

GT Hiring Solutions Moves Prince George Residents to New Careers Has Helped Over 1800 Northern British Columbians from Income Assistance

Prince George, August 19, 2004: Today, GT Hiring Solutions helped move 968 Prince George citizens from income assistance into the workforce with job-ready skills they'll need to succeed in British Columbia's booming tourism industry.

They're just a handful of the more than 20,000 British Columbians the Council of Tourism Associations of BC (COTA) and GT Hiring Solutions have helped move from income assistance to meaningful employment through its Destinations and HardHats employment programs. Destinations and HardHats are funded by the Province of British Columbia.

"Destinations helped open doors for me," said Laura McLane, who completed Destinations' job placement program in 2002. After working with a Destinations councilor, McLane found employment with LiveBridge – Prince George and advanced to a supervisor / team leader position. McLane returned today to accept a \$300 GT Hiring Solutions scholarship for her success. "As a single mom, I'm grateful for this scholarship, but even more thankful for my career and fresh start," said McLane.

At the breakfast ceremony, the Hon. Shirley Bond, Minister of Advanced Education and MLA for Prince George – Mount Robson presented McLane with her scholarship. "Congratulations to everyone who has completed Destinations' job placement program. You are all excellent examples of British Columbians taking steps away from income assistance and towards a brighter future, whether it's a trades apprenticeship in construction or employment in tourism," said Bond.

McLane is just one of GT Hiring Solution's success stories. Their HardHats program trains individuals for entry into the construction industry, and graduate Jim Bush just celebrated his first day of employment in Fort St. John. Although not presently offered in the Prince George area, GT Hiring Solutions hopes to see the HardHats Training program offered in Prince George soon.

"There is a huge skilled labour shortage in the construction trade and with two years of operating HardHats under our belts, we know we can help make a difference in the lives of those seeking employment as well as those searching for skilled labour," said M.J. Whitemarsh, CEO of the Canadian Home Builders Association of BC, a partner with the HardHats training program.

"We're very proud of all our clients, but even after they've found employment, we're far from through with them," said Christine Stoneman, Chief Operating Officer for GT Hiring Solutions. "We keep working with them for up to 19 months after they've been hired to give them the support they need to overcome any challenges they may face."

"Tourism directly employs 117,500 British Columbians and over the next seven years, tourism alone will need to fill another 50,000 positions," said Mary Mahon Jones, CEO of the Council of Tourism Associations of BC and partner in Destinations. "That means there are tremendous opportunities for all British Columbians currently on income assistance."

Destinations is BC's first choice for jobs in tourism. With 28 offices throughout the province, Destinations is the British Columbia's largest placement organization for the tourism industry.

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