

West Prince youth learn self employment can be a career option

by Ruby Arsenault, West Prince Reporter

A youth forum organized by CBDC West Prince Ventures Ltd. was recently held at the Mill River Experience. The day-long forum called **Strength in Youth** provided the youth of West Prince with insight into entrepreneurship and self employment as a career option.

Sean Doyle, forum coordinator, was very pleased with the large turnout of participants, including students from Westisle Composite High School and the West Prince Campus of Holland College.

The day's activities started with a welcome from **Maxine Rennie**, Executive Director, CBDC. "The mandate of CBDC is to help small businesses start and expand," says Maxine. "We want to give students the opportunity to explore entrepreneurship as a career option. Rural Action Centre is a point of entry for those considering starting their own business."



Sean Doyle

For more information, visit www.ruralactioncentres.ca



Robert Morrissey, M.P. for Egmont, was on hand to represent the federal government and ACOA, which funds CBDC. He said West Prince CBDC is a very active centre which is successful in assisting present and new entrepreneurs.

"Entrepreneurs and small businesses are a big part of Canada and Prince Edward Island. On PEI, many of our businesses are owned and operated in the fishing, farming, and tourism sectors."

He pointed out that being self employed can be both challenging and rewarding. He encouraged the youth attending to take advantage of the services offered by their local CBDC staff, who can help them navigate the federal and provincial government programs available.

Youth Forum highlights

Gordon McNeilly, Motivational Speaker & Owner of UFIT Inc. got everyone up and moving to energize the room. He told the audience he once worked for the federal government, but it was not his passion. He started a staff workout program, and it became a hit. He realized this was his dream, began his own business, and never looked back.

"Don't settle," says Gordon. "You have to risk something to become successful. Get yourself out there, and see what service you can offer to help others or help your community. Think about what do you want to do, do your research, and consult with others in the field."

For more information, visit www.ufit.ca



Gordon McNeilly

Tranquility Cove Adventures

Perry Gotell was a fisherman from Georgetown who fished lobster and crab. About nine years ago, he realized he needed more income to be able to send his daughters to university. His wife encouraged her husband to apply for a second job working night shift. But Perry said to himself, "if I have to work I might as well work for myself."

He researched the idea of running a tourism operation on his fishing vessel. He noticed that no one else was offering bar clam digging adventures. He thought the hands-on experience of digging your own bar clams was a great idea, and added clam cooking to offer a food experience as well.

He retired from fishing five years ago and now offers a wide variety of experiences such as private charters, weddings, pearl & starfish hunt, Georgetown walking tour, deep sea fishing, bar clam hunt, and a beach suite rental.

The company has been very successful in marketing, and has been featured on the *Rick Mercer Report*. "Don't put all your eggs in one basket," tells Perry. "When something doesn't work, find other options to fall back on. Be diverse, do what you do best, and hire professionals to help. Chart your future and change your life!"



Perry Gotell

For more information, visit www.tcpei.com



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May 2017

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From left, Martin O'Brien, Cascumpec Bay Oyster Company, Maxine Rennie, CBDC, Sara Lee Perry, Sarah Lee Studio & Gallery, and Brian Myers, Myers Welding.

Panel discussion with local business owners who accessed CBDC services

Cascumpec Bay Oyster Company

"When I went to work for the family business, it was a relatively new oyster farm," says **Martin O'Brien**. "I worked for them for a year and decided to get my own oyster growing gear to farm oysters as well."

"In 2012, the opportunity came up to buy an existing oyster processing business that would allow me to export the oysters we grow, and that's the point where I went to CBDC for financing. I started Cascumpec Bay Oyster Co. when I bought the processing business."

Visit www.cascumpecbayoysterco.com



Sara Lee Studio & Gallery

Sara Lee Perry always had a passion for painting. She graduated with an education degree and became employed in the school system. She entered some of her paintings in competitions and won several awards. While on maternity leave, Sara Lee began to consider opening her own business. She visited the Alberton CBDC Centre to get help with a business plan.

"I had a lot of questions and concerns, and I visited the centre up to three times a week," says Sara Lee. "They were always happy to help, and provided excellent support and guidance."

She decided to leave her teaching position of six years and went after her dream career. "It was a big step, and at times it was scary." But today she is in charge of her own career and is very proud to be able to help other artists by providing a space to show the work of up to 24 artists at her studio.

She highly recommends the services offered by CBDC and credits them for helping her become an entrepreneur.

For more information, search **Sara Lee Studio & Gallery** on Facebook.



Myers Welding

Brian Myers began his career as a seasonal fisherman, which at times led him to leave home for long periods of time, and he found it difficult to leave his family. "In the fishing industry things break down a lot," says Brian. "It seemed like it was always me who fixed things."

He decided to try fixing things for a living, and began to do welding in a small shop at his home. This work provided an income during the off season. Within a few years, Brian found himself becoming busier and in more demand.

"There came a day I was working on two fishing vessels and I did not have the room to accommodate both," says Brian. "I knew it was time to grow the business, so I called Maxine Rennie from CBDC to ask what expansions I needed and what services could assist me."

"The staff at the Alberton CBDC walked me through a business plan, and offered financial assistance, help with human resources, and finding new markets. I have participated in their training programs and the staff is there to assist you through good times and in bad."

"Love your work and you will never work a day in your life. When you are the owner/operator you have to love what you do, because you may need to work long hours, seven days a week."

After 22 years of seasonal fishing, Brian is now a full-time entrepreneur who employs a number of staff and is always looking to grow the company and manufacture new items that are in demand.

Visit www.myersweldinginc.com

