

Volunteering leads to employment for a newcomer to PEI

by Stella Shepard

Frances Braceland, a newcomer to PEI, secured employment as a Project Manager with **Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation (SAB)** in 2016.

Frances moved to PEI from Scotland with her husband, **Dr. Mark Braceland**, a Research Scientist who accepted a position at the Center for Aquaculture Technologies in Souris.

Frances has an undergraduate degree in Zoology, which studies animals in the natural world. Her former employment working in museums teaching natural history was a good match with volunteering for Island Nature Trust.

Staff at Island Nature Trust suggested Frances to speak with **Fred Cheverie**, Watershed Coordinator with SAB, about employment opportunities.

The organization has three year-round staff: a Watershed Coordinator and two Project Managers. "I began volunteering with SAB and spoke with Fred about employment at every opportunity," says Frances.

"Frances volunteered for a couple of weeks," adds Fred. "We got a grasp of her potential as an employee. She had the qualities we desired for this organization."

"With the help of PEI Association for Newcomers, we were directed to the SkillsPEI Graduate Mentorship Program, which subsidizes wages for the first year. This allowed us time to plan a way to keep Frances employed with us year-round."

Community resources for newcomers

The **Graduate Mentorship Program** helps unemployed post-secondary graduates develop new skills and gain work experience of their field of study through on-the-job training. A temporary wage subsidy is provided to an employer to create long-term employment opportunities and assist with the cost of hiring and training a new employee.

PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada (PEIANC) provides settlement services and inclusion and community integration programs for new immigrants on PEI.

"I didn't think I qualified for assistance from PEIANC because English is my first language, and I came here from the UK," says Frances. "I've learned the organization is open to assisting anyone, regardless of where they are from."

Lisa Chaisson, Employment Counsellor with PEIANC, helps Newcomers with their search for work on PEI. "We assist by assessing Newcomers' employment strengths and skills and exploring options to address employment barriers."

"We help identify suitable employment or volunteer opportunities, and offer one-on-one counselling. Our staff help clients create a work plan and offer ongoing guidance to help newcomers gain Canadian work experience."

Advice from a newcomer to other newcomers

- Contact PEIANC
- Be willing to attend community events to meet new people.
- Get to know your community, make new connections and new friends through volunteering.

"Once people get to know you, they will assist you in finding employment."

Hurdles for newcomers

"Searching for housing was challenging," says Frances. "The lack of public transport is a big issue as well. It's hard to search for work if you don't have a car."

"We had a good credit rating in the UK but it took a year to establish a credit rating when we moved to PEI."

"This made it challenging to purchase a vehicle or to buy a home."



Frances Braceland, Project Manager, and Fred Cheverie, Watershed Coordinator with Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation.

For more about **PEI Souris and Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation**, visit www.souriswl.com



For more about **PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada**, visit www.peianc.com



For more information about **SkillsPEI** programs visit www.skillspei.com



Self-employment made easier with help from CBDC

by Stella Shepard

The **Lucky Bean Café** is a place where people gather to socialize, enjoy specialty coffees, freshly baked pastries, nutritious food items, and board games. It's the newest social hub located on Main Street in Montague.

"We try to provide a fun atmosphere and a good vibe for people coming to the café," says owner **Matt Clendinning**, who moved to PEI from Ottawa.

The year-round business, which is open seven days a week, has a charming dining area, board games, and a communal puzzle table for customers to piece together. The walls are adorned with paintings for sale.

"When it came to name choices, The Lucky Bean Café came to me because I feel lucky to have purchased the building we are occupying," says Matt.

He studied business in college and worked in business development for six out of the 10 years he was employed with Canada Post.

"Working in the public sector wasn't for me," he says. "Since resigning from my position, I travelled and did odd jobs, including managing a bar, which was very helpful for self-employment. There are many similarities between managing a bar and a managing a café. You have to think quickly on your feet, you become resilient to working long hours, and you learn to work efficiently at a quick pace."

Matt had ideas for self-employment within the business sector, but none of those plans included relocating to a small rural town on PEI he knew very little about.

He came to the Island by chance to visit friends. By choice, he decided PEI is where he wanted to live and work.

"I bought this heritage building and tried to rent it out for commercial space. The idea didn't work. I needed to do something. I did the research and I knew the town needed a specialty coffee shop."

Researching business ideas included learning the demographics of the area, industry trends, re-learning how to start a business, consulting old school books, and writing a business plan.

Community support

Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC) assists in the creation of small businesses and in the expansion or modernization of existing business by providing financial and technical services to entrepreneurs.

Matt learned about CBDC through a local realtor, who suggested he contact **Martina MacDonald**, Executive Director of CBDC East, for financial and business assistance.

Matt took his business plan to Martina and to **Helen Antle**, Business Development Officer of CBDC East, which is located at the Rural Action Centre, Main Street, Montague.

"CBDC East was crucial in starting my own business by assisting with a start-up business loan," says Matt.

"Martina and Helen were instrumental in providing contact information of local entrepreneurs who offered business advice. As well, I enrolled in a small business course offered through CBDC East, which was very helpful."

Staff

"All of my 10 full-time and part-time employees are from the Three Rivers area," says Matt. "We are now staffed for the fall and winter months."

For more information about **The Lucky Bean Café**, contact **Matt Clendinning** at **902-838-3883** or email info@theluckybean.com

Visit www.theluckybean.com or hash tag [#theluckybeanPEI](https://twitter.com/theluckybeanPEI).



For more information about services offered at the Rural Action Centre, visit www.ruralactioncentres.ca



From right, Matt Clendinning recently opened The Lucky Bean Café with business partner Terri Tremblett.

"Becoming self-employed would have been more challenging if it were not for CBDC East, especially since I am not from PEI, so they really made being a newcomer easy."