports a spiffy FINALLY! tattoo

9 - The Soft Intelligence guitarist
 10 - Minister Wiseman answers questions from the crowd
 11 - Group from Come By Chance youth centre poses with the bands
 12 - The band Ben Trovado