



EDP Success Stories



Entrepreneurs
With Disabilities Program

Celebrating
20 years
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Success Stories British Columbia



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Victoria Maxwell is a sought-after educator sharing her message of what it is like to live with a mental illness and the recovery process.

Her self-written and performed plays called *Crazy for Life* and *Funny... You Don't Look Crazy* are now huge successes.

As an award winning actress and playwright her psychiatric illness and professional knowledge as a group facilitator give her a unique perspective on dealing with and living with, depression and other mental illness.

Victoria has written four one-person shows and is touring with three of them, in addition to holding workshops and being a keynote speaker at conferences and workshops across North America.

Victoria writes columns and has appeared in numerous magazines, is a frequent guest on the radio, and has a blog with *Psychology Today* online.

She heard about the Community Futures Sunshine Coast *Abilities 2 Business* program at her local office in Sechelt, B.C.

"I went to Community Futures because I really needed a better grasp of business skills and business plans," she said. "The program I went through was twice a week and free and I learned everything. I learned accounting, marketing and even how to write a great business plan. Another great asset was they helped me focus on what was working and what wasn't and how to get good PR. They really gave me great a skills set that has been instrumental in my success."

"Treatments made me stable but work made me well."

She adds being self-employed allows her to tailor her work schedule to her medical needs

which can be difficult to do in a regular job—for example if she is sleeping badly she can sleep in and make up the time later in the day.

Victoria added that the Community Futures Program has opened a lot of doors for her and allowed her to have a career she loves and the ability to help people.

"We can't underestimate the power of work in creating your own wellness."

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Overcoming difficult injuries to reach new successes

A car accident, a brain injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is enough to discourage anyone from continuing on with an uncertain future. Add three children, a career as a music performer and teacher and a brain that leaves you with holes in your memory, where do you start?

Sharon Lambert went from a music performer and teacher to an “angry swearing machine...who got lost in the bathroom.”

Realizing she wasn't ready for live performance, she turned to voice over work – voice over is a production technique used in radio, television, and other presentation platforms. Sharon made a demo and was signed by an agent.

“If anything, voice over has helped me to be comfortable with being my true self. Not hiding my blemishes and putting up a fake façade. It's helped me to be more confident and helped me see the beauty of the ordinary.”

Sharon began looking into organizations that could help develop a business plan and found the Community Futures Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP).

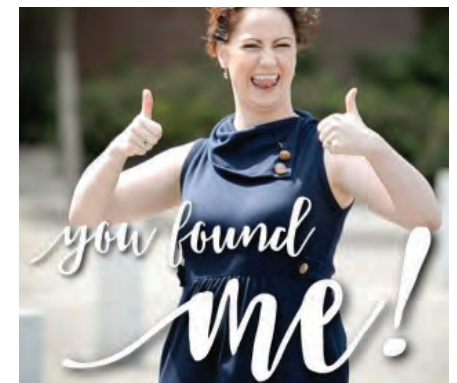
EDP provided nine months of assistance for Sharon to finish her business plan. “I thought business plans were something you write to get a bank loan – but now I realize they are a tool to guide expenses, prioritize and track my booking ratio.”

Sharon now runs a complete voice over business out of her Chilliwack home. She has been featured in commercials all over North America and is the voice over for EDP's promotional video.

Ask Sharon and she will tell you, “EDP made my business fit into my life versus fitting my life into my business.”

“My car accident broke me, and I'll never be the same...but it is that brokenness, the struggles, that have made me more beautiful as a human being. In my daily life, and in my business, I don't need to be ashamed of my cracks, bruises, and disabilities. They make me more relatable, more real, and more genuine.”

For more information on Sharon's remarkable story, visit:
www.sharonlambert.com



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Terrace entrepreneur Robert Broome went from logging to lagers and wines and has never been happier to go to work every day.

After being injured in a logging incident, Robert was in Vancouver recuperating and decided to go to a large brewing supply store. That was the day life took a new turn for Robert.

"I was injured and down in Vancouver receiving treatment," he explained. "I had been brewing beer on my own for a very long time and I always had to order supplies online. When I was down south I went to the Brewers' store in Vancouver."

When talking to an employee in the store he mentioned that the dealer in the Terrace area had left and they needed someone to take over.

When Robert returned home he found out there were issues concerning his insurance from the accident and that he was looking at a long court case to regain coverage.

"I decided rather than lose everything I would rather invest in

myself and I came up with this business plan."

Robert was on employment insurance and entered the 16/37 Community Futures Self Employment Program. He also applied for an EDP Loan and a grant from the HRSDC Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities so he could purchase two machines to make his business run more efficiently and cut down on costs.

Surviving the first critical start-up years, *Wine N' Suds* has steadily grown. And Robert wouldn't change his new career for the world.

Along the way Robert's hand-crafted wines have received consistent international acclaim. Starting with his 2011 Black Currant Port Style wine which won Bronze at the WineMaker International Amateur Wine Competition, gold and silver

awards keep coming year after year for his vine creations.

When asked if he has any advice for aspiring entrepreneurs with disabilities, Robert shares,

"Just go for it, and work hard, and love what you do. The success will follow."

For more information on Robert go to www.winensuds.com



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Dave Bachmier and his dog Pinner have found the formula to success with his Neighbours Computers business in Grand Forks, B.C.

The personable owner of the aptly named local computer shop is more than willing to communicate the challenges he has faced since serving in the Canadian Forces.

A military accident left him with back injuries and as it turned out PTSD. The non-logical side of his brain left him feeling like there is always a threat, and he spent years trying to become a member of his community again. Owning his own business was the key ingredient.

"My service dog Pinner, she gave me my life back, if Pinner is okay I'm okay."

He started his computer business in a building with only 890 square feet and when he needed to expand, the banks wouldn't help,

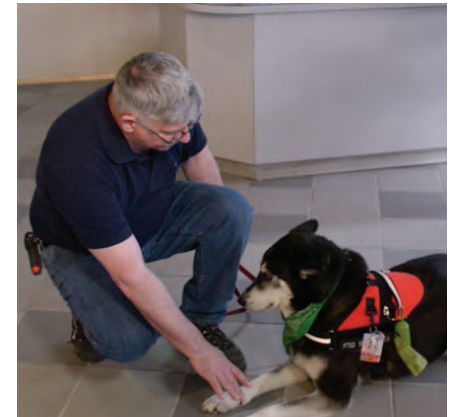
but Community Future's Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program stepped in.

With an EDP loan Dave bought a 3000-square foot building enabling him to add more stock and deliver better services for his clients. To fully participate in the business while managing his PTSD, Dave set up his new shop to minimize stress triggers: clear sight lines, open backgrounds, clearly marked customer and service areas, and his ever-present service dog Pinner.

Success may not have been easy for Bachmier, but it led to the rapid expansion of his storefront, winning his community's retail excellence award, and the addition of more employees sooner than Dave initially thought. Dave makes an effort to hire other local people with disabilities after seeing the

faith Community Futures put in his concept and its execution.

"Community Futures looked past my disability and at this ability," he says, pointing at himself. "I aim to do the same when hiring."



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Sometimes all it takes is a little bit of help to turn dreams into reality.

When Althea Mongerson arrived back in her vibrant, art centred hometown, Salmon Arm, B.C., armed with a degree in anthropology and theatre she needed to find a way to make a living.

With a background that included raising Angora goats with her mother, and connections to the Shuswap Spinners and weavers guild, she realized the community needed a wool and yarn store so she found the way to make things happen.

The reality however, was that she needed some help with the business side of things.

After a visit to the local Community Futures office she found help through the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP).

Althea lives with Rheumatoid Arthritis, an autoimmune disorder,

and was eligible for up to six months of business coaching through the program.

She says the accessibility of EDP makes it easy for anyone with challenges to access their services.

The group set her up to work with a business consultant for six months and with this help she developed an online and print business development plan and a bookkeeping strategy to launch *Intwined Fibre Arts*.

Althea continues to work with the consultant on a casual basis to make sure she keeps on track.

Now that she has successfully tackled what she calls the “daunting” side of the business she can now focus on the creative side that she loves.

For more information about Intwined Fibre Arts, visit their website at: intwinedfibrearts.ca

“I didn’t have to jump through hoops and though there are parameters ensuring all parties are accountable, EDP let’s you tell them what you need.”



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Success Stories Alberta



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Sometimes you just need to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

And believe in your heart things will get better.

Just ask Oluwaseun Fanowopo (David).

Growing up in Nigeria his family was poor, he was diagnosed with polio before he could walk, and this left him with a limp and lack of muscle in his left leg for life.

He never saw it as being a disability—it was a part of him and didn't deter him from doing anything.

Upon coming to Canada in 2005 the language barrier was harder for him than his disability. While trying to write the exam to become a certified physiotherapist he kept failing it.

Three times—and failure was not an option—he had a family to support, his wife and three young sons.

To top everything off the Canadian government took away his passport and his immigration papers for one year causing him to lose his first business.

After he began commuting to LLB from Slave Lake to work for *Body Dynamics*. He would leave his family on Monday at 4:00 a.m. and stay until Tuesday night, drive home and be back again Wednesday morning until Friday night.

Now he is working with the EDP program to set up his own business once again.

When Liv Rasmussen told him he was approved for the program he fell to his knees, then picked her up and spun her around thanking her over and over again.

Rasmussen told him, “Hey this is what we do.”

He responded with,

“For you this is what you do - but for me you changed my life today.”

David's advice for others,
“Make yourself relevant.
Work hard and you
will overcome.”



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Noreen Middleton takes things one day at a time.

And the path forward hasn't always been level, or straight, as Noreen has searched for a career.

She ended up choosing to be an electrician and that path has been long and winding, but she is closing in on the final parts that will see her business, *M. Powered Electrical*, become her fulltime gig.

It all started in her search to find a job that paid a good salary.

After a couple of careers that didn't work out she turned to wiring trailers, and small buildings before going on to apprentice at a local plant before going to school.

It was never easy. A couple of times she wanted to quit, but she persevered and went to work up in Fort McMurray for 16 years but after three bouts of pneumonia she is working part time at a local hardware store while working with

EDP to develop a business plan to start her own electrician shop.

Noreen was the only female through all her training, the only one out of 50 writing her masters exam and is possibly one of only two women with her own electrical business in Alberta.

EDP has helped Noreen in so many ways, first with her training and now they have her working with a business planner, they are helping her take a business boot camp in Okotoks and she has applied for a loan to get the business up and running fulltime through them.

Her motto for her business is,

"A soft approach to your hard wire solutions."

For others thinking about starting up their own business she advises,

"Get direction, communication is the key to good leadership, say what you mean and mean what you say."



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Right from the start Hirra knew that it was what she was meant to do...and she loved it!

When Hirra Memon's kids started struggling in school, she quickly enrolled them in *Kumon* to give them a hand up. Hirra was so impressed she decided to open a *Kumon Math & Reading Centre* herself in November 2015.

With her background in aircraft engineering Hirra thought she was well equipped to take on the challenge of owning a business, but it was opening a can of worms—the payrolls, the taxes, the financials—it was just all too much to take in.

A friend led her to the local Community Futures' Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program which changed everything. Hirra was assigned to EDP coach Chris Goodship who really opened her eyes on all the behind the scenes of running a business and how to handle finances.

Getting back on track with her finances and learning how to

handle everything herself became a life-changer for Hirra.

Stress is one of the symptoms of Hyperthyroidism and EDP helped alleviate those added stressors.

"The majority of my students have a learning disability, and I have a unique understanding of that. My own disability makes me a better teacher."

Hirra's advice to others, "Be aware of your disability. Don't be the last one to look after who you are. Don't be afraid to ask for help and ask questions."

EDP Coach Chris Goodship is "Really proud of Hirra for saying she needed help. She was a very willing student, especially on the accounting end, which was difficult. I watch her with her students and she is amazing juggling everyone's needs competently."

Community Futures is serious about wanting entrepreneurs to be successful.

"You are constantly climbing a mountain and if you stop it's like sinking in quicksand – you have to keep climbing" is what Hirra Memon lives by.
–Kumon

www.kumon.ca/cochrane
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Sheena is a shining example of how the entrepreneurs with disabilities program can walk beside a client in support of their vision.

Sheena worked with Community Futures Highwood during her high school years while developing the business plan for her candy store dream.

With some coaching, Sheena developed her first business plan and began selling candy at the local farmers market.

Because Sheena was in high school, she was able to gain credits for her business plan, a positive addition to her dream becoming a reality.

Today, Sheena is a community icon.

Everyone knows Sheena for her engaging personality and the passion for her customers, and of course, for her knowledge of candy.

Not only has Sheena celebrated over 12 years of entrepreneurship, she has provided inspiration to many other entrepreneurs while sharing her story at events and conferences.

“Running my own business is fun because everyone loves candy, I like to make people happy and the customers are fun.”

She loves to go to work at her store *Sheena's Sweets & Such* to be around her staff and working as part of a team.

One member of her staff has been with her for 11 years. “We do work well together.” She also loves interacting with her customers.

“Make it happen, dream big and go for it. Have confidence in yourself because it is fun.”

She is looking forward to owning her business for at least another 12 years and hope it stretches out much longer than that.

When asked what advice she would share with others, Sheena said, ‘Follow your dreams – I Did!’

“Sheena is a shining example of how the entrepreneurs with disabilities program can walk beside a client in support of their vision,”
Judy McMillan-Evans,
EDP Coach.

www.sweetsandsuch.ca
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Having a back up plan is always a good idea, and when that plan includes something as beautiful as designing with flowers, it almost seems like that should have been the number one choice all along.

As a teenager, Denise wanted to be a ballerina, however her parents encouraged her to have a back-up plan. Floral design became that plan and has now become the centre of her world.

The road she has traveled has included apprenticing for two years to learn the art of floral design and working in a few flower shops building her future with her passion for flowers.

Denise started developing her business from home, but being located outside of town created barriers to success.

Once Denise connected and started working with Community Futures West Yellowhead, she learned about the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program and how she could access coaching supports for the development of her business plan.

Having dyslexia, she has faced challenges and frustrations with the financial aspects of business planning and business management.

Through the EDP program, she was able to engage in the entrepreneurial circle learning program that allowed her to build skills and forced her to make a 'Dragon's Den' type presentation about her business vision. She was filled with fear at the prospect but when she started to speak of her business the fear melted away and her love for what she was doing shone through.

The program gave her the encouragement to go forward to build her own business. "I had no clue how to write a business plan, with the help of my EDP coach, I learned," said Denise.

Her advice for others —

**"Follow your dream!
If you are passionate
and do the best you
can, even if you don't
succeed, you will find a
way to fit your dream
into your life."**



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Success Stories Saskatchewan



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Ryley Iverson overcomes a personal challenge to form Townfolio

This Saskatchewan entrepreneur and business strategist has helped build a trusted and rapidly expanding community profile network. It assists municipalities and businesses in accessing hard-to-find public data and connecting them to local opportunities across the country.

Alongside *Townfolio* co-founders Davie Lee and Craig Paul, Ryley provides innovative solutions for organizations that are often short on time, budget, and or technical skills to effectively leverage information for the purposes of meaningfully promoting their respective communities for investment.

Townfolio is now live in hundreds of Canadian municipalities and was named one of Canada's Most Innovative Startups by a national accelerator competition.

With an affinity for economic development, technology, renewable energy, and real estate, the company was a perfect home for Ryley, a multi-passionate biz whiz.

However, things weren't especially easy in the beginning when the already arduous start-up phase was made even more difficult by a serious health diagnosis that he had to contend with.

While working full-time and trying to launch *Townfolio*, Ryley was diagnosed with a stage-3 blood cancer and was on the brink of needing serious conventional treatment. Thankfully, his health has significantly improved and he's more driven than ever!

The experience of overcoming such a monumental personal challenge transformed Ryley's priorities and completely shifted his perspective on risk-taking, which motivated him to tackle the start-up full-time.

At this critical phase, Community Futures was very happy to assist with the financial resources and support to move the dream forward.

"I personally owe a massive thank-you to the Elevate program," Ryley says.

His advice, "If the cards are stacked against you, are able to persevere? Then you already have one of the most necessary traits to become an entrepreneur." This will go a long way in the early days.

Ryley is an *Elevate business building program* participant and received a start up business grant that assisted with living support, training and mentoring, disability supports and bookkeeping assistance.

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For Perry Dancsok success is just a touch away.

Perry is the owner and operator of *The Massage P.A.D.* in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

He is a registered massage therapist and has owned his business for the last five years—and he is legally blind.

Perry says through his disability, he has found an increased aptitude for touch, which assists him in treating the physical aches and pains of his clientele.

Perry enjoys the fact that he is in control of his environment, he is the decision maker, he knows where everything is and he is never caught off guard.

Having a vision problem has made him passionate about “Mise en place” or, a place for everything and everything in its place.

The Massage P.A.D. is busier than Perry imagined it would be and

continues to be successful due to the support of regular clients, new referrals and his specialization in deep tissue massage.

Perry’s now successful business venture was made possible by his hard work and dedication in partnership with EDP Programs through Community Futures Ventures.

He was able to invest in the right equipment and technology, which is specific to catering to his vision impairment, in order to make owning his business a much more friendly process with his disability. He feels Community Futures Ventures in Yorkton, SK encouraged him to invest in proper adaptive technology that will last for several years.

“Make sure you have the right equipment for your business that assists with your disability. People are understanding and they

are supporting you because they want to and they will be patient with you.”

“Whether you are a person with a disability or not, if you have an idea, there are people and programs available to help you get started. Believe in yourself, and believe in what you can do”.



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An artist with a vision in Saskatchewan has combined two unique talents and along the way formed a successful business.

Customized tattoos and logo development for businesses are the foundation for *True U Tattoo & Creationz Inc.*, owned by Kimberly Wylie, located in Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

Kimberly is an artist with the ability to develop great details in multiple mediums.

She was previously a welder when she decided to take a leap and become a tattoo artist, nurturing her creativity and work-life balance while raising her children.

In the beginning the learning curve was steep, finding the best combination of products and machinery took a lot of time, trial and errors.

It was also challenging to learn how to price her services and products. To help her achieve her dreams Kimberly received support from Community Futures Sagehill and

she is part of the *Elevate* business-building program.

The business-building program assists rural entrepreneurs with disabilities or health conditions. The program also allowed Kimberly to expand her knowledge in computer designing that has proved invaluable with both tattooing and logo design.

She adds—for others wanting to set up their own business—they should, “follow a skill that you already possess, think about the environment you want to create and work in. Make sure you have the right team working with you and for you.”

When building her business would Kimberly have done anything differently?

“Nothing. All the mistakes I have made have brought me to where I am right now.”

Kim has received funding for training; bookkeeping, disability supports, adaptive technology and dependent care assistance in order to launch a new aspect of her business, which is graphic design.

“People with disabilities or mental illnesses should choose a talent or job that they are good at, then create an environment that can accommodate their disability or illness,” says Kimberly.



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The Harvest Pie Company, a long standing successful business in southeast Saskatchewan, was purchased by the Weyburn Wor-kin-shop in 2014.

They have just finished their second full year of operation under new ownership with about 30% more in sales than anticipated.

Continuing on with the tradition of producing top quality fruit spreads, fillings and frozen pies, using locally sourced products the *Weyburn Wor-Kin Shop* took over operations and is producing a full line-up of products for customers.

“This addition to our company fits perfectly with our mandate. The *Weyburn Wor-Kin Shop* strives to empower individuals with disabilities by meeting their needs for employment, community participation and inclusion.

This new opportunity will provide an innovative and rewarding approach to providing meaningful activities and also generating revenue to return directly to the individuals doing the work,” says Andria Brady, Executive Director of the *Weyburn Wor-Kin Shop*.

The purchase was made possible through the support of Community Futures Sunrise, and their Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program that provides loans, advice and support to the business community in southeast Saskatchewan.

“We were delighted to be able to partner with our local Community Futures office to expand employment opportunities for the individuals with intellectual disabilities that we support,” stated Brady, “Our mandate has always been to empower individuals by meeting their needs for employment, community participation and inclusion.

This new opportunity will provide an innovative and rewarding approach in generating revenue to return directly to the individuals doing the work.”

“It was a great project to be involved with, and a perfect fit for the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities loan funds. We look forward to the Harvest Pie Company continuing to produce and sell those tasty pies and fruit products!”
–Verna O’Neill, General Manager of CF Sunrise.



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Taylor Layton has found the pathway to living a life filled with happiness and success.

“I am successful because I have a job that is important to the community, and I am very good at my job,” Taylor says at the end of her *Just Watch Me! Video*. “And I love it. I help a lot of people, and I am helping the earth.”

And along the way she is thinking about writing a book.

It all started with a job search, and when that didn’t work she came up with a plan that her community got behind.

Taylor’s Recycling Pick-Up started in 2011 when there was no other organized program in place in Outlook SK.

It started off as a subscription based curbside recycling program and the business grew slowly until 2014 when Taylor entered the Community Futures EDP *Just*

Watch Me! Video contest. She received so much community support and attention that she won the contest.

After winning the contest, Taylor received cash prizes, business memberships, media attention and even a trailer to use for her business needs.

Taylor says she had to overcome some hurdles. “I showed them I could do it.”

Her business ebbs and flows. She has at least one customer on every single street in Outlook and several streets have several customers!

Although it’s laborious and often heavy work, with the help of her job coach/employee, Taylor gets the job done with a smile on her face and a song—not only in her heart—but shared with anyone near her!

In the video she shared her best advice for starting her own business.

Her advice for others, “Don’t give up! Ever! You can do this!”

The local Community Futures offices provides support to Taylor and helped to promote her video during the contest. Taylor also receives support from SACL (Saskatchewan Association of Community Living) in Saskatoon.

“Being my own boss works for me because it lets me work in my own way. Working at my own business means I can stay in my home town.”

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For Entrepreneurs with Disabilities the path can be challenging and rewarding.

Dave Devloo has some life advice for anyone looking to find success in life, "Count your blessings and keep moving forward!"

Dave and Connie Devloo of *Tama Millwork Ltd.* received their first loan from Community Futures Heartland in May of 2007 to purchase a building and land for *Tama Millwork Ltd.*, to expand their business which has been doing custom cabinetry since 2004 in Somerset, Manitoba into the manufacturing of custom urns. These are wooden urns with a unique customized engraved design.

Dave says going into business there are several hurdles you need to overcome, but when you add working through major pain from a disc degenerate disease it can be really challenging.

To be able to work through the pain and keep the business moving forward without putting that burden on the people around you was a challenge Dave was able to overcome.

Dave says he found success with his business because they help others succeed and in turn they succeed.

"So we reap the rewards but only after we help someone else."

Dave and Connie also brought their daughter Lexa on board with *Tama Millwork Ltd.* She has completed her cabinet making course through Red River College and also runs her own small business out of *Tama Millwork Ltd.* in graphic design, selling clothing and vehicle signage.

"One of the big things is to keep your focus, being positively goal oriented and not letting your pain be others burdens. Keeping your goals out in front of you and knowing no matter what, you are going to stay the course and you are going to make it happen," Dave said.



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Gail is a sole proprietor operating her home-based business Hospitality Plus in Warren, Manitoba.

Gail started *Hospitality Plus* as a result of her positive volunteer experiences.

She saw an opportunity and a need. This opportunity came at a time that Gail required making changes to her lifestyle due to the medical conditions that have accrued over a number of years.

Since 2005, *Hospitality Plus* has been contracted as the Executive Director of Interlake Tourism Association www.interlaketourism.com

The contract covers an array of responsibilities with the mission to entice visitors to Manitoba's Interlake region through marketing and promotion of the region and its members by networking, training and providing a regional voice in the tourism industry.

Interlake Tourism has grown and prospered under Gail's direction and most recently won an Award of Excellence from the Association of Manitoba Museums.

Gail is looking to expand her business to include various training modules: consulting businesses on staff training needs, delivering staff and volunteer tourism training, proposal writing, marketing, and event planning. Gail is presently an *Elevate* Program participant and is receiving support from Community Futures West Interlake.

Through the *Elevate* Program, Gail has been able to access the required supports, training and mentoring to assist in the expansion of her business and continue to maintain the existing day-to-day business activities.

"Gail McDonald has used a combination of determination, persistence and dedication to pioneer forward and turn her business venture into a success."



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Living close to a beach is sometimes too good not to share.

This Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba business was established in 1997. Originally, *Bye The Lake* Bed and Breakfast consisted of a one-bedroom cottage. Owners, Fred Kelly and Joy Vanderneut were able to expand their facilities with the assistance of the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program.

They were able to add two beautiful units onto their home which offered their guests private entrances and all the wonderful touches staying in a high-class hotel would offer.

With the added perks of enjoying a beautiful garden yard, guests had use of a gazebo and gas barbecue on the beautifully landscaped yard facing Lake Winnipeg.

The beautiful facilities and the superior customer service made their business a true success. Fred and Joy were very active members of their business

community and assisted with the establishment of *IDEAS Inc*, a local network of entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Their business was located in the Interlake where the EDP program was first launched in 1997. In the beginning years of EDP, Manitoba had the highest number of EDP clients and most were from the Interlake region.

This region continues to have a high number of entrepreneurs with disabilities and also has a high number of *Elevate* participants. Due to the high number of entrepreneurs with disabilities in this region, there have also been many special projects in this region.

Fred and Joy have since retired and are now relaxing by the lake.

“Fred and Joy were very instrumental in supporting many entrepreneurs with disabilities in their region and instrumental in the formation of a network of Entrepreneurs with Disabilities (IDEAS Inc).”



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Turning items that might have ended up in the landfill into art treasures is a quest that led Donald Glenn down a path where he found his future.

Shorty's Upcycling Studio takes unloved things and makes them into treasures.

Donald, or *Shorty*, uses his artistic talent to repurpose discarded materials such as pallets, engine parts, and metals by turning them into household goods like wine racks, coffee tables and lamps that are functional and beautiful.

His family was struggling between his disability and finances to get their business going when they found a helping hand with the EDP and the *Elevate* program through Community Futures North Central Developments and now he is the proud owner and operator of *Shorty's Upcycling Studio*.

Donald's condition prevents him from working on someone else's schedule so the entrepreneurial path allows him the freedom of setting his own hours and timetable.

"We've gone through a lot as a family in general and to have somebody offer you a helping hand to help you get through that, and to be able to find the path and follow those steps to get from point a to point b, the *Elevate* program has been very helpful in assisting with that."

In the future he would like to expand into experiential tourism.

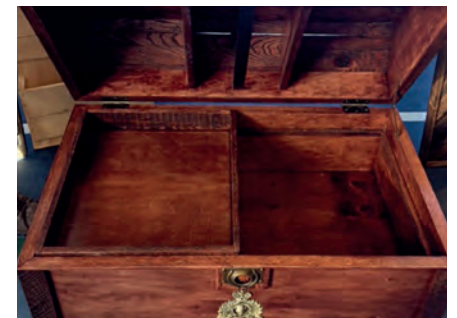
"I've become aware of that fact that people really enjoy the story and the experience of our pieces that we make."

Donald believes there is a real need for tourism and manufacturing in Manitoba and his company can play a big role in that.

Donald's advice to other entrepreneurs with disabilities who are considering starting their business is: "Start and go for it! You just might surprise yourself!"

He also said, "Anyone out there with a disability thinking of starting their own business—always remember you define your disability, it does not define you."

Through the support of Community Futures Donald had an opportunity to work with a mentor and also receive training on marketing his business, and pricing his products.



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No matter what the odds are, dreams can come true, with a vision and a plan.

Candace Lipischak knew working where she was, wasn't the right thing for her.

She says a disability doesn't take time for lunch or time for breaks, it isn't nine to five so the best path forward was to start her own business from home.

"This way it would give me the opportunity to take the rest that I need or the time that I need I order to be creative and offer a better product to my clients."

Candace is a Métis workshop facilitator and visual artist. She is also the owner and designer of *Fat Daug-Hand Carved Antler Jewelry*.

Candace launched *Productions Canart Productions* in 2007, offering graphic design/desktop publishing and printing services. Through assistance from Community Futures Triple R and the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities

Program, she was able to expand her business from a part-time venture to a full-time business.

Recently, Candace branched out more creatively having learned how to hand carve moose, deer, caribou and wapiti antler from her father Larry. Together they started *Fat Daug-Hand Carved Antler Jewelry*; the name Fat Daug is short for Father-Daughter. Their unique and organic jewelry can be found in boutiques around Winnipeg such as: *The Wag at the Forks*, *Out of the Blue*, *Neechi Niche*, *Red Cedar Gifts* and more.

"Be proud of who you are. Remember what you're doing it for. There is help out there to get you started and it's quite rewarding once you get there. Don't be scared. Just have a lot of faith, and attitude is actually 90 percent of it."

Candace has been recognized for her business success. Candace was

the *Just Watch ME!* video contest Seasoned Entrepreneur winner in 2012–2013.

"Every day that you wake up and you smile and you are able to work because of your own business, or because of what you do and it makes you happy, to me that is success."



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