

New program for newcomers in West Prince

by Ruby Arsenault

CBDC - West Prince Ventures Ltd. in Alberton recently received funding for a one-year pilot program to support population and inclusive growth in rural PEI by helping newcomers become part of the community.

Scott Smith is the new West Prince Community Navigator. He will assist newcomers to West Prince, which extends from Tyne Valley to Tignish.

"In the past few years, we have seen a large number of newcomers to our area," says Scott. This free to access program offers assistance to any new residents coming into our area temporarily or permanently.

"We are here to welcome them to West Prince, answer any questions or concerns they may have, and provide assistance and information which can help with the transition to their new life here on PEI. For example, we can let them know how and where to get a health card, where to access assistance seeking employment, or how to access banking.

"We are here to assist in many ways, and we also provide a referral service. In the past few weeks, I have toured around the region to introduce myself and the program to other service providers.

"This way, we can better help new residents learn what services in our area are best suited for them."

Scott is very interested in hearing about people's experiences with moving here, what could be done better, and what works well.

"Some may be moving here from another country and struggle with the language barrier. Others may be locating to rural PEI from other Canadian provinces. This service is an excellent tool for newcomers to gain information on what West Prince has to offer."

"We also want to hear from local businesses about their hiring needs. We hope to assist in filling any skilled or unskilled labour shortages. Some employers struggle with filling positions or with the process of finding and hiring foreign workers. We hope to mediate the process between employer and employee.

"Local businesses and employers are welcome to contact us. We may not have all the info they require, but we can assist them to find the necessary information, and we are open to hosting sessions for anyone interested in the program.



Scott Smith, West Prince Community Navigator, and Maxine Rennie, Executive Director of CBDC West Prince Ventures Limited.

"Moving to a new location can be very stressful," says Scott. "You need to find work, a home, transportation, a family doctor and other healthcare, and a bank, just to name a few of the to-do's newcomers are faced with. This can be very overwhelming and challenging. As the Community Navigator, I can lighten this burden."

Another goal of the program is to work closely with local residents, communities and municipalities to become more welcoming. "We have reached out to various organizations, and everyone is on board to help!

"We are looking for volunteers from our area willing to help others settle in and feel welcome in their new environment," says Scott. "This is a very important component of community inclusion. We look forward to hearing from anyone with suggestions, questions or ideas."

For more information, contact **Scott Smith** at **902-853-3636** or email **Scott.Smith@cbdc.ca**.

Visit **www.cbdc.ca**.

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/WPCommunityNavigator/**

The program is funded by Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Department of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture, and the Department of Rural and Regional Development.

Volunteering: whether you are new to PEI or not it's a great way to network

by Ruby Arsenault

Volunteering is very rewarding. It can lead to jobs in the hidden job market, and help you develop excellent connections and character references.

I have volunteered for many years, and I recommend it to anyone. I have had the pleasure of meeting many wonderful people, along with gaining excellent contacts.

During the past few years, I have noticed a large migration of newcomers to West Prince. Many of these individuals drop in to the Tignish Employment Resource Centre requesting information on possible upcoming employment and how to begin connecting with the community.

My first suggestion is always... become a volunteer

A question often asked is, where do I begin? I hope that the resource contacts at the end of this article will help.

Most employers I work closely with tell me they want to see references on resumés. When newcomers suggest using references from out of province, I always encourage them to also include local contacts.



Ruby Arsenault

The **hidden job market** is a term used to describe jobs that aren't advertised or posted online. The hidden job market has always been full of opportunity in rural PEI.

During my career journey, I have found out about job openings through conversations with fellow volunteers and/or committee/board members. I have rarely applied for a publicly posted position. Most of my employment was gained by hearing about an opportunity through people I know, and by talking with employers directly.

What does it take to be a volunteer?

- Willingness and eagerness to learn
- Positive attitude and integrity
- Reliable and able to take on and finish a task
- Ability to work as a part of a team
- Clean criminal record check
- Clear vulnerable sector check
- Food Safety Course for working in the food industry
- Leadership and creativity skills
- Strong interest in the role of the organization or event
- Reliable transportation

Benefits of volunteering

- Create new friendships and make excellent contacts
- Feel fulfilled and rewarded
- Contribute to a good cause
- Gain tips on upcoming job opportunities
- Secure excellent character references
- Community inclusion

How does volunteering reflect positively on your resumé?

- Shows you are an active positive person
- Relays that you are able to work as part of a team
- Ability to perform and complete various tasks
- Organizational and communication skills

Questions to ask about the organization

- What is the organization's mission?
- What are the duties of the volunteer?
- What are the responsibilities?
- Could the organization contact be used as reference?

The best references are individuals you worked closely with and/or your supervisors.

Volunteer possibilities in the West Prince community

Centre Acadian de Prince-Ouest: contact Monique Arsenault at **902-882-0457** ext. 148.

Tignish Senior Home: contact Lorianne Keough at **902-882-4663**.

Club de Coeur Centre Acadian de Prince-Ouest Senior Group: contact Monique Arsenault at **902-882-0457** ext. 148.

West Prince Chamber of Commerce: contact Tam Rix at **902-853-3616** ext. 237.

Tignish Recreation Department: contact Tina Richard at **902-882-2476**.

Tignish Co-op-Tignish Community Member Relations: contact Paulette Arsenault at **902-853-7332**.

Camp Phoenix: Island-wide: contact Anthony Millar at **Amillar859@gmail.com**.

Hospice PEI-West Prince Division: contact Jessica Dorgan-Trail at **902-214-0149** or **westprince@hospicepei.ca**.

Western Region Sports & Recreation: contact Johanna Reid at **902-859-8856**.

Kids West: contact Renee Kinch at **902-853-4066**.

Tignish Drama Club: contact Carol Anne Gallant at **902-882-4418**.

For a full list of not-for profit organizations across the Island who look for volunteers, visit:

Volunteer PEI: www.volunteerpei.ca/about-us/

Canada Volunteer Directory: www.canadianuniversities.net/Volunteer

Work**PEI**.ca

Matching job seekers with employers on PEI