

Finding out about a career in trades is a life-changer

by Heidi Riley

Jenna MacNeill was determined to change her life, and with the help of labour market programs and funding, she now has a viable career and a bright future.

Two years ago, she was unemployed or working a series of short-term minimum wage jobs. She decided to participate in a program called Trade HERizons, which helps women explore careers in trades and technology.

“Once I joined Trade HERizons, everything changed. We toured every trades program Holland College offers. When we visited Heritage Retrofit Carpentry and I built my first-ever project, Learning Manager Josh Silver sold me on the program.”

In order to get funding from SkillsPEI to cover some of the cost of tuition for the Heritage Retrofit Carpentry program, Jenna needed to be EI eligible. She found work in a seafood plant in Montague, where she was offered 40+ hours a week and free transportation from Charlottetown to the plant.

In addition to wages earned at the seafood plant, Jenna received a \$1,000 Team Seafood Bursary to help with tuition. That bursary is awarded to students working more than 500 hours in a seafood plant.

SkillsPEI covered 70 percent of the cost of tuition, and with her savings from her job, the bursary, and a small student loan, she was able to afford to take the Heritage Retrofit Carpentry program. “It was a dream come true. I learned a lot about myself, I made a lot of friends, and had a great relationship with the Instructors. I found out carpentry really is my calling.”

SkillsPEI Graduate Mentorship Program

With support through the Graduate Mentorship program, Jenna was able to find a position working on the project to restore Province House in Charlottetown. The program, which is offered by SkillsPEI and funded through the Canada-PEI labour market agreements, contributes towards the graduate’s wages for training and mentorship in their field of study.

Jenna’s job duties

On the job at Province House, Jenna documents each window, door, doorframe, baseboard, floorboard, and plaster piece that is being removed. She and her fellow workers build crates to hold the pieces, wrap each piece, and tag them. After preparing the paper records she inputs the data and photos into a computer.

Jenna has been promoted to Site Safety Officer. In addition, she has begun the apprenticeship process and is planning to go on to earn her Red Seal.

A changed life

“I am now moving in a good direction instead of wondering how I will put food on the table,” says Jenna. “The programs I used showed me that there is a lot more out there for me than the random jobs I had before.”



Jenna MacNeill on the worksite at Province House in Charlottetown.

The supervisor’s perspective

“Six graduates of Heritage Retrofit Carpentry and two from the Construction Technology program are working on this project,” says **Brian Willis**, one of the Site Superintendents of the Province House project. “It is a tremendous learning opportunity for everyone.”

For the full interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Jenna MacNeill**.

For more information about the **Graduate Mentorship program**, visit www.skillspei.com and click **Programs for Job Seekers**.

For a video about **Jenna MacNeill**, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5_eoflctgA

For more about **Trade HERizons**, call **Women’s Network PEI** at 902-368-5040 or visit www.wnpei.org



Training center highlights staffing needs, services, and programs

by Cody McInnis

Harbourview Training Center in Souris is a non-profit organization that has worked with adults with intellectual disabilities since the 1970s. Harbourview promotes inclusion in the community and helps clients develop a greater sense of independence and confidence.

Services include vocational training, on-site employment and job training, and a broad range of supports for clients. They operate year round, five days a week.

Presently, Harbourview has more than 33 clients. Executive Director **Judy Hennessey** says the most rewarding part of the job is seeing clients becoming empowered and proud of their workspace and what they have created.

Community involvement is paramount for them. “We work with Holland College to bring their students into our facility,” says Judy. “We partner with the Souris High School Leadership class to help our clients participate in activities set up by the class. We are always looking to place clients into the community to work and we also have projects done on site.”

Hiring needs and process

“We currently have 13 staff ranging in age from under 30 to over 60,” says Judy. “Over the past three years, we gained some new staff to serve new clients who need specialized support systems. Hiring needs are typically based around the needs of clients.”

“It is definitely beneficial for staff to have taken the Human Services program at Holland College. We don’t have any bilingual staff, but a student who speaks French and English would be an asset in the operation of our ice-cream shop on the Souris beach in the summer.”

Judy asks those interested in working at Harbourview as a full time staff member or as a volunteer to drop off a resumé on site. Resumés are kept on file to fill an immediate need to hire someone to work with a new client.

“During the interview process, the board of directors and some members will usually be present. Applicants must also pass a background vulnerability check and police screening.”

Programs at Harbourview

The center offers three main programs: the Woodworking shop, Bakery, and Skills Enhancement Day Program.

The **Woodworking** program is designed to promote teamwork, wood construction, job-site safety, physical skills, employment skills, social skills, and problem solving.

“Our clients trace designs onto plywood, and use a jigsaw to cut them out,” says **Collen McIntosh**, who oversees the woodworking division. “The pieces are then sanded, primed and painted. We also strip and refinish furniture. Custom wood products are made in this area as well, with many of our seasonal wood creations going to local gift shops in the summer.” The crafts are also available for purchase at the Harbourview gift shop.

“Some clients can make a project such as a lobster trap from beginning to end by themselves. Others like to specialize in one task.” **Arthur McKenzie** is a long-time client at Harbourview. He takes great pride in doing the wood staining.

For more information about **Harbourview Training Center**, contact **Judy Hennessey** at 902-687-3032. Visit www.harbourviewtrainingcenter.ca



From left, Debbie Perry, Priscilla Gaudet Keenan, Judy Hennessey, and Colleen McIntosh.

The **Bakery** produces fresh baked goods five days a week. On an average day, the bakery produces 12 dozen rolls, 10 dozen biscuits, at least two cakes, and 12 dozen cookies or cinnamon buns. During the 2017 Christmas season, they baked and sold over 160 meat pies.

“Clients bag and price the products, which are delivered to the Souris Co-op,” says **Debbie Perry**, who runs the bakery. Two days a week, the bakery also provides a hot lunch to the high school, which the clients help bag and deliver. In October, we start making mustard pickles, pickled beets and chow. The Lion’s Club buys 60 bottles to add to Christmas boxes for the needy. They also buy 120 dozen squares from us.”

The **Skills Enhancement Day Program** promotes individualized social skills, rapport building skills, personal care, community awareness, physical activity, and travel outings.

“We work on a lot of life skills here, and every day is different,” says **Priscilla Gaudet Keenan**, who runs the program. “On Tuesdays we do meal prep and serve lunch. On Wednesdays, we go to the high school. Some of our clients also do mail and flyer deliveries.”



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