

Culture PEI relaunches as Creative PEI to expand their scope beyond arts & culture

by Stacy Dunn

What was once called Culture PEI has now had a name change to **Creative PEI**. But it is not only a new name, it is a new approach. The vision is to expand the focus beyond arts and culture by empowering workers and enterprises in PEI's Arts, Culture, and Creative Industries.

Creative Industries are defined as those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent. They also have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation, exploitation and preservation of intellectual property.

"There are no Creative Industries without creative people," says **Mark Sandiford**, Executive Director of Creative PEI. "Our goal is to establish the conditions for creative people to flourish and contribute to the economy and quality of life on PEI."

Creative PEI works on behalf of 10 industries on PEI

- Contemporary Art
- Theatre
- Writing & Publishing
- Music
- Film & TV
- Craft & Design
- Dance
- Libraries
- Museums & Heritage
- Interactive Media

In 2014, Statistics Canada reported that 1,996 people worked in creative industries on PEI and contributed \$123.3 million to the Island's GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

"If you include arts administration and other arts and culture managers, the number of people working in the industry is much higher," says Mark. "We are currently working to get an accurate number of total workers in this sector."

Some programs & initiatives

The HIVE: Over 70 percent of creative industry workers on PEI are self-employed. To help aspiring entrepreneurs under the age of 30, the HIVE was formed. Six cohorts later, 40 participants started their own business, are employed in arts and culture, or advanced their education. **The program will be offered again later in 2018.**

Theatre Production Mentorship Program: In 2016 and 2017, 32 participants got on-the-job training in backstage work, which is in critical short supply on PEI. Statistics Canada reported in 2015 that live performance contributes \$4 million to PEI's GDP and represents 198 jobs. **The program will be offered again in the summer of 2018.**

PEI Film Summit 2017: More than 40 members of the Island's film and TV community attended. "It was a tremendous success; things that are happening now in film and TV on PEI were discussed at the summit."

Creative PEI plans to hold a Theatre Summit March 14, 2018 in Charlottetown. "It's a great format to get the community together to share ideas around how to make our industries better and to take action."

Mark Sandiford,
Executive
Director,
Creative PEI.



Ongoing information and programs

- I Choose Arts - exploration of arts & culture careers for youth: www.ichoosearts.com
- Careers in Creative Industries videos (2013): www.creativepei.ca/careers-in-culture
- Academy Diploma Program in Arts & Culture offered at Bluefield & Colonel Gray high schools: www.adppei.weebly.com

Last year, the Government of PEI released *Cultivating Growth - A Five Year Action Plan for the Culture and Creative Industries*. Highlights of the report include renewed annual investment in the PEI Art Bank, a local Film Media Fund, and investing in public art, festivals, and events.

For more information, contact **Mark Sandiford** at **Creative PEI** at **902-367-3844**.

Visit www.creativepei.ca.

Follow on **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **LinkedIn**.



Creative PEI is funded in whole or in part by the Canada-PEI labour market agreements.

Home based business: Just a Hug Away

by Ruby Arsenault

Seamstress **Sheila LeClair** has been sewing for as long as she can recall. Sheila is also a bus driver for the Public Schools Branch.

She always hoped to one day start a home-based business which could combine with her bus driving hours to offer her full-time employment.

In 2015, Sheila's business idea began when her father passed away and she created a memory bear made from pieces of her father's clothing.

In July 2017, Sheila opened her business called **Just a Hug Away**. People from across the country order memory bears in memory of a loved one. Today Sheila is very busy with orders for memory bears, memory quilts, and alterations on all clothing, from hemming jeans to altering wedding dresses.

One of the biggest honors her business received was when O'Leary Hockeyville asked her to create a custom-made jacket for Don Cherry and a matching tie for his counterpart Ron McLean.

"What an honor that was. This was a great method of advertisement for my new business, and I was happy to have been chosen as the seamstress."

Her peak season for making bears and other sewing projects is prior to Christmas. June to October is peak season for wedding alterations, which can include dresses for the entire wedding party.

Advice for new business owners

"My best advice is to do your research and be prepared to invest a lot of time to get your business off the ground," says Sheila.

"Speak with various agencies to gain information on what services, funding, and business loans are available. Research the market to understand what people are looking for and find out if there is a need for the service or products you want to sell."

Sheila admits that the process of opening a business can be a challenge, and it was a great deal more work that she thought it would be. She credits **SkillsPEI** staff for assisting and encouraging her along the way.

She was able to access their assistance during the summer months when she was laid off from bus driving. She also accessed services from the local **CBDC** for a startup loan and training.

David Gamble, owner of Breakthrough Business, was a huge help in helping develop a business plan. With a startup loan, Sheila invested in products and supplies, along with reconstructing the upper part of her garage into a sewing loft. She is very pleased with how her business is taking off.

"I am looking forward to continuing and expanding my products and alterations."



Sheila LeClair, owner of **Just a Hug Away** in St. Roch, PEI.

For more information, call **902-853-7124**.

Visit **Facebook** and search **Sheila Leclair**

For the full interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Sheila LeClair**.



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March 2018

Daily News Blog

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