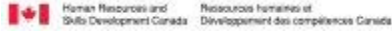


**Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada**



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Government of Canada Supports Youth Employment Program in Saskatchewan

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN--(Marketwire - Feb. 18, 2009) - At-risk Aboriginal youth facing barriers to employment are getting valuable job-preparation training thanks to the Government of Canada's investment in a local employment program. Mr. Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin, made the announcement today on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

"In today's environment, it is more important than ever that youth develop the skills to help them participate and succeed in the job market," said Mr. Vellacott. "By working with our provincial and community partners to support this project, we are helping at-risk young Canadians gain the skills, knowledge and work experience they need to reach their potential."

The Generations Ahead Family Learning Centre, through its Work Preparation Project, will help six at-risk Aboriginal youth in the Rosthern area develop life and job skills to ease the transition to work or to return to school. This project will receive over \$37,000 in funding through the federal Youth Employment Strategy's Skills Link program.

"Our on-site and funding partnerships with North West Regional College, the Rosthern Employment Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Skills Link program, CanSask, the Prairie Spirit School Division and the Town of Rosthern, as well as a new partnership with the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network and many close ties with the Aboriginal community, make Generations Ahead an ideal resource for serving the local youth and community of Rosthern," said Ms. Donna Lerat, Executive Director of Generations Ahead Family Learning Centre Inc.

Skills Link is part of the Government of Canada's strategy to create the best-educated, most-skilled and most flexible work force in the world. The Government underscored this commitment in January when it introduced Canada's Economic Action Plan. A key component of the Plan is to create more and better opportunities for Canadian workers through skills development.

"We are delighted to partner with the Government of Canada to assist more First Nations and Metis youth," Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Minister Rob Norris said. "By gaining valuable knowledge and skills, these young people will be well positioned to contribute to and benefit from the economic growth underway in our province."

The federal government works in partnership with the provinces and territories and other stakeholders to ensure that Canadians get the training, skills and opportunities they need to participate in the work force and contribute to the quality of life in their communities.

The Skills Link program is delivered by Service Canada, which provides one-stop personalized services for Government of Canada programs, services and benefits. For more information about this program, call 1-800-O-Canada, go online at servicecanada.gc.ca or visit your local Service Canada Centre.

This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

BACKGROUNDER

Established in 2004, the Generations Ahead Family Learning Centre is a non-profit organization that uses a cross-cultural approach to meet the needs of community members in the Rosthern area. It provides a multigenerational, cross-cultural learning centre where individuals and families can come together to learn in an environment that instills the values of inclusion, and a strong sense of community.

Between January 30, 2009, and May 8, 2009, the Centre's Work Preparation Project will offer eight weeks of group-based employability skills workshops and six weeks of work experience to six at-risk Aboriginal youth in the Rosthern area. Workshops will include core life skills, career exploration, portfolio development, job search skills and career maintenance.

As part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, the Skills Link program is one of three Government of Canada programs that help young Canadians facing employment barriers obtain career information, develop skills, gain work experience, find good jobs and stay employed.

Skills Link focuses on helping youth facing employment barriers, such as single parents, Aboriginal youth, young persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, youth living in rural and remote areas and high school drop-outs. It offers a client-centred approach based on assessing an individual's specific needs. The program helps youth develop basic and advanced employment skills. Eligible participants between 15 and 30 years of age-who are not receiving Employment Insurance benefits-are assisted through a coordinated approach, offering longer-term supports and services that can help them find and keep a job.

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