

Your Gifts are improving lives

Central City Foundation

has long recognized the challenge for many neighbours living in the inner-city who want to work; barriers such as poverty, homelessness or addiction often prevent people from reaching that goal. Central City Foundation donors are bridging that gap by supporting key community initiatives to create real employment opportunities.

MP Enterprises and Tradeworks Custom Products are two Downtown Eastside organizations that are leading the way in social enterprise projects. By providing in-house training and guidance as well as flexible, good-paying jobs, individuals are learning marketable skills in a business environment. "Our donors are transforming lives" Jennifer Johnstone, CCF President & CEO confirms and believes in the value of these non-profit social enterprises.

Creating jobs and opportunity

MP ENTERPRISES:

One Job at a Time



Don and Brian Postlewait (Executive Director) in front of the MP truck

While employed as a steelworker some years ago, a serious work-related accident shattered both of his ankles and left him temporarily in a wheelchair. Once he re-learned to walk, work was no longer a possibility and Don was left on disability. Too much idle time (as he put it) lead him to excessive drinking while living in the Downtown Eastside. He says he was in a rut; only existing, not living. Then his friend Peter, a cook at Mission Possible suggested that he consider volunteering and help others. Don agreed. Shortly after starting to volunteer, MP

Don is living life. He is a happy and grateful man.

Enterprises was launched and Don transferred to become one of the agency's first workers. That was two and half years ago. Today, Don is one of its greatest spokespersons.

In May 2009, Mission Possible launched MP Enterprises (MP), a non-profit social enterprise with the goal of creating flexible and supportive employment. MP offers a variety of property maintenance services that include power/steam washing, graffiti removal, cleaning of window and awnings, painting and soft landscaping. To remain competitive and grow, MP recognized the need to purchase an industrial steam cleaner. Thanks to Central City Foundation donors, a grant for \$15,000 was awarded to MP for the purchase of a steam cleaner. Calling CCF, the real pioneers of the community, Brian Postlewait, Executive Director, is grateful for the investment that CCF and its donors have afforded the program.

Work contracts continue to advance MP. Brian says this means more economic opportunity and more work for people who want to work. MP believes that individuals dealing with homeless and poverty need a chance to dream,

and think about how life could be better. People arrive at MP from a variety of backgrounds. They sometimes come from long periods of unemployment, a disability, stabilizing from mental illness or recovering from addiction. Brian is certain that people want to work as it gives them a sense of purpose, dignity and hope. Don wholeheartedly agrees with Brian and says he would have no idea what he would be doing if he wasn't getting up to go to work. Don adds work makes him feel alive, "MP has changed my whole life".

TRADEWORKS CUSTOM WOOD PRODUCTS: Good jobs for women in the inner city

There are two main barriers for women in the inner city struggling to find work. First is a lack of recent work experience and second is not having an employment reference. At Tradeworks Custom Wood Products (TCP), a women-centered non-profit enterprise, they are tackling these two barriers simultaneously by providing entry level employment and skills development. A division of Tradeworks Training Society, TCP receives no government funding and is self-supporting through the manufacture and sale of wood products. Kate Stewart, Executive Director, is quick to point out that TCP is not just a program; it is a social enterprise of women making real marketable quality products.

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