

Celebrating 25 Years!



Welcome to Success Skills Centre's first on-line quarterly newsletter. The process began with two young and talented University of Winnipeg Rhetoric, Writing and Communications course student volunteer interns, Marissa Dudych and James Hawboldt. Both interns put up with a lot of distractions at the Centre, as we were still at Colony Square across from the University.

They had to huddle around my office work table to plot out the edition, and share space on the table with our Mentorship Co-ordinator, Kay Shewtfelt Boyd, who with Marketing Liaison Carolyn Rickey, also shared my office...that is, until we moved to the Newport Centre at 330 Portage Avenue.

Yes, we have been in our lovely, newly decorated digs for a year now and were originally

Greetings from Our CEO

overwhelmed at the amount of space we had. As a matter of fact, one truly can go around in circles and get lost! The Centre occupies the entire 12th floor. The larger space gives more breathing room for staff members, provides lunchrooms for clients and staff, and allows for more program delivery. We are thankful to our funders, the provincial departments of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade and Labour and Immigration, for helping the Centre's growth and development. If you haven't had a chance to visit us yet, please do.

I said above that this is the first on-line newsletter, but Success Skills Centre did publish several newspaper editions in the late 1980s, under its founding Director, Judy Dalché. It was produced entirely by the program's immigrant women participant professionals, who at that time, attended the program on a full-time paid basis for three months' on-site training, followed by a four-month paid internship with a Winnipeg employer. The paid internships ended when the Province took over the funding of

our Centre from the federal government, and the federal government didn't transfer training dollars to the Province in their federal-provincial labour market agreements. It has been awhile, but we are pleased that we now have an internship program with Employment Manitoba back in place on a pilot basis, to finish November 2010. It will be assessed and we hope that there will be further funding.

In the coming issues, we will be highlighting our volunteer board members, employers, and success stories, along with other exciting events and changes as they occur. I look forward to your feedback, comments and suggestions, all for the improvement of the services and programs delivered out of the Centre.

Monika G. Feist, CEO



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The layout, and editing of this newsletter was completed by: Ashton Friesen and Carolyn Rickey	

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“Success Skills Centre offers free services funded by the Province of Manitoba that assist internationally educated immigrant professionals and skilled workers with an English language benchmark of 5 or higher.”

Success Skills Centre: Profile

Success Skills Centre is a non-profit immigrant service-providing organization that has been working in the Winnipeg community since 1985. The 18 employees of Success Skills Centre work with internationally educated immigrants who are skilled workers or professionals who have worked in their profession

in their home countries. Success Skills Centre receives funding from the Provincial Department of Entrepreneurship Training and Trade, and the Provincial Department of Labour and Immigration.

Its central location in downtown Winnipeg makes it close and easily accessible for the growing immigrant community in

Winnipeg, because many new Canadians decide to live in the downtown and West End areas. At the present time, CEO Monika Feist says that Success Skills Centre can expect around 5,000 clients attending courses and receiving consultations in a year.

Why go to Success Skills Centre?

The work Success Skills Centre (SSC) does is very important, especially because few other organizations do the same work. No matter what level of training individuals received in their home country, there are often differences in what qualifications are recognized and what skills are required to get a

job in Canada. Because of this, many immigrant professionals and skilled workers may experience difficulties in obtaining a job in Canada that uses all of their knowledge and skills.

As more people immigrate to Manitoba, the more important SSC's work becomes. According

to Statistics Canada, 13,000 people immigrated to Manitoba in 2009, an increase from 11,000 people who immigrated in 2007. The growing number of people who are coming to Manitoba each year makes the work at Success Skills Centre more crucial than ever before.

What does Success Skills Centre Do?



The staff of SSC works with clients to remove difficulties in finding a job. Clients are given additional job search training to what they already have in order to help give them more marketable skills. SSC helps clients in their job search during and after

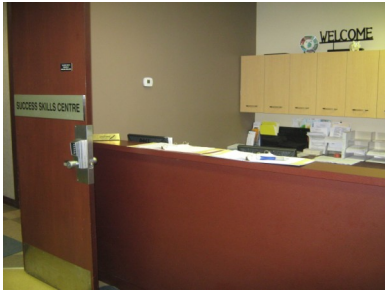
attending the Centre's training programs. Many clients find jobs with various businesses and companies with which SSC partners.

SSC runs classes in several areas, such as computer skills, résumé and job interview

workshops, job preparation, blueprint reading and many others. Success Skills Centre runs its programs at no cost to their clients, nor to the businesses where clients are placed.

A

Pictures of Our “New” Office!



Right: Computers available for clients' job search use



Above: The front reception desk where clients' make the start in their Canadian professional life



Left: The lunch-room available to clients

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Vocabulary: Common Phrases

There are many common phrases in Western cultures that found in the Bible. Most of these expressions are said without a thought to religion or spirituality. Understanding what these phrases mean can be confusing to someone unfamiliar with a broad-based Christian culture. The following is a list of ten common phrases that you may hear on any day, that have all originated from the Bible.

“He walks on water.”

A person who seems perfect, somebody who can do the impossible.

“Blind leading the blind.”

When nobody knows what the correct solution to a problem is, including the boss or leader.

“At their wits’ end.” (Psalm 107:27)

When someone is confused or angered and does not know what to do next they are said to be at their wits’ end.

“The writing on the wall.”

Usually means that some kind of action, possibly negative will happen soon.

“Man does not live by bread alone.”

Originally, this meant that man needs more than food, he also needs spirituality. But it also could stand for the need for variety in one’s life.

“Sour grapes.”

When a person acts mean after a negative experience, they are known as a sour grape.

“Good Samaritan.”

This is somebody who helps out a stranger without looking for a reward.

“Born Again.”

Usually this means a spiritual rebirth, but it can also refer to giving yourself a second chance.

“Forbidden fruit.”

Something that you strongly desire, but you are not allowed to have may be called a forbidden fruit.

“Salt of the Earth.”

Good, worthy, hard-working people.

“Success Skills Centre is a community-based, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to recognizing and promoting the skills, education and experience immigrant professionals and skilled workers bring to the Canadian labour market.”

SSC Frequently Asked Questions

• **I am a professional accountant and have just arrived in Winnipeg from Nigeria. Why should I go to Success Skills Centre?**

Success Skills Centre offers free services funded by the Province of Manitoba that assist internationally educated immigrant professionals and skilled workers who already have a good understanding in reading, writing and speaking English. Success Skills has many years of experience in assisting immigrants in finding the best way to find work in their former occupations.

• **Why do I have to go through a two-week Information and Job Preparation Program? I don't have time to sit in a class.**

We understand that new Canadians are under great stress to find housing, a good job, and schools or daycares for children. In our information and employment preparation series, immigrants can learn that they do not have to repeat their training, but may only need to fill in gaps for Canadian professional requirements. We can help you develop a career path, find work experience or internships, and training or courses to fill those gaps. These free opportunities could be funded for you, and will provide work experience, as well as save you money.

• **Is it OK for my children to do our banking, shopping and pay bills?**

This is your choice. But remember that when you give your children the power to act on your behalf either financially or verbally, you are giving them a lot of responsibility. Parents should have more responsibility than their children. Otherwise, your children "become your parents", and that may result with future problems related to discipline and respect.

• **People in my community tell me that I should just take any job because I will never get back to work in my profession. Is this true?**

Sometimes, but there are now many programs in place to help people return to their occupations. You need to go to people who have correct information. People in your community may not have up-to-date information, even though they want to help you. We have helped many people through the process of finding employment. This has taught us that there are many ways to success, and also many things that influence your progress. These things include your English proficiency levels, your family status, your age, your attitude, your initiative and how you arrived in Manitoba. You may be asked by our staff questions like: Do you have an income? When can you attend classes? Do you have copies of your transcripts, certificates and degrees? Have you contacted your Professional Association in Manitoba?

• **My wife stays at home with our young children. Why does she need to learn English?**

Your wife needs to learn English so she can ask and answer questions about health and your children's school. If she or your children were to become ill and you were not there, she would need to be able to speak English so she could get help. When your children's school needs to give you information, she needs to be able to understand and respond to them. Sometimes too, when teachers cannot communicate with you or your wife, decisions may be made about your child which may not be ones you would agree with, had you been able to participate in the decision.

Did you know?

• In 2009, Success Skills Centre placed over 300 immigrant professionals and skilled workers.

"As more people immigrate to Manitoba, the more important SSC's work becomes."



A Message from the Chairperson

My introduction to **Success Skills Centre** was in my employer role ten years ago.

A particular résumé crossed my desk on two different occasions. I then received a phone call from a Success Skills Centre Labour Market Specialist about the same individual. I thanked her for the call, explaining that I was familiar with the résumé, but was not interested. She proceeded to tell me that she could place this person in my company for six weeks – at no cost to me. This was an offer I could not refuse, so I didn't. Two weeks later, I was so impressed with the owner of the résumé, who was a new immigrant engineer-to-be, that I offered him a position in the company. This one-time intern is still with us today and is now a supervising engineer and valued staff member.

Since that time, 25 clients of Success Skills Centre have worked at the company in various capacities and under different contractual

arrangements. Today, 11 of them are still with us and they comprise a large percentage of the total staff.

Some of these highly educated, experienced new immigrants have come to us through the 12-week paid internship program, sponsored by the provincial government. Normally, one has to make a hiring decision within a few hours at most, putting the employer under considerable pressure, to avoid costly hiring mistakes. The internship program is a godsend, in that it extends the interview by 12 weeks. It enables the candidate and the employer to really get to know each other, and allows the intern time to demonstrate the true value of his or her foreign experience.

Success Skills Centre CEO Monika Feist, and her capable staff do an admirable job helping experienced, professional new immigrants integrate into Manitoba's work force, providing the services they require to settle

into positions suited to their particular expertise.

The result is a win-win situation all around. The newcomers benefit, the employers benefit by finding those skills which are becoming scarcer and scarcer, and indeed all Manitobans benefit from our developing economy.

Roy. P. Vallance, P. Eng.
Board Chair
Success Skills Centre



Words From Our Past Chairperson

Congratulations to Success Skills Centre for their success and moving into their new accommodation. The Centre now has plenty of room for training, lots of computers and a very nicely laid out facility.

I have been involved with Success Skills for many years, as a trainer of their staff, a staff member myself, as well as President of the Board of Directors. Over the years I have met many wonderful new Canadians and become personal friends with some of them. Working with the clients, I have learned about many countries and cultures that I would never

have had any knowledge of otherwise. I wish I could visit all of their home countries.

The Employment Counsellors are all very caring people who want to see their clients become successfully employed in their professions. The clients have much to offer Canada and any employer who allows them to first volunteer with their firm and then in many cases hire them, are very fortunate to get such conscientious hard working people. The remainder of the staff who compliment each other so very well, make the operation very successful.

Monika Feist, the CEO, has worked very diligently with the universities, professionals, agencies and the government to improve the chances of our clients to be recognized for the education and skills that they bring to Canada. More and more her work is being recognized.

I would like to thank the other members of the Board: Linda Clarke, Roy Vallance, Jacek Chojczak, Mehboob Shaikh as well as the staff who sit on the Board; Monika, Rany and Cicely (ex-officio).

Patricia Flaws