

The News You Can Use Employment Journey

On Prince Edward Island



Immediate and ongoing need for substitute school bus drivers across PEI

by Gloria Welton



Brian Gavin from Tignish took a bus driving course in 2017 and was employed in a position within a year. "After encouragement from friends and family and an opportunity for training from SkillsPEI, I found myself back in school taking a bus drivers course, which was excellent. They gave me all the tools I needed. Driving a school bus is the highlight of my day. The enjoyment of trying something new and being part of the kids' day makes being a bus driver so great." Photo by Ruby Arseneault

A year with COVID-19 restrictions has created a great deal of opportunity for anyone interested in becoming a school bus driver on PEI. Within the next year, there is an anticipated need for 50 to 70 new drivers in our Island school system, with training able to begin immediately.

"Anyone on our substitute drivers list today has a really good chance of getting permanent work," says **Dave Gillis**, Director of Transportation and Risk Management with the Public Schools Branch. "Since March of last year, 37 drivers from our substitute pool have been hired in long-term or permanent driving positions.

"We expect that trend to continue and have an obvious and immediate need to replenish our pool of substitute school bus drivers.

"These positions became available to drivers on our substitute list as a result of retirement and other reasons," says Dave.

"Of our 256 permanent school bus drivers, 174 are eligible for retirement within five years. That's 68 percent, which gives ample opportunity for qualified candidates to first become substitutes and then acquire permanent runs."

Dave says they need to maintain a substitute list of at least 25 to 30 substitute drivers province wide. "Our substitute list dwindles as fast as we create it. Across the province we are crying for drivers."

Recruitment, training, and support

Like many Island businesses, in March 2020 JVI Transportation & Safety Academy, the province's only driver training school, was shut down as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. But this did not stop drivers from retiring or taking leave for one reason or another. In September 2020, JVI came back on stream but is operating in a COVID-19 restricted capacity.

"JVI is still our primary training provider," says Dave. "But where our immediate need is sometimes greater than the numbers JVI can put through, we have had to implement our own supplemental training program.

"We have worked with the Department of Highway Safety to develop our own curriculum and school bus driver training program to better ensure that good candidates are not lost because of training constraints. Further, we have forged a strong partnership with the Department of Economic Growth, Tourism, and Culture to provide funding in support of training for qualified candidates through SkillsPEI."

SkillsPEI provides funding to Rural Community Learning Inc. (RCLI) to support costs associated with substitute driver training for eligible applicants. Funding is currently in place until June 2022 to train 68 individuals.

"Applicants who have been successful in the interview process with the Public Schools Branch are required to meet with PEI Career Development Services Inc. to complete the application criteria required by SkillsPEI to determine their eligibility for the funding," says **Sharon Horne**, Executive Director of RCLI.

"Applicants who are successful in meeting SkillsPEI application requirements may take the training at JVI at no tuition cost to them. Also, applicants who are in receipt of Employment Insurance benefits will continue to draw their EI while taking the training. Those who do not have Employment Insurance benefits will receive a stipend of \$200 a week while taking the training. This stipend is provided through RCLI."

For additional information regarding the application process and funding options, contact **Sharon Horne**, Executive Director, RCLI, at **902-853-3715** or **902-853-5720** or email sharonhorne@rcli.ca

Recruitment and training results

Dave reports that as a result of the campaign to recruit and train individuals, a number of their newest drivers are female. "It is encouraging to see women apply. About one-third of our existing staff are female and that number is growing with each new cohort of trainees.

"We are also seeing an increase in the diversity of our drivers. One challenge for our immigrant population is that they need to hold a valid PEI driver's license for five years to become eligible. But many have met this requirement and numbers are growing.

"We are proud of these accomplishments, but we have a lot of work ahead of us. We have a huge need to fill these jobs with people who have the ability to drive a bus safely. But just as importantly, they need to have a strong and caring connection with the kids. We can teach anyone to drive a bus, but not just anyone can be a school bus driver, as that relationship and ability to care for the children is a must."

Benefits of being a school bus driver

- Make a positive difference in a child's life
- Many remember their bus driver for their entire lives
- Giving back to the community
- Being a shining example while braving the weather to get kids safely to and from school
- Great for someone with a flexible schedule, ie retired or has their own business
- Excellent opportunity to get your foot in the door as the outlook for full-time employment is very good
- Time off for March break, Christmas, summers. etc. and very few evenings or weekends
- Respected and challenging career with benefits
- Possible financial support for training

Those who have great people skills, enjoy working with kids, care for their safety and have an interest in driving can contact the **PSB Board Office** for additional information. The first step to apply is to contact a **PSB Transportation Supervisor** in your area:

Mike Franklin, Transportation Supervisor East: **902-368-5182** or email mffranklin@edu.pe.ca

Jeremy Lawlor, Transportation Supervisor Central: **902-368-6836** or email jlawlor@edu.pe.ca

Ian Nantes, Transportation Supervisor West: **902-888-8427** or email ianlnantes@edu.pe.ca



Tourism job fair attracts high number of job seekers

by Heidi Riley



More than 600 job seekers attended a job fair in Charlottetown hosted by the **Tourism Industry Association of PEI (TIAPEI)** in April. Forty exhibitors representing about 90 businesses were looking for staff. Another tourism job fair was held in Cavendish in May. About 20 employers were looking for staff.

CEO **Corryn Clemence** says numbers for the Charlottetown job fair were much higher than expected, and higher than the average in the years before the pandemic. "I think many people may have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. I also think people are just looking to get out. There is a social element to this work. We have been living with restrictions for a year now, and people have the urge to do something."

There was a great variety of open positions available, including full-time and part-time jobs for Dishwashers, Line Cooks, Maintenance people, Housekeepers, Hostesses, Servers, Groundskeepers, and more.

"For a number of years, tourism operators have seen labour shortages in a number of positions, including Housekeepers and Line Cooks. Now we are seeing a shortage of Massage Therapists. A lot of hotels offer massage therapy as a service as part of their spa treatments.

"I think the 2021 tourism season will play out similarly to last year. We were hoping the Atlantic bubble would be open by now, but we are optimistic it will be open by June and that case counts in neighbouring provinces will be under control. Similar to last year, I do not anticipate PEI being open to the rest of Canada until the fall, depending on vaccine roll-outs and case counts elsewhere.

"This year will probably be one more year of survival for tourism businesses before we can expect things to recover from the pandemic."

For more information about the **Tourism Industry Association of PEI**, call **902-566-5008** or email tiapei@tiapei.pe.ca

For a list of open positions in PEI's tourism industry, visit www.choosetourism.ca



Agriculture jobs available now

by Heidi Riley



The busy agriculture season has arrived, and farmers are looking for staff. The **PEI Agriculture Sector Council** lists job opportunities from all over the Island. In late April, around 50 jobs were listed.

Some of the most common listings are for Truck Drivers and Labourers, and wages range from minimum wage on up. Work is most often 40 hours or more per week, including weekends.

Labourers are needed for cutting seed potatoes and vegetable and fruit planting and harvesting. The work is outdoors and they may need to be able to lift at least 50 pounds.

Truck Drivers are needed to deliver product to farms and move produce from farm fields to processing facilities on PEI and the Maritimes. A Class 1A license and some related experience is usually required.

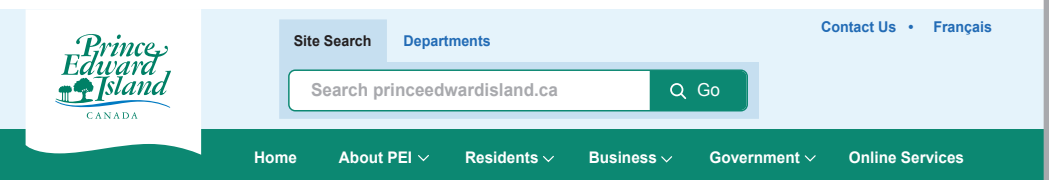
Most positions listed are seasonal, such as Crop Scouts, Administration, and Shipping/Receiving who work for about 15 weeks. These positions would be ideal for post-secondary students with some agriculture experience.

For a list of current agriculture job opportunities, visit www.peiagsc.ca/employment.php



Check out the SkillsPEI website

www.skillspei.ca



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Cyber security talent shortage: IT employment with many options

by Heidi Riley



CYBER ISLAND
SMART PEOPLE REDUCING CYBER RISK

At a recent virtual career presentation, representatives from a cyber security firm spoke to an audience of UPEI Computer Science students about career opportunities in the cyber security field.

"We have a huge talent shortage in the market right now," says **Jamie Whynacht**, CEO, **Cyber Island Global**, a strategic near-shore solution provider for cyber talent based in Charlottetown. "Currently in North America there are about a million roles open in cyber security, and only 200,000 people are looking for those roles."

Some Island companies employing Cyber Security Experts at the moment

- Invesco
- Ceridian
- CGI
- Bulletproof Solutions
- Cyber Island Global
- Cyber Force
- Amsted Canada

Joe Flower, with **Cyber Force**, listed some of the job titles to fill in the Atlantic Canada region.

- **IAM (Identity and Access Management) Consultant**
"IAM is certainly a growing part of the cyber security industry which will be providing a number of jobs in the coming years for graduates."
- **Digital Identity Consultant** manages risk and security for companies. "We are already seeing skills gaps in this area now. The more niche you go in the cyber security field, the more money you could potentially make and the more opportunities you may get for interesting positions."

• Penetration Tester

"The Penetration Testing role is seen to be the 'coolest' role to hold. However, this position requires a strong analytical mindset. Penetration Testing roles come up frequently in Atlantic Canada and pay very well for the current IT market."

• SOC Tier 1

"SOC Tier 1 is a brilliant entry-level role into cyber security. In job ads, the term IT Security Analyst can mean Tier 1 SOC."

• Ethical Hacker

"Achieving your CEH (Certified Ethical Hacker) is a real advantage when going into the cyber industry, and a number of companies are on the lookout for it. Ethical Hackers look for vulnerabilities within an organization and report on their findings."

"The area of cybersecurity is vast, and there are so many roles," says Joe. "Some jobs do not require the hands-on technical knowledge and just need to understand the theory or premise. Examples include working in specialized IT Sales or Marketing positions."



Kelly Stander, Director of Talent Development.



Jamie Whynacht, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



Joe Flower, Director of Cyber Force

Submitted photos.

Salaries for Cyber Security experts

Joe says the average salary in the IT field on PEI is about \$60,000 per year, and that the average for Cyber Island employees on PEI is \$80,000 per year and are beginning to go up.

Advice for those wanting to get into the cyber security field

Joe advises Computer Science students and graduates to expand their knowledge and earn certain certifications. "There are so many free learning opportunities available. Then get a foothold into an organization by applying to any junior position."

For more about **Cyber Island Global**, visit www.cyberislandglobal.com

For the complete interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Cyber Security**.



Opportunities for Service Desk roles can lead to advancement

by Heidi Riley

Fully Managed is a leading Managed IT Services organization with a service desk/call centre located in Summerside. The company, which has eight locations across the country, supports internal employees of other businesses, and employees do not interact with the general public.

About 120 staff members work for the Summerside location. Job titles include Level 1 Service Desk Analyst, Level One Service Delivery (Internal IT), Assistant Team Leads, Team Leads, Knowledge Management Team, Junior Account Managers, and Developers/Programmers.

"At this time of COVID-19 restrictions, most of our staff are currently working from home," says **David Hall**, Director, Service Desk for Fully Managed. "There are rarely more than eight people at a time in the office, so there is plenty of room for social distancing."

There are currently five vacancies at the Summerside location: two for the weekend team and three for the business hours teams, who work Monday to Friday on different shifts between 8 am and 8 pm.

"Fully Managed has been growing so much that we have been in hiring mode for the past three years. We are so fortunate to have had a good pool of talent to draw from locally and across the Island."



FULLYMANAGED

In addition to service desk delivery, Fully Managed also specializes in ServiceNow®, a software platform that tracks digital workflows and connects people, functions, and systems across an organization.

Fully Managed uses this software to manage its internal functions, and it also has employees trained to develop and customize it for other businesses.

"That part of the business has grown significantly," says David. "We have about 15 employees doing that now. Most of those specialists are hired first as Level 1 Techs and work their way towards a ServiceNow position."

"Our Level 1 Techs are seeing a lot more advancements in their career path."

New hires start at \$14 per hour. Once they pass the six-month probation period, they get their first raise to \$14.50.

"I would rather hire someone with great customer service skills and minimal tech skills over someone with lots of tech training and poor customer service skills," says David. "We can train the technical skills."

New hires must be willing to do two to four weeks of training in the office in person. "We find that people learn best by doing, rather than in a classroom situation."

Open positions are advertised on Glassdoor, Monster, Indeed, LinkedIn, the Job Bank, Work PEI, and Facebook job listings.

Applicants receive an email link to an online interview app. The applicant reads the questions, is given a few minutes to think about each one, and answers by recorded video.

Applicants can also choose to do a more traditional application by applying by email to jolene.wedge@fullymanaged.com

For more information, visit www.fullymanaged.com

For the complete interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **Opportunities for Service Desk roles can lead to advancement**.



Murphy Healthcare: Employment in pharmacies, medical centres, and retirement homes

by Heidi Riley

Murphy Healthcare operates pharmacies, medical centres, and retirement living facilities across Atlantic Canada. The firm has been in business for 40 years and is nationally recognized for its health promotion, patient care, innovation, and charitable work.

The company owns and operates five Andrews Senior Care Homes on PEI, as well as Murphy's Pharmacies, Atlantic Medical Centres, and other businesses.

"We are most in need of hiring Caregivers for our long-term care homes and Pharmacy Assistants," says **Anne Doucette**, Human Resources Corporate Recruiter for Murphy Healthcare.

Anne's job search tips

- When applying, personalize your application, research the company, and be familiar with the position you are applying for. Highlight your strengths and the experience that tie into the job you are applying for and be specific about your accomplishments.
- Include your phone number on your resumé or application. Applicants could be missing out because there is a chance that an email reply could go to junk mail.
- Employers look for people who are punctual, and show initiative and an eagerness to learn. When coming for an interview, be just a little bit early. Look directly at the interviewer when you talk to them. Be attentive.
- During the interview, answer the questions honestly. Be ready to talk about a work conflict and emphasize how you resolved it. If you are asked to tell about yourself, keep it professional.
- After the interview, follow up with a thank you note.
- Be ready with a few references from former supervisors. If you do not have a lot of work experience, list a supervisor in a volunteer role or a teacher. Make sure your references are aware you are sharing their name, so they are prepared to speak about you when they are called.

"Andrews Senior Care Homes most commonly hire Registered Nurses, Community Caregivers, Dietary Aides, and Housekeepers. We do our own training for Caregivers and Pharmacy Assistants."

Murphy's Pharmacies has 13 locations across PEI. "At the moment we are most commonly hiring Pharmacy Assistants and Pharmacy Technicians. There are also jobs for Customer Care Representatives and Pharmacists."

"Atlantic Medical Centres located in Cornwall, Charlottetown, and Stratford typically recruit for Medical Secretaries and LPNs."

"Murphy's Community Centre is a not-for-profit facility that looks for staff for the after-school drop-in service and to host various community events. It also hires Attendants for the bowling alley and hires Dishwashers, Cooks, Bartenders, and Servers for the restaurant, The Alley."

"We offer pension plans and benefits such as group health plan, medical and dental, and employee discounts at the pharmacies."

Open positions are posted on WorkPEI, Indeed, Facebook, LinkedIn, and the Murphy's Pharmacy website under **Join Our Team**.

Candidates may send their resumé to **careers@murphyhealthcare.ca**

Visit **www.murphyhealthcare.ca**



For the full interview, visit **www.employmentjourney.com** and search **Murphy Healthcare**.



Anne Doucette, Human Resources Corporate Recruiter for Murphy Healthcare. Submitted Photo.

Moving back to PEI and re-establishing a home-based business

by Gloria Welton

Gord and Sara Beaton and their three children moved back to PEI after Gord was offered employment on the Island last summer. "It seemed like the perfect time to move back home and be close to family," says Sara.

The family has since built a home and now Sara has once again set up her home-based custom commercial sewing business. "I worked with a custom medical-based company in Moncton for years until our third child came along, and we decided that I would work from home."

"I do contract-based custom work, which is a little bit of everything. I have work from my contacts in New Brunswick, but I am also trying to build a clientele on PEI."

Sara's journey

"I have learned so much from my work experience and educational background about pattern development, customizing products, and getting products ready for production. I love the variety and the challenge."

Sara says sewing has always been an interest. "My mom is creative and she always made what we needed such as Halloween costumes, and she let us be creative as well."

"After graduating from high school, I took a year off to travel and I was trying to figure out what to do for a career. I really liked the idea of making my own clothes. I decided to take a three-year fashion design program at New Brunswick College of Craft and Design in Fredericton."

"The college was the most wonderful place, offering so much learning about pottery, jewelry making, fashion graphic, textiles, and they have expanded to many more areas. I would love to go back now."

Sara and a friend started a business after they graduated. "We made items such as clothing and handbags, which were sold across Canada. We stopped the business after we both started to have children."

"Then I started working for a family-run, medical-based company in Moncton. The lady who owned it had such a heart for the work. She started the company by making sheets for nursing homes and expanded to items for pressure sores, custom pieces to help elevate feet and heels, and then expanded to a product line that is still going today. I helped to create the product line which was an incredible experience."

"I really enjoyed the work. We were working with doctors and occupational therapists and meeting one-on-one with clients to learn what they needed, such as ostomy belts and incontinence products."

"I worked closely with companies to take a product from the beginning stages, drafting the design, to a sample product, to production. I learned a ton and I loved custom design and the challenge of producing designs and products."

Contracts and business focus for PEI

"I still do some medical product work for various companies I connected with over the years. Right now, I have a contract with the New Brunswick school board and have made over 200 puppets so far. It is fun to have such variety."

Sara will be working on a boat cover and is also making carryall bags for the back of a Jeep.

"Now that we are settled on PEI, I am looking to expand my connections. I don't take on alterations such as hemming pants or wedding dresses, but I am wide open to more custom work."

"I can take orders by phone or online. All I need is the measurements and pictures, so there is limited need to meet customers in person, which makes my work COVID-19 friendly."

"I believe the aging population has generated a great need for custom medical products needed for assistive equipment such as wheelchairs, braces, and bedding to alleviate pressure points."

"There are not a lot of companies that do this type of custom work and the wait time for some orders can be long. I provide a service that is very rewarding, and it feels good to design and provide items that help people live more comfortably."

"I hope to build my contacts, and I look forward to making more partnerships and seeing what is possible here on PEI."



Sara Beaton is welcoming orders for customized commercial sewing work after her family relocated to the Island and settled in their new home in Fairview, PEI. Submitted photo.

For more information, contact **Sara Beaton** at **sarabeaton142@gmail.com**

For more about the **New Brunswick College of Craft and Design**, visit **www.nbccd.ca**



New business receives people's choice community impact award

by Ruby Arsenault

Games West PEI is the recent winner of People's Choice Community Impact Award given by the West Prince Chamber of Commerce. The business, located in Alberton, sells and buys video games and other items, and is thriving through the pandemic.

Tanner Handrahan, Owner and a gamer himself, always wanted to open his own business. He and his wife Amber are both very pleased with how business is going during these times of uncertainty.

"Gaming has hit an all-time high," says Tanner. "I was laid off due to the lock-down and decided it was a perfect time to launch the business. We launched our website in May 2020 during the shutdown and it instantly became a hit. In September, our store opened and we just hired our first employee."

"When people around the world had to stay home, gaming and sales of comic books and collectable cards sky-rocketed. I was lucky to jump on this when I did."

They have video games, consoles, anime, manga, board games, collectables, comics, and graphic novels. "We carry stock for all age groups, we feel we have what our customers are looking for. Anything retro is a hot commodity. We purchase good used items locally for re-sale."

"I pride myself in continuously updating our Facebook business page so customers are well informed of what we have in stock. Another service that has become very popular is our 'event night' and trading collectable cards. And there are always some video games set up in-house for people to play anytime."

For more information, call **902-214-1263**.

Visit www.facebook.com/gameswestpei

For more about the **West Prince Chamber of Commerce**, visit www.westprincechamber.com



Tanner Handrahan, Owner of Games West PEI.

Recognizing accomplishments of local businesses in eastern PEI

by Stella Shepard

Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce (EPEICC) celebrated the success of small businesses at the 14th annual Business & Community Excellence Awards luncheon held at the Kings Playhouse in Georgetown.

EPEICC supports its 265 members through business connections, access to employee health benefits through the Chamber plan, networking events, annual awards celebrations, training support, marketing support, plus their newest project, *Bizy in the Sticks*, a podcast found on Podbean.

"We were so grateful to be able to celebrate our businesses with this event in 2021," says **Lori MacGregor**, Executive Director, EPEICC. "We wanted to host an in-person celebration but of course due to COVID-19, the seating was limited."

"For the awards, there was an open nomination process that received more than 66 separate business nominations," says Lori.

"A committee was selected to score the finalists, and then the public was invited to vote. The response was incredible and the Chamber received more than 980 votes within a four-day open vote."

"It was an outstanding response from our community. We have so much to celebrate in Eastern PEI. On behalf of the Chamber staff and board of directors we want to acknowledge and congratulate all finalists and winners."

Awards recipients:

Innovation and Advancement Award: Copper Bottom Brewery

Located in Montague, this craft brewery is owned by husband-and-wife team **Ashley Condon** and **Ken Spears**, both of whom share a passion for craft beer and music.

Business Excellence Award: Ocean Acres

Leslie Swift and her parents **Sharon** and **Tim** moved to the Island from Ontario in 2015. They are living out a long-awaited dream of owning their own campground in Murray Harbour. They wanted a slower pace of life and wanted to do things their own way on PEI, their favourite place, where they have always enjoyed visiting as a family.

New Business of the Year & Community Impact Awards: The Lucky Bean Café

Matt Clendinning opened the café in Montague in 2019 and later opened a second location in Stratford. The café is a place where people gather to socialize, enjoy specialty coffees, freshly baked pastries, and nutritious food.

For more information about **Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce (EPEICC)** contact **Lori MacGregor** at **902-838-3131** or visit www.epeicc.ca

Check the EPEICC podcast at www.bizyinthesticks.podbean.com



Lori MacGregor, Executive Director, EPEICC. Submitted photo.

Habitat for Humanity PEI to build affordable housing units

by Stacy Dunn

The province of PEI is partnering with the **Canadian Mental Health Association of PEI** and **Habitat for Humanity PEI** on two projects to build affordable housing units.

Habitat for Humanity PEI will receive just over \$1 million to build four family homes. The detached three-bedroom rental units will be for Island families in the Summerside area.

"We much appreciate the support from government officials now and in the past to help us in our vision," says **Jamie MacKay**, CEO of Habitat for Humanity PEI. "This project will help to provide affordable and appropriate housing to deserving Island families."

The housing will be energy efficient and meet accessibility requirements. "We hope to have the builds begin within the next 12 months, depending on COVID-19 protocols."

"In 2020, we were able to complete one build. It was difficult to do it with a limited number of volunteers, but we hope to bring in volunteers soon. They are critical and essential for a non-profit organization such as ours."

During the pandemic, the **Habitat for Humanity PEI Restore** moved from Mount Edward Road to the old Sears location in Charlottetown. "We have a Store Manager, Assistant Manager, Floor Manager, Truck Drivers, and volunteers who accept and inspect items. The new, larger location has been open since January 2021 and allows us to sell more product – even wholesale items."

Twelve staff work at the organization. One job title is a Family Services Worker who provides support to the families chosen for the homes. Later this year, there may be a volunteer opportunity in office administration.

For more information on **Habitat for Humanity PEI**, call **902-367-3559**.

For more information on applying for housing and volunteering, check Habitat for Humanity's social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and visit www.habitatpei.ca

For volunteer inquiries, email volunteer@habitatpei.ca



Jamie MacKay, CEO of Habitat for Humanity PEI.

Working for companies in Ireland while on extended stay on PEI

by Heidi Riley

Vanessa and **Shawn Tremere** are taking the idea of working remotely to a whole new level. They are working for companies in Ireland while on extended stay back home on PEI.

Vanessa graduated with a Business Administration degree from UPEI in 2018. That led her to a job with a bioscience company on PEI. She started as an Administrative Assistant, and within her four years with the company, moved to a position as a Quality Assurance Specialist and then as a Buyer/Production Planner/Master Data Specialist in the supply chain field.

Although Vanessa and her husband Shawn, a Computer Programmer, were very happy in their jobs on PEI, they decided to make a huge change. When they got married in Scotland in 2018, it opened the door to the possibility of moving to Europe.

"It's something we had been dreaming about for a few years," says Vanessa. "We were both eligible for a program called Working Holiday Authorization, which grants a work permit to people aged 18 to 35," says Vanessa.

In 2019, Vanessa and Shawn moved to Ireland and settled in Dublin. "We are avid travelers, and from Dublin there is easy access to Europe. Prior to COVID-19, we travelled once or twice a month, sometimes just for a weekend."

Living so far from home was not always easy. "It can be a bit difficult living in a foreign country with no family," says Vanessa. "We had a lot of tough days when the pandemic hit, feeling so far away from our loved ones."

Before COVID-19 hit, Shawn worked in an office in Dublin. Once the pandemic started, employees were given a laptop and worked from home. Vanessa's employer already had a work from home policy in place.

She went to the office about once a week and would meet with her team about once a month in person.

"I work with people who live all over Europe. My boss is in Switzerland, and in my team I have a colleague in Dublin and one in Switzerland. Before the pandemic, we would have in-person team meetings and workshops in many European countries."

When the pandemic started, Ireland imposed a mandate to work from home if possible. In-person meetings ended, and everything was done through the telephone or Microsoft Teams.

At Christmas, the couple returned to Canada and continued to work remotely, but from a much further distance away.

"My advice to anyone considering working in another country: Just do it," says Vanessa. "It has been an incredible experience, and it brought us closer together as a couple as we went through so many hurdles in a foreign country."

"It was not always easy. We left two decent jobs that we liked, and we landed in Ireland with no apartment, no friends, and no job. There were a few other bumps along the way, but we loved living in Ireland. It's a gorgeous, lively country with stunning natural beauty, friendly people, and an unlimited amount of excellent music and events."



Shawn and Vanessa Tremere, both from PEI, moved to Ireland in 2019. They have temporarily returned home and are able to continue to do their jobs remotely. Submitted photo.

Vanessa's work permit has been renewed, and Shawn is waiting for his to be finalized before they head back to Ireland.

"Working online has made our jobs a lot more flexible. We hope to come back to PEI next summer and continue to work remotely."

For the complete interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search



A career in Veterinary medicine

by Heidi Riley

After years of hard work, **Alanna MacKinnon** of York is seeing her career dreams come true. Alanna graduated from the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC) this spring.

"It really is a demanding program," says Alanna. "It tests your strengths and weaknesses for sure. The course load is heavy, but the class size is small. My class started with 68, and 64 graduated. There were fewer than 10 males."

"We students worked really well as a team, and we became very close. There was no competition between us, and we were always sharing notes, helping each other, and holding study sessions."

Alanna earned her undergrad degree in biochemistry at University of New Brunswick. "I always had a love for animals, and that was in the back of my mind."

"Dentistry was also interesting. I volunteered at a dental clinic in Charlottetown, and I did love it. I also volunteered at Abegweit Animal Hospital, and absolutely fell in love with the work. Volunteering there for a couple of summers really opened my eyes to the profession."

During her years of university study, Alanna worked a full-time job as well as a part-time waitressing job every summer to cover tuition. In addition, she also volunteered one day a week in order to get experience in the field.

"The opportunities are vast with this degree," says Alanna. "I really enjoy emergency work. I worked in the ICU at AVC for two summers after my first and second year, and that ignited in me a love for emergency and critical care."

"Graduates have the option of going into general practice, or they can pursue a specialty by doing an internship followed by specialized internship and then a residency."

Alanna has been hired by a small animal veterinary practice in Halifax and will start work in June. "I am going into a general practice which also has an emergency clinic, so I will get experience in both areas."

"COVID-19 has seen an increase in pet ownership, and there is a good demand for Veterinarians across North America," says Alanna. "There were several opportunities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and other provinces. Here on PEI there were not as many positions available. I would have liked to stay on the Island, but it is also nice to explore someplace new."

"I definitely recommend volunteering in a Veterinary clinic before you decide to take that route. The experience opens your eyes to the profession. A lot of people romanticize the role of a Veterinarian, and it is good to see that it is not all puppies and kittens. There are a lot of difficult decisions to deal with as well."

Alanna says it is also a good idea to reach out to the school you are thinking of applying to, so that you can get an understanding of the course load. "There is a big difference between undergrad and Veterinary school."



Veterinarian Alanna MacKinnon, with the family Dachshunds Felix and Frankie. Submitted photo.

For more about the **Atlantic Veterinary College**, visit www.upei.ca/avc

For the full interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **A career in Veterinary medicine**.



The need for this service has tripled since COVID-19 hit PEI

An inside look at successes and further needs *by Gloria Welton*

Gifts from the Heart is a not-for-profit charity that is meeting the needs of low-income Islanders or those going through temporary hardships. The organization forms many partnerships as it reaches out to those in need.

Betty Begg-Brooks, who founded this place of hope six years ago out of her home and runs it with the help of a board of directors, says she is thankful to everyone involved as the service evolves.

Since COVID-19 hit, she says the need for their services have tripled. Currently, they serve 947 families and feed over 2,500 people.

"We strive to enrich their lives through the most trying of times by meeting their needs, and showing them compassion, love, and kindness."

They strive to help people who are homeless, those reintegrating into the community, and newcomers with essentials needed to help achieve a better quality of life.

They collect, buy, and deliver food, clothing, personal items, furniture, household items, toys, and more to give to others at no cost to the recipient. They serve the entire Island, tip to tip.

The Employment Journey was approached to do this article to help get the word out about the need for further support for this organization, in particular the fundraising required to purchase a new van.

It certainly is in our mandate to partner with community members working towards strengthening and supporting PEI residents to help them reach their goals, and employment is among Islanders' top priorities.

Inflation has hit us all, especially those who are just barely getting by. Now the pandemic has placed more hardship on youth, families, and many others with low incomes. It is my pleasure to provide a look at the incredible work done by Gifts from the Heart, and to spread the word about their need for a bigger van to continue meeting the needs of the community.

Betty has partnered with many in the community to expand the services and has built a volunteer base of over 70 people. She also commented on what an honor it is to host youth volunteering on site, who are working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

"I have learned in my over 55 years serving our community that some of life's fondest memories and learning can take place in the most unlikely of places.

"We have been on an incredible journey," says Betty. "Since 2019, we have served clients out of a 5,000 sq ft leased space in Charlottetown. The lease is paid by our provincial government, but we are responsible for the overhead. Now we need to double the size of our space, and we are working towards this expansion."

Gifts from the Heart is run solely by volunteers under the direction of Betty as CEO, who is also a volunteer. "Poverty is a community responsibility, and we have to work together to address this growing concern," says Betty.



Gifts from the Heart, located on 58 Spring Lane in Charlottetown, is fundraising to purchase a van or truck. "We are in need of a bigger vehicle to pick up food and other items needed for our day-to-day operations," says Gary Katzen, Chair of the Fundraising Committee. "The small van the provincial government kindly provided for us is no longer adequate to pick up larger items such as furniture from our generous donors and to deliver them to our clients at no charge."

Standing in front of their existing van are volunteers, from left, Charlene Drake, Stan Ferguson, Betty Doucette, Elaine MacDonald, Gary Katzen, Betty Begg-Brooks, Connor MacLean, and Rob Brooks.

Partnerships in the community to help those in need

Here is a snapshot of some of the connections Gifts from the Heart has made:

- Liaise with the Provincial Correctional Centre outreach, Housing First, PEERS Alliance, Lennon House, Anderson House, Cornwall Food Pantry, Blooming House, The Mount, special needs groups, Community Outreach Centre, and Fitzroy Centre, to name a few.
- Helping families referred through the Provincial Social Assistance Program to help offset costs of those on financial assistance.
- Liaise with the local Red Cross, helping meet the needs of those encountering temporary hardships such as fire and death.
- Work with the Salvation Army by sharing resources to help families they serve.
- Work closely with the John Howard Society (Wraparound program).
- Work in conjunction with the Native Council of PEI to help ensure that the basic needs of Indigenous peoples are met.
- Work with staff at Career Development Services assisting their clients.
- Volunteer at the Farm Centre Legacy Garden to help distribute thousands of pounds of fresh produce to families.
- Provide food to Harvest House for their clients.
- Work in conjunction with Second Harvest.
- Deliver food to two safe houses for women, helping 13 mothers and 12 children each week.
- Deliver food to 108 seniors living in four low-income housing establishments and many others in need.
- Help provide appropriate clothing to individuals entering or returning to the workforce.
- Work with Santa's Angels with their Christmas project.
- Work with 100 Women Who Care, a Charlottetown organization that collects and then donates money to assist non-profit charities and others.
- Work with 4 S Catering, 4 Love 4 Care, who give back to the community by providing a meal to the hungry the last Sunday of each month.

Those who could benefit from their services

"As we ask for help from the community to expand our services, we certainly want those in need to come to us and benefit from our services," says Betty.

Islanders in need are offered free clothing, food, toys, household furniture, and personal items.

The food pantry is open Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm and for emergencies as needed. No one in need is turned away.

For more information, call **902-628-6871**.

To donate and/or volunteer

"We have had tremendous support from the communities, companies, and individuals of PEI in the form of generous donations on a regular basis, and we are so grateful," says Betty.

If you would like to support their work, you can donate and/or sign up to volunteer by calling **902-628-6871**.

Donations for the van will be gladly accepted at Gifts from the Heart or dropped off at Red Fox Flooring Warehouse, 167 Minna Jane Drive, Unit 6, Royalty Power Mall (former Sears building) Charlottetown. Call **902-626-3338**.

Visit www.giftsfromtheheartinc.com



Advice for post-secondary students facing life after graduation

by Stacy Dunn

It's OK to not have your life all figured out when you are 22, says **Sarah MacEachern**, Education Coordinator with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), PEI Division.

Her comment was part of a webinar called *Life After Graduation* hosted by the UPEI Student Union. Sarah and co-facilitator **Hassan Abbassi** from CMHA PEI offered some advice on how to navigate the transition between university and the work world.

"Entering this next stage of life can be hard, and these big changes impact all areas of your life," she says. "Change comes with a lot of uncertainty and people have different ways of coping with it. Stress can also arise from being nervous or overwhelmed even when you know what's next."

Coping tips

- Find structure and maintain a routine. Set a daily or weekly schedule for job search, for example
- Remember to eat and sleep regularly
- Make time for exercise and socializing

"Be flexible and open to change. Success and growth are not linear, and everyone is on their own journey. Try new things – life-long learning is one way to take care of your mental health."

Finances

Hassan says if finances are a concern, create a budget and set up a savings account. "Apply for loan forgiveness programs and be aware of grace periods and interest charges. Graduates are encouraged to apply for the Government of PEI's Debt Reduction Grant as soon as possible."

Applying for jobs

Sarah cited a report that says 70 percent of graduates do not get a job associated with their major. "Apply for the job you think you are under-qualified for. Employers may be looking for younger talent who will bring fresh ideas to their organization."

"One statistic says women will apply for a job if they have 80 to 90 percent of the qualifications listed, and men will apply if they have only 50 percent of the qualifications. The message here is to apply for a job you would enjoy. It is OK to explore new things and to take time to find a job you will enjoy. We work eight hours or more a day and if we don't enjoy what we are doing, it's detrimental to our health."

Get involved and stay connected

She says it can be lonely after graduation, so you should find ways to get involved in the community. "Join a sports team or volunteer at a non-profit organization. Meet as many new people as you can. Remember the people you connected with at university – like professors, alumni, and staff. They may be willing to help you by writing letters of reference for a job or for graduate school."

"Be hopeful and kind to yourself. Appreciate everything you have accomplished and celebrate your graduation."



Sarah MacEachern, CMHA Education Coordinator.

Submitted photo.

For more information on **Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), PEI Division** programs and supports call **902-566-3034**. Visit www.pei.cmha.ca

For more **Mental Health & Addiction supports and services**, visit www.employmentjourney.com/mental-health-and-addictions-supports-services

For **PEI resources and services for job seekers**, visit www.employmentjourney.com/resources-services-for-job-seekers

For **Financial help for education and other financial literacy** resources, visit www.employmentjourney.com/financial-help



Marketing yourself & making connections are key to a successful job search

by Stella Shepard

Miriam Briggs, MBA, has more than 25 years of experience as a Marketing Consultant in the local and national business world. She is the co-founder of **Briggs & Briggs Marketing Services** in Monticello, PEI.

She provided strategies and tips in a **Marketing Yourself and Making Connections** workshop hosted by **PEI Connectors**.

"You need to tell your story and not think of it as bragging," says Miriam. "The difference between bragging and marketing is to back up your results and specifically describe the skills that enabled your success, rather than simply stating you are the best person for the job."

"Marketing is talking about the values and accomplishments you bring to the table. Employers are looking for people who show how their skills can contribute to their business."

She suggested creating a one-minute elevator pitch that tells something about yourself with the goal the person will ask for more information and continue the conversation.

"The elevator pitch should have a strong introduction, which is key to having the conversation go well. Include your profession or position, your role, skills, and achievements."

To help you pull your story together, she suggests doing an inventory of your experience and skills for each job and volunteer position you have held.

"Convey your strengths and soft skills by making notes of your previous jobs listing your responsibilities, the skills set you used and the results, which could be getting a degree, certifications, license, awards, promotions, and more."

"When networking, you can also add to your story personal information such as passions and volunteering."

"If you are asked what you do, instead of saying, for example, you are a server at a restaurant, it would be better to say you excel at offering dinner specials, drinks, and desserts to accompany customers' meal selection, getting their order correctly to the chef, and providing service with a smile. Also add any other examples of how your work has led to positive results."

Marketing tips

- Have a resumé ready
- Practice a personal introduction
- Review the company website
- Follow the company on social media, which is sometimes more up to date than their website
- Practice with a friend three questions to ask when networking

"After the interview, it's really important to follow up with an email within 24 hours, thanking them for their time, saying it was a pleasure to meet them and learn about their company or organization, and to express excitement about the possibility of joining their organization or company. Also, include a short summary of the most important ways you can contribute to the company."

For more information about **Miriam Briggs** Co-Founder of **Briggs & Briggs Marketing Services**, visit www.brandmarketingtips.com

For more information about **PEI Connectors**, visit www.peiconnectors.ca



Miriam Briggs. Submitted photo.



Connecting local employers with newcomers and foreign workers

Island Recruiting/Confederation Capital *by Heidi Riley*

With over 30 years of experience, **Island Recruiting** provides professional recruiting and outsourced human resource services to companies across North America and around the world.

Their diverse clientele includes multinational organizations, government agencies, and small to medium-sized businesses. They recruit locally and through immigration.

Island Recruiting works directly with employers to find the staff they need, and they have a database of job seekers looking for work on PEI.

"Our sister company **Confederation Capital** does immigration consulting and helps companies with foreign recruitment," says **Kalie MacKinnon**, HR with Island Recruiting. "We have 72 connections with agents overseas and in North America.

"Many of our job seekers are from outside Canada, and they can submit their resumé through our website. Local people can submit a resumé as well. The resúmes go into our database and are sorted according to education, experience, and industry. We use the database to help local, Maritime, and national clients looking for a particular skill set."

What types of positions are most in demand by their clients on PEI?

Kalie says there is a variety of jobs in demand, especially in spring when employers are looking to fill seasonal positions. "Probably the largest number of requests we are seeing right now is from employers in the trades.

"There is a huge labour shortage and many vacancies across PEI for Labourers, Carpenters, and other jobs in the construction industry. Carpenters and Electricians coming from Holland College get snapped up very quickly.

"Other jobs in demand include general administration and Executive Director positions.

"Employers are searching for capable, skilled workers, and it has been difficult to fill those positions. They pay decent, competitive wages and benefits, but it is a matter of finding job seekers who are committed, will show up, can physically perform the job, and are willing to stay with the job for at least a few months.

"In the construction industry, foreign recruitment can fill labour shortage gaps. But the timeline can be an issue. It can take six to eight months to bring a foreign worker to Canada.

"If employers are willing to wait that long, we can help by doing processing and foreign recruitment for them."

Advice to job seekers

Kalie says newcomers can run up against difficulties when looking for work because employers are not always sure about a resumé listing foreign experience or education.

"We encourage job seekers to get involved in the community. If they cannot find a position right away, volunteering is a great way to get out and meet people, even if you have only a few hours a week to spare.

"You never know when an opportunity might present itself. On PEI, those connections can make a big difference.

"Stay positive and investigate other fields that may be options for the time being, such as labour work, and be open and willing to doing a job that might be new territory. Any experience is good experience."



Kalie MacKinnon, HR, Island Recruiting. Submitted photo.

Advice for employers having difficulty filling roles

"Be open to all applications. A resumé does not always tell the whole story, and may not reflect all their positive traits. There are other ways of recruiting successfully besides analyzing a resumé. Give someone a call, have a five-minute conversation, and invite them to an informal meet and greet. Keep an open mind.

"On PEI it can be hard for employers to overcome the hesitancy of hiring someone they do not know, but diversity in the workforce makes a difference. Bringing someone in from a different country will give you so much perspective, and you will learn as much from your employees as they will learn from you."

For more information about **Island Recruiting**, call **844-367-3797** or visit www.islandrecruiting.com



Preparing for a successful job interview

by Ethan Paquet

During a job interview, while people are trying to impress the hiring manager, they may be making common mistakes that can lower their chances of getting the job.

During a recent workshop, **David Smallman**, Career Development Practitioner with **Career Development Services (CDS)**, talked about strategies for a successful job interview.

"It's all about just being yourself," says David. "Employers are deciding about investing in you as an employee and they want to get a really good sense of who you are as a person."

David works with clients to help them reach their goals, whether it is furthering their education, entering the workforce, or looking at a career change.

"Take time prior to the interview to do some research. If you check the company website and search for articles about the company or organization, the information you gain will show that you are truly interested."

A mock interview with CDS staff by running through common interview questions can help you prepare. It can also help identify which areas you may need to work on. "Be able to talk about your skills and abilities, and the things you thrive or excel at. That is what you really want to focus on during an interview.

"It is important to dress appropriately for the interview. Arrive about 10 minutes early, and do not bring anyone with you. From the moment you walk in, be friendly to everyone you meet. It may be important to impress the receptionist as well as the interviewer."

Even if you have already submitted a resumé, bring extra copies, along with copies of references or letters of recommendation.

During the interview, it is important to stay focused and engaged with the conversation. "Make eye contact, use open body language, and use the interviewer's name."

David says a common question asked is to list some weaknesses. He suggests using an example unrelated to the position that you are working to improve on. "When speaking about yourself, focus on your skills and achievements. Mention success stories and examples of your skills."

If you work hard to prepare for the interview, you will line yourself up for success. "A job interview is also a time for you to determine whether this is the place you want to be working."



David Smallman, Career Development Practitioner with Career Development Services (CDS). Submitted photo.

For more information about **Career Development Services (CDS)**, including upcoming events, workshops, and current job openings, visit www.cdspei.ca



Funded by the Department of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture through the Canada-PEI Labour Market Agreements.

Enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities

by Stella Shepard



The **PEI Council of People with Disabilities (PEICOD)** promotes the full participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in Island society. They have office locations in Summerside, Charlottetown, and Montague.

“PEICOD assists clients with career decision making, skills enhancement, job search, job readiness identification, resumé preparation, interview techniques, and job coaching,” says **Canda MacNeill**, PEICOD Employment Specialist in Kings County.

“PEICOD offers clients employment maintenance, employer supports/engagement, and a wage subsidy program.”

Job seekers

“We work with a variety of job seekers,” says Canda. “Some individuals may have recently developed a disability and are interested to learn how to transfer their skills into a new work situation.”

“Often, individuals who have done physical work for many years need to find an accommodating fit due to injury. We also assist clients who are receiving their Canada Disability pension with finding employment, as they can make additional income.”

COVID-19 employment challenges and opportunity

“COVID-19 has been difficult for some clients who are immune compromised and unsure of how to safeguard themselves in certain work situations,” says Canda. “Other workers had trouble wearing the required masks, as it made breathing difficult.”

“One of the highlights we have seen is the new acceptance and sometimes even preference for staff working from home. In the past, this was not an accommodation favored by many employers.”

“Working from home has opened the door to talking with employers about the concept of accommodations in the workplace and has helped remove fears and myths around that concept.”

What employers are looking for when hiring persons with a disability

“When touching base with employers since COVID-19, there has been a heightened sense of stress. PEICOD has an important role in helping them simplify their hiring decisions,” says Canda.

“Though employers have specific needs, the common link is that they are looking to hire people who bring value to their business, whether that is through increased knowledge and skills, public perception, or profitability.”

Hiring persons with disabilities often makes an immediate and direct impact on workplace culture. Canda points out some of the successes they are seeing with employers:

- Inclusive culture is attractive to other talent pools
- Motivated, engaged employees and improved morale
- Lower staff turnover
- Enhanced brand as customers view the company more positively
- Increased productivity, profit, innovation, and safety

Help with the employment search

“If you have barriers or limitations related to physical health or learning, whether diagnosed or self-disclosed, reach out to staff at PEICOD,” says Canda.

“The staff have a vast amount of experience and training, and we are committed to helping with career goals.”

Charlottetown - Head Office:
902-892-9149 or 888-473-4263
peicod@peicod.pe.ca

Summerside - Prince County Office:
902-436-9259 or 902-436-1296
employprince@peicod.pe.ca or
summerside@peicod.pe.ca

Montague - Kings County Office:
902-838-5878 or 902-838-5879
employkings@peicod.pe.ca or
montague@peicod.pe.ca

For more information about **PEI Council of People with Disabilities**, visit www.peicod.pe.ca



How to build your network through volunteering

by Ethan Paquet

Whether you are just starting out on your career journey or looking for a career change, volunteering is the best way to strengthen your network. This message was part of a series of job search workshops Holland College's Events Management class recently hosted with support from the college's Student Union.

Elmira Moghimi, Program Officer with PEI Connectors, facilitated the workshop and said volunteering has many benefits job seekers may not know about. “Volunteers get the chance to meet with business owners, community leaders, and people who have the same or similar interests.”

The first step to volunteering is to create a list of the people you would like to be part of your network. Then develop your elevator pitch. “Practicing how to describe yourself in about a minute helps you to be confident and comfortable talking to people.”

An elevator pitch can be used any time you meet with an employer or industry leader. The listener should walk away knowing exactly who you are and what skills you can bring to the table. Focus on who you are, your area of expertise, your work experience, and your relevant skills. With practice, it can be easily memorized and helps offer a great first impression.

It is important to keep your professional social media profiles updated with current information and a professional picture.

“Make sure everything is clear and include information about your educational background and work history.”

From there, you are ready to start volunteering and building your network. “Volunteer work can help you gain experience and meet people working in your field of interest. If you are looking for a job, volunteer work will help bridge the gaps in your resumé.”

The more you put into the experience, the more it will pay off in the end. “By being a dedicated and effective volunteer, you can get a new reference, which is useful when applying for a paid job in that industry or for a post-secondary program.”

For more information, visit www.peiconnectors.ca

For more job search advice, visit www.employmentjourney.com

Click **Jobs** and then click **Job Search Tips, Videos and Job Fair Information**.



About PEI Connectors

PEI Connectors is an initiative of the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce. It works to sustain PEI's economic growth by offering support to businesses owned and operated by newcomers.

It also connects new Islanders and new graduates to business and community leaders to grow professional networks and expand career opportunities on the Island.

Services are offered at no cost to the recipients and encourage and provide necessary resources and connections between job seekers and entrepreneurs.



A longtime gardening hobby becomes a successful home-based business

by Stella Shepard

Jim Graham of Souris West learned the art of doing home-style preserves with his mother growing up in southern Ontario.

The early experience of making homemade salsa eventually led Jim down the path to self-employment. He turned a hobby of 35 years into a home-based business and launched **Souris Sauces** in 2019.

Jim, a veteran, gave 10 years of global service to the Canadian Military Special Service Force as an Airborne Gunner. He later worked as a Quality Assurance Specialist in the automotive and the concrete industries for 25 years.

"The work weeks were long and stressful," says Jim. "I would retreat to a backyard garden to combat stress. I grew tomatoes and peppers and I started making salsa as a hobby."

A visit to PEI in 2015 with his wife **Josee Stewart** became a game changer for Jim. "Three years later, we were living on a four-acre property near the town of Souris."

Souris Sauces produces small batches of hand-crafted salsa, sauces, and hot pepper jellies. The peppers are grown from seed without the use of chemicals or sprays and are processed on-site.

"This is our third season," says Jim. "Retailers sell my products seasonally and year-round. I also sell at Souris Farmers Market. I sold 10,000 units in the middle of a global pandemic. This season, I hope to sell 10,000 units."

For more information about **Souris Sauces**, contact **Jim Graham** at **902-330-4243** or email sourissauces@gmail.com. Visit www.sourissauces.com or follow **Souris Sauces** on Facebook and Instagram.

For more information about **Community Business Development Corporation East (CBDC)**, call **902-838-4030**. Visit www.cbdc.ca. For more information about **Skills PEI**, visit www.skillspei.ca

About the staff

"Josee is the Chief Financial Officer and is also a Beekeeper and cares for hives on-site that pollinate the peppers used in the salsa. She is a very creative person and sells artwork and crafts as well. I could not operate the business without her.

"I plan to hire an employee for the summer through the Post-Secondary Student Program offered through Skills PEI."

Community Business Development Corporation East (CBDC) is located at the **Rural Action Centre** on Main Street in Montague. CBDC East assists in creating small businesses and in expanding and modernizing existing business by providing financial and technical services to entrepreneurs.

Services target entrepreneurs who require customized financing not ordinarily available from traditional sources.

Jim met **Martina MacDonald**, Executive Director of CBDC East, and **Helen Antle**, Business Development Officer, at a Small Business Growth Expo hosted by CBDC. The Expo inspired Jim to expand the business.

"I started the business and purchased the necessary processing equipment without any financial assistance," says Jim. "However, we got to the point where we needed an influx of cash to expand Souris Sauces."



Jim Graham is the Owner of Souris Sauces, a home-based business located at 396 Route 2, Souris West.

"Through the financial assistance of CBDC East, I recently expanded the business to include a storefront operation. I invested money in the structure, which CBDC East matched.

"In my personal opinion, if you are a viable business, CBDC East can help make your entrepreneurial dreams come true."

Community support

Jim has lived coast-to-coast in this country and has travelled all over the world, but chose PEI as his forever home. He became actively involved in the community as a councillor for Souris West and he is a member of the Souris Lions Club.

"I believe if you support the community, the community will support you," says Jim. "You cannot move to a place and expect to know the people and gain their trust if you are not community minded."

Stay focused and job search with confidence

by Stella Shepard

Julie Ann Gauthier is a Leadership Coach at **Chandler Coaches**, a Motivational Speaker, and an entrepreneur who offers tips and strategies for job searching with confidence.

She recently spoke about staying focused when you are not getting the results you hope for while job searching at a workshop hosted by **PEI Connectors**.

"Every interaction counts," says Julie Ann. "PEI is a very connected community. You could meet someone at the grocery store who could know someone you want to connect with, which could lead to a new opportunity."

"Thinking about your past experiences, your training, and what you want in your work life is really important when job searching. Think about what you did not enjoy working at in the past. That is important so you don't apply for a job that you are not going to excel at or enjoy."

"Make a list of what you want and what do you not want in a job. Take time and list your strengths so that you will be able to sell yourself to the company."

Transferable skills

"Organizational skills, good customer service skills, and problem-solving skills specific to one job are transferable to other jobs," says Julie Ann.

"Consider your transferable skills instead of overlooking a job posting you do not think you are qualified for."

Expanding your network

"The more people you get to know while job searching, the better. Striking up a conversation could lead to expanding your network. Put yourself out there and find ways to communicate through Zoom, webinars, and other social media platforms."

Tips and suggestions

- Focus on what you can control
- Be OK with rejection
- Be around positive people
- Believe in yourself
- Maintain your self-confidence

"Write down five things that you are grateful for, and focus your energy on gratitude," says Julie Ann.

"Job searching is serious business, but it can also be a fun process."

"Reward yourself for achieving the mini goals leading up to a bigger goal."

"Have a goal of a certain number of jobs to apply for or a list of people/employers you want to introduce yourself to. When you hit your goals, treat yourself with a mini reward."



Julie Ann Gauthier

For more information, contact **Julie Ann Gauthier** on Instagram at [@Julieann.gauthier](https://www.instagram.com/Julieann.gauthier) or at [@coachjulieann](https://www.instagram.com/coachjulieann) or visit www.facebook.com/julieann.gauthier

For more information about **PEI Connectors**, visit www.peiconnectors.ca



Help with the job search during challenging times *by Stella Shepard*

Career Development Services (CDS) has provided job search and career counselling support across PEI since 2003. Here is a look at what help clients need and are getting with the job search.

Nicky Perry is a Career Development Practitioner with CDS based out of Souris. Nicky recently did a question-and-answer interview with *The Employment Journey*.

Q: What are the employment needs of CDS clients? Are they searching for full-time, part-time, seasonal, entry-level positions, or specialized areas of employment?

A: "Clients often seek full-time or seasonal employment but there are also many who seek part-time roles where they can work around school, family, or other obligations.

"The employment needs of clients are diverse and often shaped by the opportunities available in their communities. In rural areas, for example, there are more opportunities for seasonal jobs tied to major industries such as fishing, farming, and tourism."

Q: What are some of the specific employment opportunities in your area?

A: "Many industries typically increase their hiring in spring and summer. There have been job fairs for seasonal sectors such as tourism and hospitality, and job opportunities with farming, construction, restaurant, and retail businesses."

Q: What are employers looking for when hiring?

A: "Aside from skills and qualifications required for a position, employers often tell me that they want workers who are dependable, trainable, and able to work effectively with other people. In many businesses, the owner often wears several hats, so workers with personal initiative and accountability who require less managing stand out."

Q: What are some of the challenges job seekers are being confronted with?

A: "Some common job search challenges include a lack of experience or skills for the available jobs, and a lack of opportunity in a job seeker's area of expertise in their community. Childcare and transportation are also long-standing challenges, in addition to finding jobs that provide a liveable wage."

Q: How well are clients navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of job searching?

A: "Even before COVID-19, the job application process was moving online and through email. Now there is a bit less opportunity for the type of personal networking that happened when people were out in the world more, either socializing or attending professional events in person.

"There is a greater sense of isolation for some people who are not active on social media or able to access online resources, and many are frustrated with the extra precautions required for many daily activities.

"Some clients have expressed reservations about working in certain service roles impacted by pandemic restrictions, with specific concerns around personal safety and working enough shifts per week to meet their financial needs."

Q: What advice could you offer job seekers struggling to secure employment?

A: "There are still ways to connect with employers and find opportunities, but there is rarely a one-size-fits-all solution.

Job seekers can create a supportive network of personal and professional contacts of organizations like CDS.

"During uncertain times, hope can be fragile, but people can often look to past challenges for evidence of resourcefulness and resiliency in themselves."

For more information about **Career Development Services**, visit www.cdspei.ca



Direction with post-secondary and much more *by Ruby Arsenault*

Career Development Services (CDS) is a confidential and welcoming place which provides help to those searching for work on PEI.

Here is a list of some of the free services they provide:

- Search for a new job
- Get help with resumés and cover letters
- Prepare for job interviews
- Learn about different careers and the local labour market
- Discover skills and abilities
- Extensive job board

They can also help those interested in entering or returning to post-secondary studies. CDS sees a number of clients who are interested in furthering their academic studies and assists with career decision making, labour market information, and funding options.

They field numerous queries about program prerequisites, availability, and start dates. "Once someone decides on a career path that works for them, we try our best to mitigate any surprises down the road," says **Dean Getson**, Site Manager of the CDS O'Leary office. "We ask the tough questions up front in an effort to help people make a smooth transition into post-secondary studies."

One-on-one or COVID-19 friendly information sessions are arranged to assist clients with school applications and funding options such as bursaries, student loans, potential grants, and government programs.

Like many service delivery organizations, COVID-19 has forced CDS to look at their method of delivery and to respond accordingly. "Appointments can be in-person at any of the five office locations across the Island; by e-mail or phone conversations; or through the Zoom platform.

"In some cases, we offer flexible hours to best meet the needs of our clientele. First and foremost, we want to create a safe and welcoming culture for everyone. Site managers are constantly reviewing their operational plans and making the necessary changes as needed."

"We work with people at the grassroots level of our services and it is so rewarding to see them progress to post-secondary.

"Some people, after already being accepted to a program, will come in for the first time to receive assistance and we go over funding options. Each year, CDS helps hundreds of individuals access funding through SkillsPEI's Career Connect and Training PEI programs.

"These excellent programs have proven to be a huge financial help to numerous students. We urge everyone to check them out and to contact us or SkillsPEI with questions.

"We can all agree that post-secondary education is expensive, so we do our best to stay on top of programs and services that help alleviate some of that cost. Never before have we seen so many available programs, bursaries, and grants to assist students."

Dean urges the public to not wait until the last minute. "We would encourage anyone with questions to contact us as soon as possible. Also, we ask those who have just received their acceptance letters to connect with us right away. There is a long list of resources available, and the trick is finding the ones that work best for you."

CDS is known for their holistic approach to case management. Along with providing funding options for post-secondary students, they offer a full suite of job search and career counselling services.

"We offer a complete wrap-around service for our clients. Our goal is to see them transition into employment that makes sense to them, and we are here to help. Our supports extend well past the end of the school year."

For more information, contact CDS at any of the following locations:

- **O'Leary** - 454 Main Street, **902-859-2776**, westprince@cdspei.ca
- **Summerside** - 674 Water St., **902-436-0706**, sside@cdspei.ca
- **Charlottetown** - 160 Belvedere Avenue, **902-626-2014**, chtown@cdspei.ca
- **Montague** - 500 Main Street (Down East Mall), **902-838-5453**, montague@cdspei.ca
- **Souris** - 175 Main Street (Souris Mall), **902-687-1526**, souris@cdspei.ca

Visit www.cdspei.ca



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