

Lower Similkameen Indian Band



Service

OTDC Annual Report June 2010 - 2011

This past year has presented it's share of trials and tribulations. Power outtages, computer software and virus difficulties, even birds getting trapped in the wall of our office. Coupled with devastating losses to her family, the Employment Assistance Services (EAS) Coordinator, Wendy Hawkes, has had a extremely difficult year. However, she continues working dilligently for the Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) community. Naturally, this would not have been possible without the support of the LSIB Education Staff, fellow EAS Coordinators, and LSIB community members. That said, I would like to express heartfelt and sincere graditude to everyone that offered kind words and support throughout this particularly difficult time.

Since the last annual report was issued the EAS Coordinator was able to pay a visit to the offices of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) in Oliver to meet with the staff. I learned a bit about what to expect from the MSD. After the meeting I provided MSD staff with a referral letter that they could utilize to refer aboriginal clients living within the LSIB territory to our office for assistance. Getting to know people or "networking" is key to delivering intergrated service to our community. A few weeks later the EAS worker visited the Upper Similkameen Indian Band office to attend a session delivered by Labour Affairs Officer, D.J. Phippen. In addition to learning about the rules and regulations governing labour affairs, those in attendance were allotted ample time to present on the job 'senerios' and ask questions. All participants were provided with resource materials to take back to the office.

Providing EAS services and supports to the community frequently entails researching, securing, and coordinating specific training sessions to be delivered within the local community. Marketing OTDC programs also plays a pivital role in delivering technical, vocational, or trades training. Without a doubt partnering with LSIB departments, non-profit and private employers, and/or neighbouring bands to share tuition and overhead costs can make or break an annual budget. The EAS Coordinator sought and obtained meetings with the Keremeos Visitor Centre, Smelco Mine representatives, and the British Columbia

Aboriginal Mine Training Association (BCAMTA). Unfortunately, communication was impeded by the funding administrator. This proved exasperating because the delay thwarted a valid attempt to establish a mutually beneficial partnership and hindered training opportunities for two participant's. Skill enhancement that leads to sustainable long term employment is central to the OTDC mission. Fortunately, some success was had and funding partnerships were formed with a neighbouring band (USIB) as well as other LSIB service departments. This resulted in the delivery of several types of group training sessions in our community.



Summer saw the beginning of Youth/Student Program. The FNEESC Summer Works Experience Program partnered and supported this eight week program to give four youth-

students practical entry level work experience while they learned about and practiced the nine essential workplace skills.

In July 2010, a two day First Aid group training session was delivered by St. John Ambulance at the Keremeos Band office. As a result fourteen community members successfully obtained SFA CPRC with AED. The participants were grateful for the opportunity to obtain SFA training because when applying for employment this ticket helps to give them an edge over competing job applicants.

Continuous learning is imperative to delivering great employment service. Therefore, the EAS worker completed a two day Microsoft 'Access' training session in Kelowna. Finding the most effective way to maintain up to date human resource information is vital to capacity building in the community. Later, she accompanied a group of her fellow EAS Coordinators on a trip to CFB Esquimalt. Hosted by Sergeant Farid Karmali, we were treated to work sites and a ship tour. Both civilian and military trade personnel were available to talk with about particular trades and the shortages we will be facing in the all to near future. In addition, Sergeant Karmali brought in representatives from the Raven and Bold Eagle Aboriginal Youth Programs. The visit was very informational.

In January 2011, the EAS worker attended the Similkameen Elementary Secondary School (SESS) "Graduation Transition" event in support of Grade 12 students. Each student set up a display that illustrated the highlights of their secondary school experience. Wendy took this opportunity to speak with each student one on one about their future career plans and how OTDC programs could support them in pursuit of trade, technical, or vocational training. Each student was provided with a complete application package and an invitation to utilize EAS services to explore occupational profiles that interested these students.

February brought Employer Engagement training for all EAS Coordinators. This vastly informational gathering was probably the single most important training session received to date. I learned more about OTDC programs during this four day period then from any other training. Later, Chain Saw Safety and Operation, as well as a Operational Fuel Management group courses took place. This was followed in May by a full week of fire crew training certification in Keremeos. The comprehensive five day course



Fire Crew Training

fully qualified thirteen community members to fight wild fires. Three partners were involved in the funding of this training. All participants passed with flying colours and the skills each gained are transferable to other areas of employment. The Course Seat Purchase and Human Resource Investment Fund programs are at the heart of many of services offered through the LSIB Employment Services Program. Participants successfully obtained training certification in a variety of areas such as: