

BDC ABORIGINAL BANKING | ISSUE 16 | WINTER 2011

soar

MAGAZINE

CANDICE WARD

This is My Life

AARON RAE

Business on the Mind

ABORIGINAL
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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Aboriginal Banking
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WELCOME

In this issue of *Soar* we hear from young Aboriginal students who have persevered and are doing what they love to do.

Candice Ward has travelled across the world and back and can be found snapping shots for the *Calgary Sun*.

Ashley Julian can be found representing and advocating on behalf of Aboriginal youth at the office of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs.

Joachim St-Onge is studying to be an electrician and putting the skills he learned at E-Spirit to use.

Mindy Brooker overcame numerous challenges and is now doing what she loves and expressing her culture through her work.

Angel Ward worked for BDC throughout the summer of 2010, where she was a great addition to our Aboriginal Banking team, and is currently focusing on her studies.

Aaron Rae had the opportunity to be inspired by a vast array of business leaders at the World Indigenous Business Forum in New York and shares his experience.

Registrations are complete for E-Spirit 2011 and the project managers are preparing for the gathering and awards which take place in May 2011.

Keep up all the hard work with your business plans, videos, tradeshow booths and presentations and make sure to “bring your top game” to beautiful Moncton, New Brunswick in May!

Miigwich,

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THIS IS MY life

BY CANDICE WARD

Sometimes I can't believe this is my life. I get to do some of the most unbelievable things and would not even be able to make up some of the stories I have witnessed. Being a photojournalist has allowed me to live a life I couldn't have ever dreamed of.



After spending more than six years bartending after high school, I decided one day that there had to be more to my life than that. I loved my job but was not satisfied, and only I could change that. In one day I quit my job and booked a trip to Europe. Once I returned I started school at SAIT in the Journalism program.

I started school thinking I wanted to work in fashion, even though I barely know how to dress myself. But once I learned how to shoot sports, I threw that idea out of the window.

I spent half of my internship with Metro Calgary, where I learned a lot about newspapers and the rest of my internship in Australia. I worked at the West Australian in Perth and fell in love with newspapers. I shot one of my first major concerts there. Practically being on stage with Jack Johnson made it easy to fall in love with photojournalism.

In April 2008 I graduated from SAIT with a diploma in Journalism, with a major in photojournalism. I have been working as a freelance photographer and journalist since. It has not been easy. Not knowing if you can pay your rent the next month is always stressful, but nothing beats being your own boss.

Without the help of the Aboriginal community, I don't think I would be as successful as I am. I have received a lot of positive support from the community,

and also financial help with getting my education and with my business. I have worked for some great clients in the Aboriginal community, such as Treaty 7 Management Corp. and Pathways.

In May of last year I got a full-time freelance job with Metro Edmonton. I more than gladly uprooted my life in Calgary and made the move slightly north. It was an amazing learning experience, which opened the door for me at the Edmonton Sun where I worked as a full-time multimedia journalist, which included reporting, photography and video. The last year has taken my career down an unexpected path, but one I am more than happy to explore. Currently, I am back in Calgary and still freelancing for the Calgary Sun.

I never know what the day is going to hold for me, rappelling off a high-rise, shooting from the sidelines of an Eskimos game, standing against the stage to shoot acts like Green Day or AC/DC, or writing about the latest homicide.

In the future, I hope to work more closely with the Aboriginal community to create work and art that will leave a positive footprint in the rest of the world.

www.candiceward.ca



Energizing The Nations

Every year, BDC hosts the E-Spirit National Aboriginal Youth Business Plan Competition where we see a plethora of talented young adults bring their own unique ideas to the table.

Now, going into the 11th year of this tradition, we've seen thousands of students from all across Canada obtain the skills and knowledge they need to make critical choices in their lives.

Specifically, E-Spirit is designed to give them experience with regards to business skills and career paths. More than this, E-Spirit is intended to be an enjoyable experience for all involved, with awards and activities planned throughout the event. It affords these students the opportunity to work together towards a common goal. Furthermore, it includes a reflection on their past and their culture, with First Nations elders in attendance to pass along their wisdom.

We contacted one of our E-Spirit veterans to discuss the impact it had on his life. **Joachin St-Onge** participated in E-Spirit nearly six years ago, and was keen to discuss the experience. Joachin is of Montagnais descent from the Sept-Îles region, and studied in Quebec City at the Collège Technique Aviron to become an electrician.

His goal is to one day help his father and brother run their family business, Shetush Électrique, which is why his father encouraged him to participate in E-Spirit. He claims that the experience he gained from attending E-Spirit has given him a better idea of what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur. "You have to be prepared," he says, "not only to serve, but to understand. You really

have to understand the underlying needs of your clients." He also cautions young entrepreneurs not to get ahead of themselves. "Don't go too fast," he affirms, "make your way slowly, put aside some earnings, and just keep working hard."

And he's not afraid to take advice from his more experienced counterpart. "My father says a business is like a child, it takes time and care to develop it. I guess E-Spirit was my first step on that path."

Good advice for any aspiring entrepreneur!

ASHLEY JULIAN A VOICE FOR YOUTH

Sometimes balancing one's culture with the rigours and velocity of modern life can be somewhat challenging. In fact, it's a challenge that the youth of First Nations confront on a daily basis. Striking a balance between the contemporary world and one's culture is important, not only in establishing one's identity, but also in making life decisions.

Ashley Julian, a youth coordinator at the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC), spoke to us about that balance and her mission to help young people achieve success in both their careers and their personal lives.

"One of my major goals right now is helping youth get through a post-secondary education," she affirms. "I try to get them involved and get them thinking about post-secondary education, and just the importance of education in general."

In fact, one might say that Ashley herself is the epitome of how rewarding it can be to attain this balance.

Hailing from the Mi'kmaq First Nation community of Indian Brook in Nova Scotia, Ashley is involved in a myriad of groups and organizations designed to make life better for First Nations youth. She is currently studying Political Science and Sociology at Dalhousie University and she also serves as a representative on the Mi'kmaq Maliseet Atlantic Youth Council (MMAYC) where she acts as liaison for First Nations youth.



In January 2010, Ashley and MMAYC organized the "Youthlink Conference: Accessing Post-Secondary Education" conference in Moncton, New Brunswick. Based on Ashley's vision, the conference was designed to provide education opportunities to First Nations youth, create a network for young people to support each other, and provide a forum for post-secondary education and related topics.

In addition to this, Ashley holds a number of positions, including her recent election as the female Nova Scotia / Newfoundland representative on the Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council (AFN NYC), and in July 2010 she was elected as female co-chair for the Council. She also sits on a number of committees at her university, and is currently the Aboriginal Representative on the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), as well as an Executive Member of the Dalhousie Native Student Association (DNSA). She even took part in the opening ceremonies for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics as a fancy shawl dancer, along with 300 other Aboriginal youth.

It's interesting to note that all of Ashley's work and her involvement with youth stems from a very common pastime:

"It all began through hockey actually. I started playing hockey and baseball and that led me into coaching,

which paved the way for my involvement with kids in the community. And I was always interested in politics so I was involved in small youth councils, or just anything that I could get my hands on."

Throughout all of this, Ashley maintains that her ability to achieve a balanced lifestyle revolves around the traditional values of the Medicine Wheel. It allows her to balance her mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, while providing a strong foundation as she strives to give a voice to the young people she works with.

As for her future, Ashley maintains that she still has many lofty goals:

"My dream is to become the first female Assembly of First Nations National Chief. But my more immediate goals involve the creation of grassroots youth councils, so that the youth of these communities have a voice. I also want to promote a greater degree of organizational transparency, from the community level, to the regional level, all the way up to the national level. I want to make sure that the youth voice is being heard when it comes to decisions on legislation and policy."

It's safe to say that she's well on her way to achieving her goals, as well as improving the lives of First Nations youth all across the country.

WHERE I am

BY MINDY BROOKER



Sometimes I just have to take a step back — things are so overwhelming. I never thought I'd be where I am today or that I'd have my own business, but here I am.

I am Mindy Brooker of Winnipeg. I'm 30 years old, have two young daughters and I work with youth and women. Oh, and I make jewelry. My business is called Mindy's Jewellery.

I love what I do. I used to suffer from post partum and seasonal depression, but found that it went away when I was making my jewelry. I also love to show people how to make their own. It feels so good when someone says, "I want to learn to do that" and I can say "I can teach you."

My gift is to share with other people, to pass on what I have learned.

It hasn't always been easy. I grew up in foster care. It wasn't a very safe home. Throughout my childhood, teen and young adult years, I struggled to find where I fit in. I tried to hurt myself and even tried to take my own life. I had so many jobs - you name it, I did it.

I started experimenting with jewelry making in 2001. A friend taught me how to make hemp jewelry. I used to sit at home making it while my baby daughter was sleeping. It was quiet and it kept me busy. Then I'd sit out on a blanket in Winnipeg's Exchange District or on the lawn of the Legislative Building and try to sell what I'd made. I didn't sell a lot, but it was a start. I also worked as a consulting assistant for a private firm to help make ends meet.

There was a time when I thought I'd be an addict all my life. I spent some time in treatment in 2008 and when I got out, I made a promise to myself not to isolate myself anymore. I knew I needed the community and the support it offered. I started going to Ma Ma Wi Chi Itata Centre and Snowbird Lodge for weekly Aboriginal craft-making drop-in sessions.

I used to feel guilty not being a stay-at-home mom, but now realize that putting my daughters in daycare was a healthy choice for them and for me. My struggles with parenting and post partum depression started to go away. I began to understand that you can't give what you didn't get yourself.

One day when I was looking for more community support, I found Ka Ni Kanichihk. Did they ever help me! They had a Self-Employment Program for Aboriginal Women (SEPAW). I enrolled in October 2008. They taught us how to write a business plan, how to get your ideas going and ways to market your business. They were very supportive.

I graduated in June 2009 and have never really looked back. I want people to see me the way I see myself: professional, mature, intelligent, balanced and healthy spirited. It's my very own thing and I can do anything I want with it. I find that my skills keep evolving and that I come up with creative ideas all the time. You have to have a passion for what you do — and that's what makes it work for me. I am able to represent my culture through Aboriginal-inspired jewelry.

I am very busy! My jewelry is on consignment at two local stores. I am contacted regularly to be at community craft sales, pow wows, shows and conferences. I also do arts facilitation and have contracts with school divisions to give crafting workshops. I do public speaking to students, talking to them about the gifts they have and encouraging them to value and nurture these gifts. I do crafts sessions at Marymount, a social services agency that works with young people with similar backgrounds to mine. Being around the young people makes me feel better about my own past.

And while I am still learning the financial piece, I can support myself and my girls. Their dads are very supportive of what I do and always help with childcare.

In just a little bit of time, my life has changed so much. It's a process — you need to learn life skills, working out how to balance important and unimportant things. My career in jewelry making and teaching is the biggest reason I am where I am right now.





BY AARON RAE

On October 4, 2010 I departed Winnipeg with a youth delegation comprised of EIYGL members (Empowering Indigenous Youth in Governance and Leadership) en route to New York City to attend the 2010 World Business Forum and first annual World Indigenous Business Forum.

The first forum we attended was the 2010 World Business Forum which was held at Radio City Music Hall in downtown Manhattan from October 5-6. The forum boasts having the most brilliant minds in business delivering an unparalleled learning experience. The two day forum delivers and is very, very impressive.

Among the many intriguing speakers at the World Business Forum, two speakers stood out for me.

The first being Jack Welch, a renowned author, leader and educator in management. He was the former Chairman and CEO of General Electric, a company which grew extensively under his leadership. Fortune Magazine named him "Manager of the Century" in 2000. What made him stand out to me was his straightforward and frank nature. An important message was to "celebrate champions", which I agreed was incredibly important in business.

The second presenter that appealed to me was Renée Mauborgne, co-author of Blue Ocean Strategy. Her presentation revolved around creative marketing strategies to reach customers that would not normally buy your product/service and retain those customers who may soon be non-customers as well as probable customers. Through her case study and references to her book, Blue

Ocean Strategy, she gave the audience a lot to digest on ways they can develop creative marketing strategies to increase their market share.

The first annual World Indigenous Business Forum was held on October 7, 2010 and organized by the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute Inc. (ILDII). The speakers came from Canada, the United States, Peru, Guatemala, Columbia and Australia. It was such an amazing experience to be in the same room with such dignified Indigenous leaders from across the globe.

Just to name a few of the speakers Dr. Tom Calma (Australia), Dr. Alejandro Toledo (Peru), Jefferson Keel (US), Phil Fontaine (Canada) and Rigoberta Menchu (Guatemala).

Also notable, ILDII held a small reception of about 150 guests with guest speaker James Cameron. It was an unforgettable experience for me to meet the director of Avatar, Terminator 1 & 2, Aliens and Titanic. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience.

The 2011 World Business Forum and 2011 World Indigenous Business Forum are scheduled for next October in New York City.

www.ildii.ca
www.wbfny.com

INSPIRED TO THRIVE

BY ANGEL WARD



Wow! How can I sum up my experience with BDC this past summer of 2010? It has been amazing to be part of the Aboriginal Banking Unit along with my local Moncton branch, the people truly made my experience phenomenal. I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge, skills and most of all confidence in myself.

Currently I am studying at the University of New Brunswick in Bachelor of Business Administration, which I will complete in April 2012. Also I am a proud mother of a beautiful two-year old daughter, Kylie. It sounds overwhelming to be a Mom, full time student, and also working part time during the school year, but many of my co-workers learned that I thrive when being challenged. This may be why I was quickly recruited to assist with the E-Spirit project team. I joined BDC as an intern in April 2010, and by the next month I had been given the option to join the E-Spirit project team in Ottawa, and of course, eager as I am, I did not hesitate to take on this incredible opportunity. Little did I know how hard it was going to be to leave my daughter for a whole week, and after a brief emotional turmoil at the airport I was off to Ottawa.

Upon my arrival in Ottawa it was amazing and a bit overwhelming to see the big city, as I was raised in the small Mi'kmaq First Nation communities Metepenagiag and Gesgapegiag. When meeting the E-Spirit project team I had a sense of belonging from the minute I walked in the door and saw everyone's positive and enthusiastic energy. When speaking with Cheryl K. Watson about my role as the media relations assistant she informed me that I would be filling bigger shoes than originally planned, but she was very optimistic about my capabilities. After hearing this, my goal was to help make the 10th anniversary of E-Spirit a great success!

During the event it was empowering to see the young people from all across Canada participating in the trade show and presenting their businesses with great pride and enthusiasm. During an over-the-phone radio interview with a group of students it was emotional to hear their personal stories and comments about attending E-Spirit, and how it had inspired them in so many ways.



It is just like they say "you leave the best for last," and that is exactly what the Awards Gala entailed. After a week filled with hard work and dedication the E-Spirit participants anxiously awaited the Gala evening. It was awe-inspiring to see all of these beautiful First Nation participants from all across Canada in their finest attire and smiling from ear to ear. The event was perfection, from the performances, guest speakers, masters of ceremony, to the heart-warming words from both Cheryl K. Watson and Dianna Hudson.

The 10th anniversary of E-Spirit was a hit not only for the participants, but to the public as well. The gathering received a tremendous amount of media coverage and had been highlighted in several newspapers. When receiving this exciting news I realized I had accomplished my goal of helping the team make the E-Spirit 10th anniversary a success!

Although at first I questioned whether I could fill such a role in the E-Spirit gathering, I would like to thank the E-Spirit project team for the guidance, assurance, and ongoing support throughout the event. This experience not only gave me new skills to assist me in life, but most of all gave me the confidence to achieve any goals in my future career.

Last but not least, I would like to congratulate the E-Spirit participants for a job well done. The perseverance of these young people has been astonishing and very inspiring in many ways. These participants are role models in every sense, and I hope they inspire others as they have me.

O'wela'lin

E-SPIRIT CROSSWORD

FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS

Advertising	Equity	Loan	Operations	Research
Business Plan	Financials	Management	Product	Sales
Entrepreneur	Inventory	Marketing	Pricing	Staff

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BDC ABORIGINAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

As part of our national program, we are looking for 20 Aboriginal (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) students at the college and/or university level who are interested in a future career with BDC. The program is designed to provide business experience through training and mentorship. The objective will be to select candidates who may qualify for permanent employment as customer service officers or account managers with BDC once they have completed their education and are looking for full-time employment.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Aboriginal students who have completed at least one year of college or university and/or who are enrolled in a bachelor of commerce or business administration program.

To apply, send your resume and cover letter to Alyssa.reid@bdc.ca