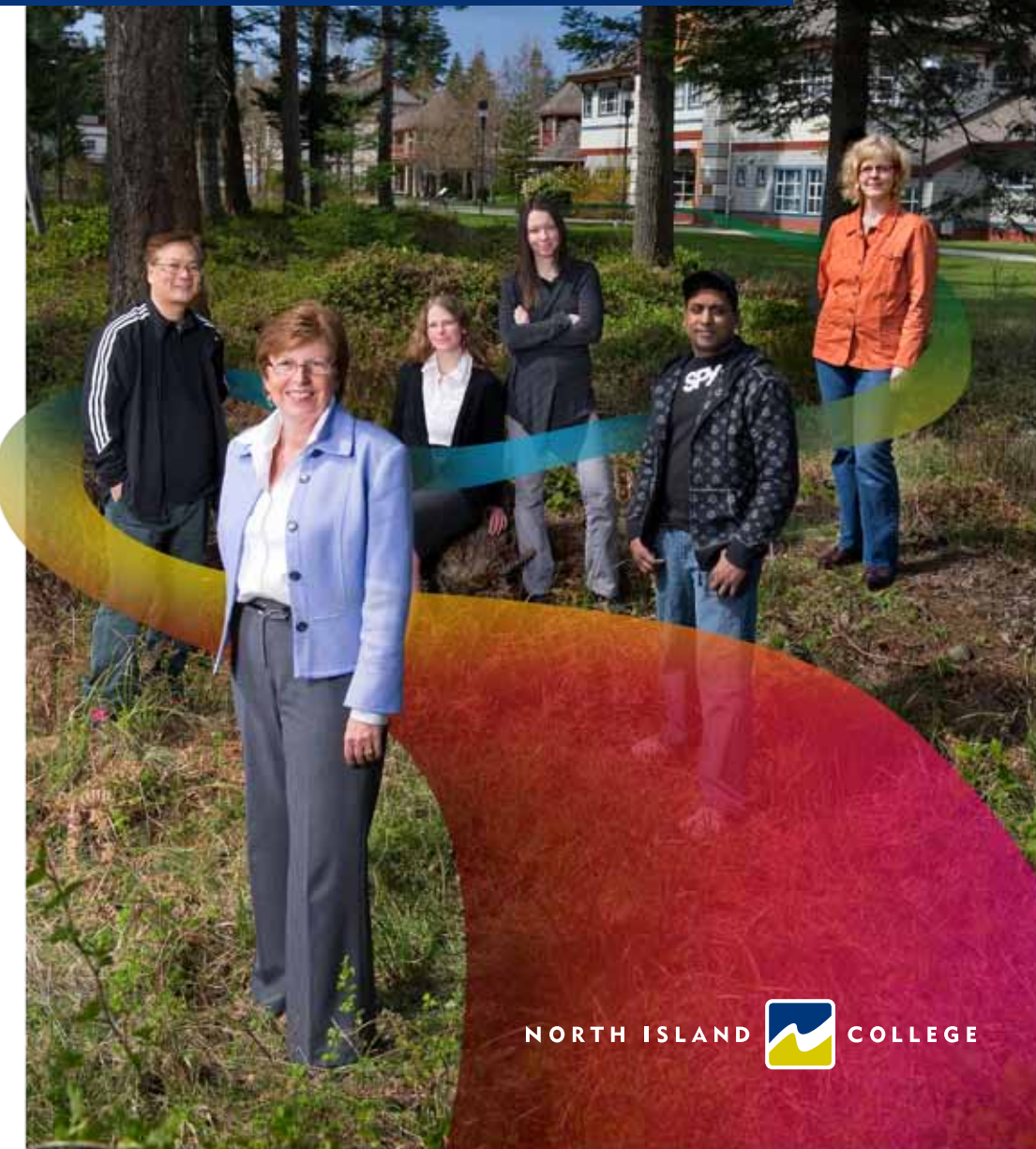


STUDENTS of the NORTH ISLAND

STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES / 2010



NORTH ISLAND



COLLEGE

**A message from
College President**

Dr Jan Lindsay



The story of the North Island is one of innovation and change, challenge and success. For 35 years, North Island College has been an integral part of this story.

NIC, as a public post-secondary institution, offers programs and courses that serve the diverse needs of citizens of the North Island. We aim to develop the knowledge and skills required to strengthen our communities and to foster leadership and growth. We work with community partners to create opportunities for rewarding careers for our students, to fulfill dreams, and to facilitate positive change.

We are proud of our students' stories and inspired by their voices and actions.

Together, we are working to make the North Island a spectacular place to learn, work, and live.

*Our stories are woven with the threads of our pathway through life: the people who inspire us, the places we experience, and the challenges and opportunities we encounter along the way. Each idea, dream, and goal pushes us to forge a new path, to write a new chapter. With these stories, we invite you to travel with our students on their journeys, as they share their answers to the question: **Where do you want to go?***

STORIES OF THE NORTH ISLAND

**Out and About
with Story Slamming**



Live story-telling events, hosted by NIC's English department at Zocalo Café & Gallery in Courtenay, allow writers to share their

work and connect with their audience in a vibrant, interactive way. The first slams in 2008 were so successful that the event continues every few months. University Studies student Telka Duxbury has taken home the \$100 first place prize twice, and her work, along with the other winners', is published in *The Island Word*.

**Science goes Global
with Web Associate Degrees**

Bella Coola sciences instructor Ron Evans and Albert Balbon, Supervisor for Distributed Learning, have coordinated an innovative initiative to bring science degrees to remote communities with an entirely online Associate of Science program featuring a remote web-based science laboratory. New on-line microscopes will allow distance students to access and use lab equipment, in real-time, over the Internet to complete their biology requirements.



FIND INFORMATION ON ALL OUR PROGRAMS AT **WWW.NIC.BC.CA**.

TO SPEAK WITH A STUDENT ADVISOR, CALL **1-800-715-0914**.

UPGRADING

Santa's Little Helpers



Visitors to Santa this holiday season were able to have their photos taken in a larger-than-life brick hearth, thanks to the efforts of the Port Alberni Carpentry Foundation students, who volunteered to transform a salvaged former entrance-way into a giant fireplace, complete with chimney.

Cooking their Way into our Hearts

Campbell River Culinary students and faculty warmed hearts this year with their participation in the Rotary International wheelchair fundraising events; two Culinary students who have received bursaries will travel to Argentina to help deliver the wheelchairs to local communities, and will live, share, and learn with local host families.

TRADES

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

The Universal Language

When NIC's Health Care Assistant students are studying the importance of understanding cultural differences, they go right to the source. Sang Beom (Dan) Hong and his fellow ESL students were invited to join the HCA students for an afternoon of tea and conversation planned by their hosts. Students from both classes benefitted from this exciting example of inter-cultural communication and participatory learning.



Access for Students with Disabilities

Students in the Latch-on for Literacy program in Port Alberni demonstrated their new abilities and brought their audience to tears with a powerful presentation to the College's senior leadership team, sharing what the program means to them. Designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities, Latch-On is a supportive literacy and technology program that helps students build effective speaking and listening skills.

Local Talent



Joyce Lindemulder, a graduate of the Emily Carr at North Island College Bachelor of Fine Arts program, made her hometown instructors proud

as the first NIC graduate accepted into the prestigious Emily Carr University's new Low Residency Master of Applied Arts, which allows students to research and practice in their own communities.

FINE ARTS

A New Club at NIC!

Human Service Worker students have taken a big step towards making student life a little more fun for everyone with NIC's second student club. Human Service Workers contribute to the social work field through a variety of care-giving and support roles in our community, and these students are well on their way. Lawrence Sami and founding President Conch Kunschuh lead the crew in their mandate to raise awareness of social issues and encourage the inclusion of diverse populations through community outreach, among many others.



Preschool Comes to College

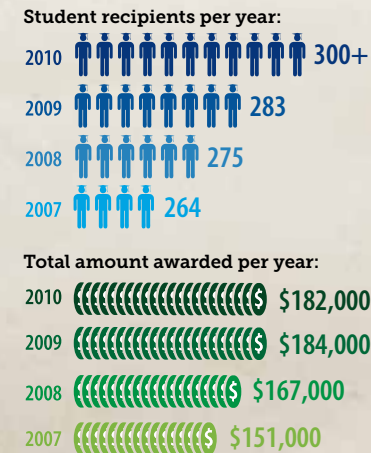


Twice a week in March and April, students in the Early Childhood Care & Education program at the Comox Valley campus transform their classroom into a preschool for the kids of the neighbouring Beaufort Children's Centre. The aspiring educators create suitable environments and stimulating learning programs, practicing their skills in real-life situations.

COMMUNITY CARE

The gift of education: a great investment in the future

Melissa Dekker is a full-time student, single mom, and recipient of the 2009 Lazo Women's Bursary. "Going back to school is challenging, but with support you can achieve your goals," she says. Every year, the NIC Foundation supports over 250 students like Melissa through scholarships and bursaries, helping students work towards a brighter future for themselves and their families. "NIC is a big part of what I am able to give back to my community."



To learn more about giving opportunities, visit www.nic.bc.ca/foundation

Inter-community Learning



Since completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, community health nurse Angela Bowers commutes to work in a float plane. Part of a new initiative in the small remote communities of Rivers and Kingcome Inlets, where health services are limited, her position was created through a unique partnership between the local Bands, NIC, and a charitable organization. "This program is responsive to needs identified by the communities," Angela says, and explains that NIC prepared her well for the cultural experience. "Students are encouraged to be facilitators of positive change. I am empowered to share my voice."

From creative projects in their own communities to awareness-raising efforts on a national scale, the innovation and initiative of NIC students and faculty demonstrates the impact of allowing a big idea to take flight.

Catching up with Tom Hill,

a featured student in 2009's Community Report

Practical Nursing student Tom Hill is looking forward to starting his new job in Campbell River when he graduates in May. "I worked at a small private long-term care facility during one of my practicum placements," he says, "and I'm starting there on a permanent basis once I'm certified!"

Tom and his classmates will write their national Licensed Practical Nurse exam in May, and then it's off and into the workforce. "We aren't all going to be able to walk out of class and into our dream job," he explains. "But there's a variety of plans in the class; there's a demand for practical nurses in a variety of roles. We'll all do fine."

Tom started at North Island College in September 2009 after TimberWest laid off 230 workers from their Campbell River mill. A single dad with two young daughters, Tom chose to stay and build a new career in his community instead of relocating to find work.



"I feel very lucky to have accomplished this."

"It has been very challenging, sure," he recounts. "But I have nothing but good things to say about my time at NIC. I'm very excited—nervously excited—to be starting the next phase of my life. I feel very lucky to have accomplished this."

Changing LIVES, honouring dreams

Marian Webster's grandmother always dreamed of becoming a nurse.

Nearly 75 years later, her granddaughter enrolled in North Island College's Practical Nursing certificate program at the Port Alberni campus, and honoured her grandmother's memory.

"It has been a **very long journey** to this moment," Marian recounts. "And it was a very big step for me to take."

Marian grew up in the tiny Nootka Sound community of Yuquot (Friendly Cove) until she involuntarily left her family for residential school in Tofino and Ucluelet. "I was accepted to study teaching at UBC when I graduated high school," she explains. "But I was **not interested in the big city**. It's a little scary."

"It has been a very long journey to this moment, and it was a very big step for me to take."

Instead Marian worked for many years in office administration, most recently at Kakawis Family Development Centre in Tofino. "From 1989 to 2006, work was my life," she laughs. "I never became a teacher, but in all my jobs, I have always been teaching people something. Nursing, to me, is an extension of that."

When Marian, mother and grandmother of three, decided to pursue a career in Nursing, she spent two years in Adult Education at NIC upgrading the five courses she needed to be accepted to



For more information on Nursing Programs, please visit www.nic.bc.ca/health

MARIAN WEBSTER / NIC NURSING STUDENT

the certificate program. This time helped her get used to studying again. "I had been out of school for quite some time, so it was difficult," she says. "But **I knew it was worth it**."

The **support and personal interaction** she experiences at NIC helps her feel connected to her school and her community. "I needed a watch one day for a final lab evaluation," she remembers. "I had left mine at home. Linda, who works in the office, lent me the one on her wrist!"

Marian keeps an **open mind** about where her path will take her. "I am trying to get as much experience as possible, and just let things happen," she smiles. "I know there will be **many opportunities** for me to have a rewarding career in health care in my community."

"I would like to make my grandmother proud."

BIG opportunities start with the **right** EDUCATION

PG 6



For students in Instructor Ruedi Pletscher's Aircraft Structures shop in Campbell River, the sound of rotors beating outside the door is just part of class.

"Robinson R44 helicopters land right over there," student Russel Walton says, gesturing outside the shop window. "Studying here, we get to experience all the different aspects of the aircraft industry. **Helicopters, float planes, forestry, freight and passenger flights, mechanics, technicians**—we're exposed to absolutely everything, so we have so many more opportunities."

Ruedi's hands-on approach to teaching, and his years of experience in the industry, give his students a great advantage over similar programs in the province. "Ruedi plays a major part in the **local industry**," Russel explains. "As a result, students get to do so many amazing things here that we wouldn't have access to in a different program. We see what we're learning to do in action, every day."

For Russel, born and raised in Port Alberni, the opportunity to live, study and eventually develop a rewarding **career in a North Island community** is very important. "I won't have to leave the Island to find a job," he says. "There are at least five companies in Campbell River alone who hire from our shop."

In high school, Russel met Ruedi at a career fair, and was inspired by the student work Ruedi showed him. But when he graduated, Russel was torn between NIC's program and a scholarship for Mechanical Engineering at BCIT in Vancouver. "I decided on BCIT, because I had this misunderstanding of NIC as a 'little school.'" But BCIT wasn't for Russel. "I'm a country boy," he shrugs. "It was overwhelming; I felt like I was only a number."

"Ruedi gives us the opportunity to experience so many amazing things... we get to see what we're learning to do in action, every day."

As for the education, "the program wasn't hands-on enough for me," he laughs. "I wanted to be in a shop, learning to play with the cool toys." He found the perfect blend of technical and practical training when he transferred to NIC, and learned that although **NIC may be small in numbers, it has a huge impact** on the economy and communities of the North Island.

"This program is so much more than I had hoped," Russel admits. "And I had hoped for a lot."



For more information on the Aircraft Structures Technician and other trades programs, please visit www.nic.bc.ca/trades

Building a **future** *in* our communities, *for* our communities

PG 8

"Part of living here is taking initiative," NIC University Studies student Sarah O'Shannessy explains, winding through tables at the bustling café in Manson's Landing on Cortes Island.



As she passes, every face raises to smile and greet her. "You have to make things happen."

She returns the smiles. "These are the folks in my seniors group," she says. "My jobs have really helped me **get to know my community.**"

"It means so much to be able to continue my work with these amazing community programs, while continuing my education."

When Sarah and her husband, a teacher at the Cortes Island School, moved to the island in 2008, Sarah worried she wouldn't be able to find work in the small community. But within the year, Sarah had started a youth program, and

was hired as Coordinator of both the Island Literacy Outreach with Literacy Now and the Seniors Helping Seniors programs.

She was introduced to NIC through her participation in Literacy Now, and has since become passionate about the **value of NIC in remote communities.** "We were discussing the importance of access to education and resources in the community," she remembers. "When I suddenly realized it was important for me, too."

Her work with the youth program sparked a desire to become a teacher. "Working with the kids is one of my favourite experiences," she smiles. "I love helping to **create opportunities through education.**" She had started taking the pre-requisites for a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree through distance courses when NIC announced its new BEd program partnership with VIU—and Sarah is thrilled about the opportunity.

"Remote communities need teachers, but people have to leave their communities for many years to be educated," she explains. "And the reality is that many don't come back." The new NIC/VIU program is designed for working people, and enables Sarah to stay in her community full-time, commuting to the Comox Valley and Nanaimo infrequently. "It means so much to be able to continue my work with these amazing community-building programs, while continuing my education at such a respected institution."

"I'm very excited NIC is continuing to develop more opportunities," she says happily. "With access to **education**, we can make anything happen. And that **benefits everyone.**"



For more information on University Studies courses, please visit www.nic.bc.ca/ut

REAL Education for Real Jobs

PG 10

NIC student Ferris Stirling greets a lot of familiar faces at his part-time job at HSBC in Campbell River. "The best part of this job is the community interaction," he says. "I love working with people. A lot of our customers are people I've known for years."

When Ferris decided to go back to school for retraining after 13 years working for TimberWest, he looked for a program that would lead to a **career close to home**. With finance one of the biggest growth industries in the region, he decided to apply for the Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Accounting at NIC, and started studying part-time in January 2009.

"It's important for me to know that what I'm learning will lead to a job that fills a need in my community."

"It's important for me to know that what I'm learning will lead to a job that fills a need in my community," he explains. "And at NIC, **all my classes are 100% relevant** to what I want to do for a living. I know I'm going to use every aspect of what I'm learning."

As part of the application process for his retraining funding, Ferris visited several bank managers in town to get a feel for his future career. What he found reinforced his goal of working in finance.



"When you're chasing resource work, you work where and when you're needed," he recalls. "With a degree in accounting, I'll have a **stable career** I can feel good about, where **I control my path**."

For Ferris, being able to study and work close to home has another benefit. "My 18-month old daughter likes to open my door when I'm studying, and play peek-a-boo," he says with a smile. "Not only do I spend time with my wife and daughter every day, but my education will lead to a lifetime of **better opportunities for my family**."

Ferris feels strongly about the importance of education being available locally. "There were 230 displaced forestry workers in Campbell River when the Mill closed," he says. "So the programs available at NIC have a **real value for our community**, by helping people think about their local opportunities."

"There's so much opportunity out there if you're willing to go for it."

For more information on Business Administration programs, please visit www.nic.bc.ca/business



FERRIS STIRLING / NIC BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENT / HSBC EMPLOYEE

So... where do you want to go?

Education can take you anywhere.

At North Island College, the possibilities are endless. Whatever your dream, on the Island or around the world, NIC offers a range of options to give you an inspiring start on any adventure. One smart choice opens the door to a world of opportunity—and at NIC, you have a lot to choose from.

Getting started is easier than you think. Student Advisors are available to help, every step of the way. Call today, and share your story.

1-800-715-0914

www.nic.bc.ca/studentadvisors

We're here. For you.

North Island College is a premier community and destination college, in a spectacular west-coast environment, that inspires and prepares students for success in a rapidly changing world.

North Island College is recognized as:

- a vibrant community of learners—embracing their goals and shaping their worlds,
- a gateway to education, work and life, a central force in improving the cultural and socio-economic well-being of the communities we serve, and
- a respectful steward of our unique natural setting.

Together we create a workplace that inspires personal growth and delivers results to our students, partners and citizens.

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