

# Weaving Our Way Program

The year is rapidly drawing to a close and it has been some time since I have reported to the membership. I would like to say that it has been a pleasure being back working for Nak'azdli after six years of working elsewhere. Thank you to all who have made my return so welcoming.

The Weaving Our Way program is funded through MARR. This is a pilot program based on the application for funding put together by Aimee Thomson from PGNAETA, in consultation with the four partner First Nations. This program was the brain child of the Education and Training people for each of these bands and the direct supervision was awarded to Amelia Stark to be run in Nak'azdli.

I was hired in December of last year to put together and coordinate the three cohorts of the WOW (Weaving Our Way) program. My assistant April Thomas started in January. I must say it has been a very busy few months which have kept us both hopping. The end date from one program to the start of the next has been exactly two days and we have been running continuously since January. We are currently on our last cohort which ends in December.

The programs have included:

Math and English, Computer Skills, Essential Skills, Life Skills, Traditional Practices, Respectful Relationships, Building Services Worker, Flagging, H2S, Fall Protection, Whimis, Confined Space, First Aid, Transportation, TDG, S100, Fork Lift Safety, Cashiers Training, to name a few.

The students were all TOWES tested twice to establish a base level and measure improvement over the course of the program. The scores attest to how successful we have been in achieving our goals. We also worked to help find the students

work placements in and around Fort St. James. These work placements have resulted in several of our students gaining employment beyond the end of the program, and to date there are two that I know of who are attending other courses at CNC to upgrade and get into trades.

We have included other departments and agencies to help our students deal with issues that have come up along the way and have entertained guest speakers to motivate them. Lisa Sam came from the Health Centre and talked about adult health, Karla Olinek from the Justice Centre walked them through the Respectful Relationships program, Marcelle Leon came and talked to them about being an Aboriginal Trades Person in a global market and the opportunities that are available, the RCMP talked to them about what motivated them to become RCMP, as well as how a criminal record holds you back. April talked to them about being a woman in trades.

We had guest speakers from ITA and other agencies which provide training and scholarship opportunities as well as potential employers such as Nusdeh. All of them gave freely of their time to help our students each achieve their best selves.

We have been witness to these young—and not so young—students taking steps to change their personal habits and lifestyles to move forward in a positive way. This program is designed to be a beginning—to employment, education and what ever else you want to achieve. We have gone above and beyond to support the person; including but not limited to; driving them to daycare, booking counselling appointments, referring to the Justice Centre or any other way we can assist within reason.

The Employment and Education people for each of Nak'azdli, Tl'azt'en, Yekooche and Takla have

helped us immensely over the last year and their support has been invaluable to the student's success. We have experienced two graduations to date and have seen 24 students complete successfully. Our last cohort has 13 students which will bring our total for the year to 37 only 3 short of our target.



## Save the Dates:

In November we will be partnering with the Justice Centre to bring in a two to three day Traditional Practices workshop which the students will be attending. We are inviting elder guest speakers from Burns Lake, Yekooche, Tl'azt'en, Binche, Takla, Saikuz, and Nak'azdli to share their knowledge on a variety of topics related to Keyoh, Potlatch, Medicine, Legends, naming, and the good old days to name a few. We encourage all of you to attend what we believe will be a most educational and enjoyable two/three days. Your memories and input will be greatly appreciated. This event will be documented to share the knowledge we gain. We are scheduled to have the workshop in Kwah Hall on November 7 & 8. Lunch will be provided both days. Please join us!!!

## Moving Forward:

The Band will be managing a further 4 programs called "On Our Way" to be run later this year and into 2017. These programs will be community based, which means that one will be run in each of the four communities. I will continue on coordinating and putting the programs together for delivery in the partner bands territories. The next one being run on Nak'azdli will be in the fall of 2017.

There are a lot of exciting opportunities coming up in Nak'azdli over the next year, if you have any questions about other programs you should make an appointment to meet with Amelia Stark at the Nak'azdli Band Office. Thank you

Respectfully

*Lynne Leon*

Weaving Our Way Program Coordinator