

CASE STUDY:

TIES 2 Work

Training in Essential Skills

In January 2009 the Saint John Learning Exchange and Vibrant Communities Saint John partnered with employers, government and educational institutions to support a new employer-specific training approach called TIES 2 Work.

TIES 2 Work is a three-year demonstration project funded by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL) as part of the WES program. It facilitates matches between employers and potential employees through 12 weeks of essential skills training including a three week job placement which results in employment.

TIES 2 Work is an alternative method for employers to use when recruiting new employees. Employers get reliable employees who are able to adapt to the workplace using the skills they obtained through this new training approach. Employers are integral to the success and longevity of this program and interest is continually building.

The innovative TIES 2 Work training approach has captured the interest of many partners in the Saint John community. One of the first employers to participate was Coast Tire & Auto Service, a tire and automotive business with 26 locations across the Maritimes. Shirley

Mitchell is the Human Resources Manager and an employer representative on the TIES 2 Work leadership team. Shirley said, "Much of the economy depends on our ability to safely move products by truck, and our industry has become more regulated



and complicated. New workers now require training and certification which they may not have anticipated, so getting and keeping good people has become more difficult. TIES 2 Work gives potential employees a clearer understanding of our requirements; they learn about our terminology and standards, and they get three weeks of work on the shop floor. All of that will result in workers who are better prepared and more likely to fit well into the job and our organization."

As one of the first participants, Melissa was hired by Coast Tire. She states, "As a single parent of two children I struggled to make ends meet. It was hard to find a good paying job with benefits. I participated in TIES 2 Work at the Learning Exchange, a new start for me. It gave me the skills and

connections to a job. I work at Coast Tire and Auto Service and love it. Although I work and my kids are in daycare, I don't feel so tied down and my outlook is totally different. TIES 2 Work gives you the essential skills to succeed." Melissa continued to succeed in her employment moving from a position as a tire technician to working with commercial accounts.

To date the program has had 19 employers and 50 clients participate. Participating employers have reported high levels of satisfaction in the program. Many are thrilled with the quality and enthusiasm of their new staff members.

"People are like diamonds in the rough; given the right opportunity, they will discover their capacity to learn and make a positive contribution."

The program offers a solution to the difficulties with finding the right people for particular jobs, and it provides the break that potential employees need to make a fresh start. As Coast Tire Manager Chris Veniot says, "People are like diamonds in the rough; given the right opportunity, they will discover their capacity to learn and make a positive contribution."