

# Program expands to Montague

by Stella Shepard

For more than 40 years, **Career Bridges** has offered vocational assessment and guidance for people considering a career change or further training.

The program is designed to meet a variety of individual needs and is now offered in Montague, O'Leary, Summerside, and Charlottetown.

The 12-week program, which started in Montague in February, is full to capacity, and has a waiting list for the next intake.

"We have had many enquiries about establishing a program in eastern PEI," says **Bruce Cluney**, Coordinator of Career Bridges. "It is our goal to establish a long-term presence in Montague."

The program involves a six-week in-class component covering such topics as diagnostic and self-assessment exercises, career exploration, and job search skills. The last six weeks is a work placement.

The program is provided at no cost to participants, who may receive a stipend if they are not receiving other government-based funding.



## Success story

Bruce is one of many Career Bridges success stories. His participation in the program eventually led to employment with the service provider. "About a year and half ago, I moved to PEI from Newfoundland with my wife and family. I wanted to explore a career change to make a successful transition into the workforce in the province.

"I was reading *The Employment Journey* publication at the local library when I saw information about Career Bridges," says Bruce. "I was intrigued about the program and I gave their office a call. When I was accepted into the program, I realized it was a great opportunity to give myself a makeover in my career exploration, resumè writing, and job search skills.

"The program allowed me to become more familiar with the Island and to explore what resources and tools were available to assist me in my employment pursuits. The diagnostic and self-assessment component confirmed that my gifts were in the areas of administration, leadership, and helping others.

"When I graduated from university, I started as a guidance counsellor in the K-12 education system, and I also spent a few years administering an adult basic education and life skills program.

"I was once a participant of this program, which helped me map out a career path that has become quite rewarding," says **Bruce Cluney**, Coordinator of Career Bridges.



"After about 12 years, I made a career change into the field of business. When I arrived on PEI, I wanted to contribute something meaningful to life on this beautiful island."

Bruce completed the Career Bridges program in June of 2018, and eventually went full circle when he was offered a job as Provincial Coordinator for the Career Bridges program. He is also the French Education Coordinator for the Charlottetown Islanders hockey team.

"I started my professional life providing guidance services, and now I found myself back in that same environment," says Bruce. "The whole process was very rewarding, and the end result was better than what I had hoped for."

For more information about **Career Bridges**, contact **Bruce Cluney**, Coordinator, at 902-566-2811 or email [bcluney@careerbridges.pe.ca](mailto:bcluney@careerbridges.pe.ca)  
Visit [www.careerbridges.pe.ca](http://www.careerbridges.pe.ca)



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# Youth program offers life & work experiences to help continue a career path

by Gloria Welton

The **Reach Foundation** in Stratford continues to reach out with the strong resources that have been established over the years to support youth with mental health and addiction challenges and the community.

**Expanding Your Reach** is a new 16-week program which they hope to offer three times a year. It offers opportunities to strengthen confidence and essential employability and life skills, while supporting youth as they transition from addiction, to recovery, to integration back to the workforce or school.

"Participants will benefit from essential skills training, volunteer, in-house and community work, daily physical activity, obtaining provincial certifications (CPR, WHMIS, First Aid and Food Safety), making connections to employers, and exploring the many options for continuing education," says **Chris Craig**, Youth Services and Community Liaison.

Twelve weeks is spent at the Reach Foundation classroom, and the last four weeks is a work placement in the community, typically in the private or non-profit sector. "In the classroom, we are focusing on essential employability and life skills, including literacy and numeracy," says **Richard Fellbaum**, Youth Supervisor.

"The participants have been out of school for a significant period of time, and need this refresher," says Chris. "The longer you are away from school, the harder it is to go back."

Reading assessment and document use is done with PEI Workplace Learning. "Youth can work on their GED, and others may already have some post-secondary education.

"There is a nutrition and physical fitness component, and we have a fitness centre on location," says Chris. "Jason Mosher from Naturally Fit develops individualized plans for each youth and periodically checks their progress. We also work with the chef and dietitians at

Sobeys to make healthy meals and shop to prepare economical meals every two weeks."

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From left: Richard Fellbaum, Youth Supervisor, Chris Craig, Youth Services and Community Liaison, and participants Mark Driscoll, Connor McLean, Kelsey King, Taylor Keall, and Marc Ballum.

## Social enterprises raise funds and teach skills

"Our soap products were awarded the 2019 best product of the year at the PEI Buyers Market," says Richard. "We also make beautiful cutting boards, picnic tables, and more."

This year, they are adding landscaping to the skillsets youth will gain. "This is a great chance to get out into the community and offer services such as garden maintenance, yard clean-ups, and tree and bush trimming and removal. It is rewarding for the youth and the community to see projects come to life." Customers can purchase soap and wood products and inquire about landscape services at the in-house store at the Reach Foundation facility.

## Job placements

Four-week job placements have seen great success. "From our most recent program, an aerospace company offered further work to one youth, a Resident Care Worker was hired full-time in a licensed community care facility, and a youth was hired in an after-school program with the goal of attending the Youth Worker program at Holland College in September," says Richard.

"Queens County Residential Services has hired youth from our program, and another youth completed a placement in the recreation department at the Prince Edward Home."

"Youth and employers are supported during the placement and both get a chance to see if the placement could result in long-term employment," says Chris.

"We provide an opportunity for Island youth in recovery to learn new life skills, set personal goals through work experience, and develop a plan for continued education.

"The youth are surrounded by support and peers who are experiencing similar lifestyle changes."

The next **Expanding Your Reach** program begins on May 6, 2019. For more information, contact **Chris Craig** at 902-620-0000 or email [chris@reachfdn.ca](mailto:chris@reachfdn.ca)



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