

# Program helps youth explore careers and entrepreneurship

by Stacy Dunn

**S**YnC (Supporting Youth in Careers) helps PEI youth explore career paths and entrepreneurship. For the 2016-2017 year, 100 people between the ages of 15 and 30 have taken internships to build their skills or received guidance in self employment.

## Programs created and run by SYnC

- **The Hive** fosters the entrepreneurial skills of recent arts and culture graduates.
- **Propel** helps interns explore career and educational options in aerospace.
- **IT Garage** hires recent graduates and students from IT and business-related fields to develop their own video game or business application.
- **Trade IT** includes classroom shadowing at various Holland College campuses, as well as visits to local work sites that incorporate skilled trades.
- **Ellevate** helps young women looking to start their own business to gain entrepreneurial skills, and mentorships with community and business leaders.

SYnC funds the programs and runs them in partnership with intern host organizations.

**Emma Werner** is SYnC Youth Manager. Her background includes tourism and hospitality management and she worked with various community programs in Toronto.

“I have a strong interest in community engagement and I like helping SYnC participants with career management skills such as resumé writing. It’s fulfilling to see many success stories, from interns deciding to go back to school, to meeting with potential employers or determining if self-employment is for them.”

## Youth recruitment methods

- Job ads for the programs are posted on the federal Job Bank and WorkPEI websites.
- Career Development Services is notified to inform its clients of openings.
- SYnC holds open competitions and does a full interview process to select youth participants for the program.

## About the Ellevate program

**Katharine MacDonald** is the Coordinator of the Ellevate Program, the newest SYnC-funded program which offers skills training, business support, and guidance for women ages 15 to 30. A baker, a photographer and an arts educator are just some of the participants.

“We brought in guest speakers who’ve owned businesses from two years to 35 years to share their experiences.

“Recently, the interns liked hearing from a graphic designer who has her shop on the popular Etsy website. Some interns want to sell their product on Etsy.

“We went to an entrepreneurs’ forum, and it was great to hear how people started their businesses and are willing to have one-on-one conversations with our interns. Our host organization PEI Business Women’s Association has been a very supportive partner with their start-up business resources.”



Emma Werner, left, SYnC Youth Manager, and Katharine MacDonald, Program Coordinator, Ellevate.

For more information about SYnC, visit [www.princeedwardisland.ca](http://www.princeedwardisland.ca) and search SYnC.



# Award for businesses supporting women’s workplace advancement

submitted by Roxanne Carter-Thompson, Executive Director of The Adventure Group

**T**he Adventure Group is working with women and employers to identify practices that support PEI women to advance their careers and reach their economic potential. This three-year project is funded by Status of Women Canada.

One of the employers identified as a leader in championing women employees on PEI is **Value Village** in Charlottetown.

Before graduating from The Adventure Group’s Life Management Program and joining the team at Value Village, **Kara McIntyre** struggled to find employment that met her family’s needs. She felt she was being judged by potential employers because she was a single mom with visible tattoos.

“I found that potential employers questioned my reliability,” says Kara. “They seemed to think I couldn’t comply with their scheduling or have good attendance because I am a single mom. During interviews, I felt like I was being judged on my appearance. It felt degrading and unfair to be judged on how I choose to express myself.”

Everything changed when Kara secured work with Value Village after graduation. After her first year with the company, she was promoted to a Production Supervisor role. “Value Village supports individuality and promotes equality on all levels,” says Kara. “The company recognizes my efforts, and my managers continue to support me to work towards higher management levels and coach me on the things I need to do in order to get there.”

One of the keys to her success is feeling supported by her employer to balance responsibility at work with responsibility at home. “Being a mother of a young child, I know that Value Village will support me with any issues I may have in the future. If there is ever a personal or physical thing that would take me away from my job duties, I know Value Village will support me and give me what I need to come back and continue to be successful.”



From left, Roxanne Carter-Thompson, Executive Director of The Adventure Group in Charlottetown presents Value Village with a “Champion for Change” Award for their diligence in supporting women to advance in the workplace. Accepting the award on behalf of Value Village Charlottetown are Kara McIntyre, Production Supervisor, and Irma Hughes, Production Manager.

“We cross-train often, and when people show an interest in growing with the company, we prefer to promote from within,” she says. “We move people in and out of positions as needed. It helps us meet the needs of the business and also helps staff feel needed and recognized. When employees know they are valued and supported, it’s a win for everyone.”

“The support from Value Village has had a completely positive impact on me and my family,” says Kara. “I’m a hard working individual, and I know the more effort I put towards the company, the more it will pay off, and the better it will be for me in financially supporting my family and setting a positive example for my daughter to have a strong work ethic, and to always strive for the things I want. It will pay off.”

For more information about the project, contact **Roxanne Carter-Thompson** at 902-393-1337.



**Irma Hughes**, Production Manager at Value Village in Charlottetown, recognizes the importance of supporting and valuing employees.