


# BusinessAble

AN INFORMATIVE  
GUIDE ABOUT  
ENTREPRENEURS  
WITH DISABILITIES

CHOOSE YOUR OWN PATH

Community  
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du Québec Canada 

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AN INFORMATIVE  
GUIDE ABOUT  
ENTREPRENEURS  
WITH DISABILITIES

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**INSTEAD OF GOING WHERE THE PATH TAKES YOU,  
MAKE YOUR OWN PATH AND LEAVE A TRAIL.**



## The Spirit of Success

How do you define success? That's one of the questions we asked the disabled entrepreneurs profiled in these pages. Their answers are as varied as the individuals themselves, but there are some common themes. To them, success means making their dreams reality, being independent and self-reliant, and working to their full capacity every day. Like all successful entrepreneurs, they have achieved their goals by focussing on the many things they *can* do, rather on the few things they can't.

As you read on you will meet nine talented, hard-working individuals who have established viable businesses across Alberta – and one young man who is clearly destined for future entrepreneurship! We are very proud to have been able to support them all on the road to success through the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP).

The EDP program is designed to make it easier for entrepreneurs with disabilities to pursue their business goals and contribute to economic growth within their rural community. By establishing and running successful businesses, EDP clients provide jobs and services to the rural areas where they live, and help their communities to remain vibrant and sustainable.

In profiling these entrepreneurs, we hope to provide you with insight into what it takes to be a successful businessperson – whether you have a disability or not. In fact, you may notice that disabilities are barely mentioned. That's because it is their strength, perseverance and ability that makes these individuals remarkable. We can all gain inspiration from their determination in reaching their goals.

CONTRIBUTED BY



# Colleen Green

When Colleen found a treatment that helped her to heal, she became motivated to bring it to others.

## Background

Originally from Kamloops, British Columbia, Colleen Green now practices Reiki and reflexology, with a focus on stress reduction and healing, as an entrepreneur in Medicine Hat. She was introduced to this technique when dealing with her own health concerns. "There are so many components involved in it; I liked crystals, incense, and aroma therapy, and because it worked for my healing, I wanted to use it to help other people."

Reflexology, also known as "zone therapy," focuses on massaging and using points of contact to improve health and encourage productivity. This practice is based on the idea that the soles of our feet are connected to a stream of organs within the body. Reiki, which is similar to reflexology, is a Japanese art that believes that "unseen life force energy" reduces stress and promotes



relaxation and healing. In treatment, this practice is used as a complementary therapy on diseases relating to physical, emotional and mental well-being.

Part of Colleen's practice is based on utilizing the energy from stones to assist in the healing process. "At a young age I started feeling energy through certain stones; amethyst is a stone that creates nightmares, while sapphire is associated with soothing."

## Becoming an entrepreneur

Colleen's Reflexology and Reiki is a home-based practice that has now been in business for over a year. It was through the support of the Self-Employment Program at Community Futures Entre-Corp that she was able to take her idea beyond the concept

stage and create a viable business plan. "I have a vision, and a desire to succeed. I'm naturally a people person, and I think I've just always had a knack for it."

Colleen has been successful at targeting a variety of clientele, and her services range from in-home treatments to hospital visits. Whether she is dealing with clients needing simple stress relief, or those suffering from cancer or going through dialysis, her focus is on providing healing and calm during difficult times.

Colleen has positioned her business to include natural products such as crystals, bath beads and salts, which she creates herself and offers to her clients. "I want to be very hands-on in this experience, and even look at expanding my business to include aroma therapy and massage."

## Advice for potential entrepreneurs

Colleen is self-motivated and inspired by those who are involved in offering alternative medication and natural healing; her advice to entrepreneurs is to "dare to dream." "Be aware of what you want, don't be held

*Continued on p. 16*

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# Graham and Cindy Norman

Graham and Cindy saw the potential in Fort McMurray's oil industry, and through hard work and determination have been able to share in the city's growth.

## **Background**

Graham and Cindy Norman have been residents of Fort McMurray since 1983. The Normans, like many of the city's residents, moved to Fort McMurray from another part of the country, married, and raised their two children there.

Graham became a member of Local 1325 and started his first job as a scaffolder at the oil sands plants in the early '80s. He worked his way up to journeyman status, gained experience as a foreman and a supervisor and continued in this field for a number of years. Then, in 1990, he had to undergo major surgery, and due to health issues and other surgeries, worked only intermittently for the next 10 years. As a couple, Graham and Cindy worked together to deal with the struggles, trials and victories they experienced.



The year 2000 brought yet another challenge. When Graham was returning to town from a Saturday afternoon ice fishing trip, his truck slipped on an icy bridge and fell approximately 20 feet to the ground below. He miraculously survived but suffered a fractured T-6 vertebra. Against all odds, thanks to a positive attitude and steely determination, Graham did return to the work force once again in a supervisory role.

## **Becoming an entrepreneur**

Contemplating all the growth occurring within Fort McMurray's oil industry, and seeing the future potential, Graham, the ever-thinking entrepreneur, began to weigh the idea of starting a scaffolding business. Cindy's first reaction was concern not about Graham's ability, but about his continuing

health issues. However, Graham chose to forge ahead.

In March 2005, Venture Scaffolding & Carpentry Ltd. (now Venture Scaffolding & Insulating Ltd.) was born; yet another challenging but exciting "Venture" indeed. The growth the company has experienced over the past two-and-a-half years is nothing short of amazing. Started with approximately 12 employees, it has jumped to a maximum of 28 employees in year two and currently employs 48 staff, including a full time site supervisor. Total sales have increased by over 600% since the company's inception. It has also gone from employing one trade to three different trades. There were some growing pains along with the success, but with hard work and determination

*Continued on p. 16*

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# Paul Fabreau

Paul has always been a natural at sales and marketing – essential components of running a successful business.

## Background

Paul Fabreau has lived in Medicine Hat since a young age. He seems to have been born with a natural sales pitch, a useful tool when interacting with others. “When I was young I’d be selling balls and chips at the golf course; I like dealing with people, being the problem-solver and the solution.”

Early on, Paul realized that sales was an integral part of what he wanted to do; he started out in the service industry, and later moved to Calgary to learn the fundamentals of business. When he returned to Medicine Hat he invested time in sales with some of the leaders in the retail market. Aware of his passion and certain of his sales potential, Paul directed his focus to entrepreneurship.

## Becoming an entrepreneur

Fly Guys Delivery Service has been in operation for four years; Paul employs six people, as



well as occasional temporary staff. His venture started with a concept that, after participating in the Self-Employment Program at Community Futures Entre-Corp, he developed into what is now a successful business. “I came in with the drive, passion and idea; Entre-Corp gave me the working tools to succeed.” Although there were obstacles to overcome, Paul embraced the idea that “in business the only thing that matters is tenacity; the biggest obstacle is yourself.”

In the past, Paul ran a “business club”, which focused on seeking out business ventures which could provide employment opportunities for individuals with mental disabilities. Now, running his business full-time, Paul is fuelled and motivated by a bigger vision and a consistent schedule.

He remembers well that the earlier years of his business were surrounded by struggle, stress, and little income, and therefore is appreciative of what he has accomplished in his entrepreneurial career.

## Advice for potential entrepreneurs

Early in his venture, Paul was advised that starting his own business would be one of the hardest things he would ever do. Slowly he realized this to be true; he built self-motivation and an ability to keep pushing forward when faced with rejection. “Overall you need to hang tough and market, look for people that are better. Don’t do it yourself if you don’t have the skills; what you’re not good at, hire for.”

One of the leading components to success in his mind is marketing and sales: creating a brand that people are aware of which in return will create longevity in the market. “Without marketing, even the best organizations can fail just because people are unaware of what they do.”

Every year Paul is expanding his business and achieving results; he always remains

*Continued on p. 13*

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# Lindsay Gayman

Lindsay saw a challenge as an opportunity to grow, and combined her passion and interests into a thriving business.

## Background

Lindsay originally trained as a registered nurse, and enjoyed providing professional care to her patients with just the right amount of TLC. After she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, she knew it was time for a change. She therefore decided to combine her interest in healthful practices with a service everyone needs – home cleaning.

## Becoming an entrepreneur

On track with a great business idea, Lindsay spent time researching existing cleaning services before launching her company. She discovered that her idea of using all-natural products and offering a new level of professionalism was well received, and within months her business, Simply Natural Home Cleaning, was offering TLC to homes



throughout the Bow Valley corridor. The group training sessions and one-on-one counselling Lindsay received during her Self-Employment training at Community Futures Centre West helped her develop the planning and marketing skills she needed for success. In addition, support funded by the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program provided Lindsay with extra coaching services.

## Advice for potential entrepreneurs

“Network, network, network,” advises Lindsay. “Building good connections with people is worth more money than you’ll ever make by yourself.” As a result of her own networking practices, Lindsay has built good relationships

with other environmentally conscious service providers in her area and has drawn attention from a national health magazine and local media.

## How do you define success?

Lindsay defines entrepreneurial success as being able to combine your passion, drive and willingness to take a risk in order to see your business thrive. She is humble and grateful that she lives in a place where she was able to start a business that reflects her ideals and beliefs. ■

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# Simone Forget

Simone's medical diagnosis was the catalyst for a major life change: she developed a long-term vision which has now come to fruition.

## Background

The story started a few years ago, when Simone, a school teacher at that time, was facing a series of difficulties in her professional life. She had a form of disability that did not allow her to focus on her job and she felt she hadn't achieved her full potential. The only way to solve her problems was to take a completely different approach: she needed to find a type of occupation that would challenge her, be non-repetitive and easily manageable.

That's how Simone started to dream about change, about having the flexibility of managing her own business, and about the freedom and independence brought by owning her own venture. She knew the start-up would be difficult. She knew the flexibility would be offset by the workload and responsibility. She knew that re-training would take her away from her family and



community for at least two years. But she knew she could not continue doing the same things in the same way; she needed a change.

## Becoming an entrepreneur

Simone graduated from the Medicine Hat College with a Diploma in Massage Therapy in 2007 and moved back to Pincher Creek to open her own clinic. Her program of study had provided courses in business management skills, and had prepared her to be a thorough and competent therapist.

However, there was something missing: Simone needed local information and support for her enterprise. She needed additional customized training, and a management system she could easily implement, control and upgrade.

On top of all the internal challenges she had to face,

she wasn't sure if the local market could support another massage therapist; the market seemed saturated and the competition was strong. Simone had to build her own niche in the massage business, and she was able to capitalize on her skills to demonstrate that she had a unique and effective form of treatment to offer her clients.

Simone turned to Community Futures Alberta Southwest to find the local support she needed. Working with them, she was able to transform various problems into opportunities and to prevail over the difficulties she was facing. She left their offices with a clear view of her business, of the directions she wanted to pursue and the strategies she would follow.

Simone is currently operating her business in Pincher Creek and there is every reason to believe that she will continue to be successful and grow. Her treatments are highly individualized, providing injury prevention and treatment using a blend of Eastern and Western treatment modalities. Most importantly, she finds her work challenging yet manageable, and more satisfying than she could have imagined. ■

CONTRIBUTED BY



# Walter Snowden

Walter became a successful entrepreneur on his own, but support from the EDP program allowed him to take his business to the next level.

## Background

Walter Snowden was born in British Columbia in 1938, and moved to the hamlet of Rochfort Bridge, Alberta, when he was still a child. He was stricken with polio in 1948 when he was just nine years old. Soon after moving to the Village of Sangudo, in 1985, Walter became completely confined to a wheelchair.

In 1976 Walter had started to learn about "saw filing" and in subsequent years went on to expand his knowledge and skill level to include being able to perform shoe repairs and after that upholstery repairs specializing in leather items. Walter has continued to expand his knowledge by learning how to sew and repair many comparable items, always with the caveat that all services provided have to be something



that he can do while seated in his wheelchair.

## Becoming an entrepreneur

Walter liked the idea of being his own boss and he saw a need in his community and surrounding area for the services he was able to provide. When Walter approached Community Futures Yellowhead East (CFYE) for assistance he had already been self-employed for a number of years, operating as a home-based business from his garage in Sangudo.

When Walter first contacted CFYE in the fall of 1997, his initial needs were two-fold – he was looking for funding to help expand his business, and he was looking for help with his marketing plan. Walter applied to the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities lending program available through CFYE and

was successful in securing a loan for his business, which he has since repaid.

As loan clients, Walter and his wife Eva attended a number of small business courses which were facilitated by CFYE and which included topics such as Bookkeeping, Marketing, Promotion and Sales, Business Management and Business Finance. In addition to the classroom learning, a number of CFYE staff members spent extensive one-on-one consulting time with Walter discussing strategies to market and grow his business.

During his many years in business, Walter has been able to add to the services he provides as he identifies new services that his customers need. Some of the services he now provides include shoe repairs, canvas product manufacturing and repairs, and upholstery services, such as repairs to chairs, ATV seats, snowmobile and implement seats. He continues to offer a sharpening service for carbide saw blades, planer blades, knives, chisels, skates, scissors and more. Walter also does custom metal work and custom sewing, and repairs to items

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# Evelyn Cook

Cancer couldn't stop Evelyn's dream; now she is growing her business with the same care and diligence she uses in tending the gardens she designs.

## Background

Evelyn Cook was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1996 while obtaining her landscaping journeyman certificate from Olds College. On the verge of embarking on a new career, she refused to be defeated by the disease. She underwent radical chemotherapy and radiation treatment, and triumphed.

The cancer, although now in remission, has left some lingering side effects. Fatigue, back pain, extensive osteoporosis of the hips and wrists, as well as a number of residual effects from the treatment, have made it extremely difficult for Evelyn to maintain conventional employment. So, with the passion she rallied to conquer her cancer, she set her sights on pursuing her dream of a landscape/ interiorscape design business.



## Becoming an entrepreneur

Somewhat limited in her physical ability to do hard labour, Evelyn focused on what she *could* do. With well over ten years experience in the landscaping industry, coupled with her ability to coordinate and delegate, she was well positioned to move forward with her business idea.

With the help of Momentum, through the Self-Employment Program, Evelyn developed a business plan – putting together a comprehensive framework detailing everything from advertising material content, right down to how many shovels and rakes she would purchase. She also drew support from family and friends along with existing relationships within the industry to seek out opportunities for business exposure.

On April 1, 2001, Eve's Gardens & Landscapes was launched. The services included year-round landscaping, lawn and garden design and the installation and maintenance of interiorscapes in the Calgary region. A series of graduated FundAbility loans from Momentum ensured that Evelyn's business had the necessary equipment and cash flow to get off the ground and continue to expand.

## Benefits of entrepreneurship

Evelyn loves her work very much. She has not only been able to support herself, but employs up to ten people during peak seasons. Eve's Gardens & Landscapes motivates her each day to work towards self-sufficiency. She has learned how to pace herself within the flexibility of self-employment, and

*Continued on p. 9*



# Sonny Davis

Sonny compares life's problems to songs and rhythms; if you want to change your life's problems into solutions, then you must learn a new rhythm and sing a new song.

## Background

Sonny Davis was born in Calgary, Alberta. At the age of 5, doctors diagnosed him with Muscular Dystrophy, a degenerative muscle disease which affects both his legs and hands. As he grew up, it was always a mystery to him as to why he was created the way he was.

Sonny discovered rhythm and music after picking up the drumsticks at the age of 13. This began his fluency in the universal language of music. Soon after, he realized things that he had always wanted to happen were starting to happen – most significantly, he began walking without the use of the artificial leg braces he had worn all his life.

## Becoming an entrepreneur

Sonny took his passion for



rhythm and used it as the foundation of his business venture. He began coaching drums 5 years ago, emphasizing the healing power of the drum and the Zen principle of “How you do anything, is how you do everything.”

Although he established the Solid Rhythmic Foundation in 2001, he found that his vision for a coaching and drumming workshop needed a plan. “The idea was there, but I didn’t know how to implement it. I felt directionless.” Sonny knew he also needed to find some funding in order to overcome his financial limitations.

While looking for organizations that offered loans to disabled entrepreneurs, Sonny stumbled across Momentum. Enrolling in the ABC’s of Small Business program, he discovered an

environment where he could excel both personally and as an entrepreneur. As his vision became a reality, Think Rhythm was born.

Partnering with Momentum, Sonny worked hard to complete his feasibility study and business plan. Many hours were spent on research, writing and editing, all culminating in a spectacular presentation. This in turn led to the approval of a FundAbility loan which enabled him to create a website, develop promotional materials, and secure the necessary equipment for his business. Sonny hopes Think Rhythm will give him the financial independence that he didn’t have before.

## How do you define success?

“To be successful, you have to complete your cycles,” Sonny says. “Through Momentum, I’ve completed an important cycle.” ■

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*Evelyn Cook, continued from p. 8*  
continues to challenge herself intellectually. As Evelyn continues to reach for success, she looks forward to seeing her business, like the lawns and gardens she cares for, grow and flourish. ■

CONTRIBUTED BY



# Alex Rangen

The Alberta Youth Entrepreneurship Camp helped one teenager overcome his fear of not fitting in and discover his passion for business.

Alex Rangen is a young entrepreneur driven by a desire to succeed and a passion that is palpable to those around him. Aware of the risks and challenges that accompany entrepreneurship, Alex has pushed all odds aside and is striving to accomplish his dream of opening his own business. "I have learned that being an entrepreneur means that you take a risk and hopefully survive out in the global economy. You also have to be willing to take on any competition that is out there."

## **Where does a teenager attain this kind of knowledge?**

The Alberta Youth Entrepreneurship Camp (AYEC) is a week-long experience designed to assist 13-15 year olds in gaining self-confidence, insight into entrepreneurship, and support in achieving their goals and ambitions, all within



a summer camp atmosphere. "The thing that made me apply to go was the fact that this was a business camp and you got to learn how to build your own business from scratch. I also figured it would give me a chance to meet new people."

Separated into teams, the youth learned how to plan a business, build on their vision, and ultimately open and operate their business on Business Day. Alex's team called themselves "Snowbanks", and featured homemade snow cones and unique handcrafted keepsake boxes. Walking away with both a profit and the award for "Mr. Entrepreneur," Alex has many fond memories of camp, including a multitude of new friendships with other youth from across Alberta. AYEC also assisted Alex in refining skills that will push him to achieve his

next goal. "My plans after I'm done high school are to go to a college or university that offers a recording program. Once I'm done I'd like to open up my own recording business."

It was his experience in camp that has made this past school semester easier and the challenge of his disability less apparent. Although initially intimidated by the camp and the concern that his disability would make it hard for him to fit in, Alex was delighted to find himself surrounded by people who believed in what he could accomplish, and walked away with confidence in himself and readiness for his next endeavour.

An avid supporter and advocate for the Alberta Youth Entrepreneurship Camp, Alex recommends this experience to others. "If you have a chance to go, I would say take it. You will probably learn more about entrepreneurship and being an entrepreneur at the camp than if it was taught at school. The knowledge and skills you learn can be used in your everyday life."

Alex has left a lasting impact on fellow campers, volunteers and

*Continued on p. 15*

# Community Partnership

## Helping Clients Along the Stepping Stones to Success

Few of us ever accomplish anything alone; support, collaboration and teamwork are essential components of almost every success. The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP) and its clients are no different – they receive assistance from individuals, businesses and agencies across Alberta, without whom many projects could never be completed.

In the next few pages we introduce four projects that highlight the importance of Community Partnership. In Vegreville, one very supportive local business joined with local and national agencies to help create jobs for the clients of the Vegreville Association for Living in Dignity (VALID). And so many partners were involved in the inception of the first Northern Alberta Youth Entrepreneur Camp for young people with disabilities that the list was, as the article states, “almost overwhelming.”

The other two projects we feature are truly groundbreaking. One involves using new technology to bring training to entrepreneurs in rural areas. And the other proves that sometimes innovation can be as simple as gathering people together in the same room for the first time – and that effectively sharing information can have a dramatic effect on a program’s outreach.

So please join us in recognizing and appreciating the amazing contributions of our Community Partners. By working together, we can help even more entrepreneurs reach for their dreams.



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# Community Partnership

## Information Sharing in St Paul – Smoky Lake

Ground-breaking meetings gathered together community stakeholders, and created a new level of awareness of the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program.

The Community Futures office in the St Paul – Smoky Lake Region of northeast Alberta has initiated an information sharing process with various stakeholders that can play a role in the success of the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program. The immediate result of these meetings has been a great improvement in the delivery of program information.

### Financial Institutions

The office began by hosting two meetings with all the financial institutions in the region, first in St Paul and then in Smoky Lake. The meetings were sponsored by the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program, and their main focus was to share information about the program and the services it delivers.

General Manager Paul Pelletier took the opportunity to inform



the financial institutions about the partnership potential available through the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program. The program is available to the financial institutions' clients, working in partnership with their local Community Futures office. This partnership is a key aspect of the program and contributes enormously to participants' success.

This meeting was the first time in the history of the region that all the financial institutions had gathered in one room at the same time. As a result of this valuable information sharing, clients have been referred to the financial institutions by the Community Futures office, and have been referred to Community Futures by the institutions that were in attendance.

### Front Line Service Providers

In another phase of its information sharing process,

in the fall of 2007 the Community Futures office in the St Paul – Smoky Lake Region was invited to make a presentation on the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program to a group of front line service providers from northeast Alberta. These service providers work directly with clients with disabilities, and were eager to obtain more insight into Community Futures' programs.

Again, General Manager Paul Pelletier focused on the potential available through the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program. He emphasized the advantages to clients of working in partnership with their local Community Futures office.

The presentations allowed front line staff to recognize the depth of the services available, and they are keen to have more meetings of this kind in future. There were some terrific questions posed and it quickly became evident what importance the providers place on the services offered to their clients. Obviously front line staff are in the best possible position to determine if any of their clients could benefit from the program.

*Continued on p. 15*

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# Community Partnership

## Northern Alberta Youth Entrepreneur Camp

Contributions from partners and sponsors came together to create a summer camp specifically for disabled youth in northern Alberta.

Last August saw 48 young people ages 13-15 gather together at Camp Warwa in north central Alberta to explore the possibilities of self-employment and to learn important workplace skills. The first of its kind for northern Alberta, the camp was specifically configured and planned to be accessible for young people with disabilities.

The sheer number of partners and sponsors that came to the table was almost overwhelming. They included ATB Financial, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, Northern Alberta Development Council, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Community Futures of Alberta Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program, Alberta Women Entrepreneurs, Royal Canadian Legion, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Peace Region



Economic Development Alliance, Business Development Bank of Canada, Laird Electric and Walmart.

If you are (or know of) a young person with a disability who would benefit from a week-long entrepreneurial experience, NAYEC is for you! This year's camp happens at Moose Lake in northeastern Alberta from August 17 to 23, 2008. ■

*To book a space, contact Community Futures Lloydminster and Region. Phone: (888) 875-5458; fax: (780) 875-8026; email: [comfutur@telusplanet.net](mailto:comfutur@telusplanet.net).*

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*Paul Fabreau, continued from p. 4* aware that it is the support of the EDP program and of the team he has built that has

pushed his business forward. "Without good employees, a leader is useless, and a business has potential to fail." Taking advantage of available resources and being aware of your market can assist entrepreneurial success rates.

### **How do you define success?**

"I've reached a level of success. I maintain a lifestyle for both my family and myself; however, I still am not quite there." Paul's goal is to franchise in different cities across Alberta and Saskatchewan and expand the services he offers. By increasing his client base, he hopes to have a consistent schedule, even through off-seasons; once he has achieved that level of success he plans to continue to grow. Success is ever changing. ■

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# Community Partnership

## Vegreville Association for Living in Dignity (VALID)

In Vegreville, a new business is ready to help you with all your needs in the area of snow removal, lawn maintenance, yard clean-up and garden and flower bed care.

Vegreville Association for Living in Dignity (VALID) is pleased to announce that Extreme Clean and Green is up and running! This enterprise was created by VALID and the people they provide support to. It was developed to answer a community need that also meets the interest and abilities of the individuals involved.

This project was made possible through collaboration and funding from Community Futures Elk Island Region, the Northeast Community Board for Persons with Disabilities, Community Futures Alberta Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program, Western Diversification, the Government of Canada and VALID.

Dennill's Agricentre (Vegreville) Ltd. was very generous in assisting the venture in



Wayne Antoniuk, Entrepreneur; Terry Seniuk, Supervisor; Harvey Maskowitz, Dennill's Agricentre

obtaining a great selection of equipment. Harvey Maskowitz, Equipment Sales Representative at Dennill's Agricentre, has offered ongoing support and sage advice from the inception of the project.

### Origins of the Project

Vegreville Association for Living in Dignity (VALID) in partnership with Community Futures Elk Island Region was interested in setting up an entrepreneurship program for the clients of VALID. VALID would have ownership of the business and equipment, and the clients would be involved in the day-to-day activities of the business. These would include marketing, customer service, review of profit/loss statements, and diversification of services.

### The Business Concept

The business started up this past winter with snow removal services – thanks to the snow blades and snow blowers which can be fitted to the company's lawn maintenance equipment. This means that all the purchased equipment can be used year-round.

With the arrival of spring the focus will shift to lawn maintenance, with about 5 VALID clients on a team and one VALID employee acting as supervisor/mentor on each job site. As some VALID clients are unable to work a full 8 hours a day, the clients can work on a rotating basis for the small jobs, and work in teams on the larger jobs.

By fall time, the community should be more aware of the

*Continued on p. 16*

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# Community Partnership

## Innovative Training Opportunity for Rural Entrepreneurs with Disabilities

Thanks to podcasting, entrepreneurs in rural areas will no longer have to travel to a Community Futures office in order to access training sessions.

The Community Futures offices of Grande Prairie & Region, Peace Country and West Yellowhead have partnered together to develop an innovative service geared towards Entrepreneurs with Disabilities in rural areas. Launching April 21, 2008, the Small Business Podcast website will contain business training materials that can be accessed from virtually anywhere, without having to travel to a Community Futures office.

Available in both High-Speed and Dial-Up, these 10-15 minute podcasts were developed with rural entrepreneurs in mind and cover a variety of business topics including, but not limited to: Marketing, Rural Business Trends and Opportunities, Growing your Business and Work/Life Balance. Podcasts



offer an alternate training option and are easily accessed online, or are downloadable to MP3 players for entrepreneurs on the go. This allows potential entrepreneurs easy access to valuable resources. The Small Business Podcast website ([www.podcastsforbusiness.ca](http://www.podcastsforbusiness.ca)) has other features including an "Ask the Expert" section, scripts of each podcasts for reference or for the hearing impaired, as well as resource pages with additional information on each topic.

This project was funded in part by Western Economic Diversification, the Community Futures Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, the Peace Region Economic Development Authority and the Grande

Alberta Economic Region. All research and writing was completed by Hammond Mediation and Consulting Group Inc. of Sherwood Park, AB, while the recording and editing was completed by New Harvest Media of Dawson Creek, BC. ■

*For more information on Small Business Podcasts, please visit our website at [www.podcastsforbusiness.ca](http://www.podcastsforbusiness.ca).*

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*Alex Rangen, continued from p. 10* guests at the entrepreneurship camp. He realizes the benefit of taking a chance. "Just be yourself, don't be afraid and try your best. You might surprise yourself and end up liking it and wishing you could come back the next year!"

Although faced with the challenge of his disability, Alex has left a legacy that is seen as an inspiration and testimony to achieving your goals while overcoming the odds. ■

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*Information Sharing, continued from p. 12*

The plan is to deliver the next series of meetings directly to prospective clients who may be ready to look into the possibility of starting their own businesses. ■

## Continued...

*Colleen Green, continued from p. 2*  
back by the odds or by fear; work towards a larger picture and prepare to put in the work required to achieve your vision.”

### **How do you define success?**

“Success is realizing what you believe in and taking small steps that will get you where you desire to be.” Colleen believes that it is important to continue to develop your services, to have the vision to expand your horizons and to use your passion to achieve results. Success should be just as much about the small achievements as the grand accomplishments. ■

*Graham and Cindy Norman, continued from p. 3*

Graham and Cindy continue to persevere. They would like to especially thank Community Futures Wood Buffalo for their help and support and for believing in them.

### **Advice for potential entrepreneurs**

Cindy has always been bothered by a comment that would occasionally get repeated to Graham: “if it wasn’t for bad luck you wouldn’t have any.” But focusing on the negative

doesn’t get you anywhere. “I don’t believe in luck,” she says. “I believe in providence.” Graham is definitely fortunate to be alive and the growth of this business is nothing short of a blessing. They look forward to seeing it reach its full potential. ■

*Walter Snowden, continued from p. 7*  
such as trampolines, heavy duty zippers, swather canvases, truck tarps and barbecue covers. Walter is truly a man of many talents.

### **Advice to potential entrepreneurs**

Walter believes it is important to take things “day by day” but also that you must always be focused on “giving good value to your customers by being close to your competitors in pricing. And, you must be honest.” Walter has expanded the services he provides by talking to his customers to find out what they need and then determining if and how he can meet their needs.

### **How do you define success?**

Walter has never shied away from hard work. When asked this question he responded with: “You know you are successful because you are busy working.” ■

*VALID, continued from p. 14*

new business and there will be increased demand for yard and garden clean up. With this higher demand more VALID clients can become involved, as the lawn maintenance will be on-going; another crew can be assigned to garden clean up, flower bed clean up, tree trimming, or eaves trough cleaning.

### **The Market**

With one third of the Vegreville population being over the age of 55, there is a high need for this business. The Vegreville Family & Community Support Services receives calls on a regular basis from seniors requesting lawn maintenance and snow removal services. The FCSS has agreed to refer these calls to the new VALID business.

### **The Opportunities**

After a couple of years of operation there will be the opportunity for VALID clients to develop repeat customers so they can each have their own customer base. They can then essentially have their own businesses with their own customers, while still being able to share the costs of equipment and advertising. ■

# Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Programs



## Support for Rural Entrepreneurs with Disabilities

This program was established to make it easier for entrepreneurs with disabilities to pursue their business goals and contribute to economic growth within their rural community.

This program offers business loans up to \$125,000, the terms of which are specifically tailored to address each individual entrepreneur's needs.

The loans received under this program can be used for:

- Starting or expanding a business
- Applying new technology to your business
- Upgrading facilities and equipment
- Developing marketing and promotions material
- Establishing working

capital for anticipated sales increases

*To contact your nearest Community Futures Organization refer to back cover.*

## Support for Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities

For Calgary and Edmonton service providers contact:

### MOMENTUM

16 – 2936 Radcliffe Drive SE  
Calgary, AB T2A 6M8  
Phone: (403) 272-9323  
Fax: (403) 235-4646  
info@momentum.org  
www.momentum.org

### DECSA

11515 – 71st Street  
Edmonton, AB T5B 1W1  
Phone: (780) 474-2500  
Fax: (780) 474-7765  
info@desca.com  
www.desca.com

# Resources

## Self-Employment Support

Alberta Women's Enterprise Initiative Association  
[www.aweia.ab.ca](http://www.aweia.ab.ca)  
Canada Business Service Centres  
[www.bsa.cbcs.org](http://www.bsa.cbcs.org)  
Community Futures Network of Alberta  
[www.cfna.ca](http://www.cfna.ca)  
Workink  
[www.workink.com](http://www.workink.com)  
Canadian Society for Social Development  
[www.cssd-web.org](http://www.cssd-web.org)

## Assistive Technology Support

Rehabtool  
[www.rehabtool.com](http://www.rehabtool.com)  
Aroga  
[www.aroga.com](http://www.aroga.com)

## Disability Support

Alberta Disability Forum  
[www.albertadisabilitiesforum.ca](http://www.albertadisabilitiesforum.ca)  
Enablelink  
[www.abilities.ca](http://www.abilities.ca)  
Business Abilities  
[www.businessabilities.ca](http://www.businessabilities.ca)  
Diversity World  
[www.diversityworld.com](http://www.diversityworld.com)

## Government Support

Western Economic Diversification  
[www.wd.gc.ca](http://www.wd.gc.ca)  
Persons with Disabilities-Online  
[www.pwd-online.ca](http://www.pwd-online.ca)

# Your abilities + our resources

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
BIG COUNTRY**  
181 North Railway Avenue E  
(Box 610)  
Drumheller, AB T0J 0Y0  
Phone: (403) 823-7703  
Fax: (403) 823-7753  
info@cfcdcdrumheller.com  
www.cfdcdrumheller.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
CAPITAL REGION**  
5004 51st Street (Box 188)  
Warburg, AB T0C 2T0  
Phone: (780) 848-2222 or  
1-888-848-2285  
Fax: (780) 848-2200  
businessdevelopment@wccfdc.com  
www.wccfdc.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
CENTRAL ALBERTA**  
5013 – 49th Avenue  
Red Deer, AB T4N 3X1  
Phone: (403) 342-2055  
Fax: (403) 347-6980  
kathy@rdcbd.com  
www.rdcbd.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
CENTRE WEST**  
6 – 205 First Street East  
Cochrane, AB T4C 1X6  
Phone: (403) 932-5220  
Fax: (403) 932-6824  
cfcwest@nucleus.com  
www.communityfuturescentrewest.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
CHINOOK**  
5324 48th Avenue  
Taber, AB T1G 1S2  
Phone: (403) 223-2984  
Fax: (403) 223-2096  
manager@biz-help.ca  
www.biz-help.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
CROWSNEST PASS**  
12501 20th Avenue (Box 818)  
Blairmore, AB T0K 0E0  
Phone: (403) 562-8858  
Fax: (403) 562-7252  
cnpbdc@telusplanet.net  
www.telusplanet.net/public/  
cnpbdc

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
EAST CENTRAL**  
5104 53rd Avenue  
Viking, AB T0B 4N0  
Phone: (780) 336-3497  
Fax: (780) 336-2266  
eccfdc@telus.net  
www.ecabiz.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
ELK ISLAND REGION**  
5019 51 Street (Box 547)  
Two Hills, AB T0B 4K0  
Phone: (780) 657-3512  
Fax: (780) 657-2359  
cfeir@telus.net  
www.cfelkisland.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
ENTRE-CORP BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT**  
202 – 556 4th Street South East  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 0K8  
Phone: (403) 528-2824  
Fax: (403) 527-3596  
bizinfo@entre-corp.com  
www.entre-corp.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
GRANDE PRAIRIE & REGION**  
104 – 9817 101st Avenue  
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 0X6  
Phone: (780) 814-5340  
Fax: (780) 532-5129  
office@cfogfp.com  
www.cfogfp.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
HIGHWOOD**  
101 – 120 4th Avenue SW  
(Box 5429)  
High River, AB T1V 1M5  
Phone: (403) 652-3700  
Fax: (403) 652-7022  
info@cfhighwood.net  
www.cfhighwood.net

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
LAC LA BICHE**  
10106 – 102 Avenue (Box 2188)  
Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0  
Phone: (780) 623-2662  
Fax: (780) 623-2671  
rcdc@telusplanet.net  
www.rcdc-merc.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
LAKELAND**  
201 – 5016 50th Avenue (Box 8114)  
Bonnyville, AB T9N 2J4  
Phone: (780) 826-3858  
Fax: (780) 826-7330  
lcdc@telusplanet.net  
www.lcdc.ab.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES LESSER  
SLAVE LAKE REGION**  
2.2 km East of Highway 88  
intersection (Box 2100)  
Slave Lake, AB T0G 2A0  
Phone: (780) 849-3232  
Fax: (780) 849-3360  
info@cf-lslr.ca  
www.lslldcorp.ab.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
LETHBRIDGE REGION**  
2626 South Parkside Drive  
Lethbridge, AB T1K 0C4  
Phone: (403) 320-6044  
Fax: (403) 327-8476  
info@cflethbridge.com  
www.cflethbridge.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
LLOYDMINSTER AND REGION**  
5 – 4010 50th Avenue  
Lloydminster, AB T9V 1B2  
Phone: (780) 875-5458  
Fax: (780) 875-8026  
comfutur@telusplanet.net  
www.lloydcfdc.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
NORTHWEST ALBERTA**  
100065 100th Street (Box 210)  
High Level, AB T0H 1Z0  
Phone: (780) 926-4233  
Fax: (780) 926-2162  
info@medc.ab.ca  
www.medc.ab.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
EAST PARKLAND**  
5020 50th Avenue (Box 250)  
Mirror, AB T0B 3C0  
Phone: (403) 788-2212  
Fax: (403) 788-2199  
info@eastparkland.com  
www.eastparkland.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
PEACE COUNTRY**  
9816 98th Avenue  
Peace River, AB T8S 1J5  
Phone: (780) 624-1161  
Fax: (780) 624-1308  
admin@peacecountry-cfdc.com  
www.peacecountry-cfdc.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
ALBERTA SOUTHWEST**  
659 Main Street (Box 1568)  
Pincher Creek, AB T0K 1W0  
Phone: (403) 627-3020  
Fax: (403) 627-3035  
swabdc@telusplanet.net  
www.swbizdev.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
ST. PAUL - SMOKY LAKE  
REGION**  
4802 50th Ave (Box 1484)  
St Paul, AB T0A 3A0  
Phone: (780) 645-5782  
Fax: (780) 645-1811  
admin@communityfuturespsl.ca  
www.communityfuturespsl.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
TAWATINAW REGION**  
10611 100th Avenue  
Westlock, AB T7P 2J4  
Phone: (780) 349-2992  
Fax: (780) 349-6542  
info@tcfdc.ab.ca  
www.tcfdc.ab.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
TREATY SEVEN**  
300 – 6011 1A Street S.W.  
Calgary, AB T2H 0G5  
Phone: (403) 251-9242 or  
1-800-691-6078  
Fax: (403) 251-9750  
treaty7@t7edc.com  
www.t7edc.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
WEST YELLOWHEAD**  
221 Pembina Avenue  
Hinton, AB T7V 2B3  
Phone: (780) 865-1224  
Fax: (780) 865-1227  
info@wycfdc.ab.ca  
www.wycfdc.ab.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
WILD ROSE**  
101 – 331 3rd Avenue (Box 2159)  
Strathmore, AB T1P 1K2  
Phone: (403) 934-6488 or  
1-888-881-9675  
Fax: (403) 934-6492  
wildrose@wildrose.ab.ca  
www.wildrose.ab.ca/edc

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
WOOD BUFFALO**  
102 – 9816 Hardin Street  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 4K3  
Phone: (780) 791-0330  
Fax: (780) 791-0086  
fmrbdc@altech.ab.ca  
www.fmrbdc.com

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
YELLOWHEAD EAST**  
5028 50th Avenue (Box 249)  
Sangudo, AB T0E 2A0  
Phone: (780) 785-2900 or  
1-800-556-0328  
Fax: (780) 785-3337  
yebdc@yebdc.ab.ca  
www.yebdc.ab.ca

**COMMUNITY FUTURES  
ALBERTA**  
115A 4th Avenue West (Box 184)  
Cochrane, AB T4C 1A5  
Phone: (403) 851-9995  
Fax: (403) 851-9905  
jon@cfna.ca  
www.cfna.ca