

## **Mentoring Program Launches - A Great Success!**

The new Women's Enterprise Centre mentoring program has generated much interest, both around the province and beyond.

"Women's Enterprise Centre carried out extensive research into issues that women face when transitioning to self-employment. We discovered that while there are many mentoring programs for entrepreneurs once they've been in business for a few years, no one was helping women entrepreneurs survive the first two critical years of business... until now!" said Laurel Douglas at the Kelowna Mentoring Program Launch, held April 17th.

Women entrepreneurs all over the province are ecstatic about being involved in our Mentoring Program. Being accepted into the program is "kind of like winning the lottery!" exclaimed a new participant upon being notified that she'd been accepted into the program. The following paragraphs are an example of some of the feedback we've received from the participants of the newly-formed Peer Mentoring Groups around the province:

"I work out of my home, which can be an isolating thing, and this is an amazing way to meet other women entrepreneurs so we can compare and contrast our business issues. I'm just excited by the number of women in our community who are running their own businesses!"

*Sarah Zimmerman, saz communications - Terrace*

"It is so refreshing to be able to talk with other new entrepreneurs about concerns and triumphs in business because there are few other people who can understand. It's also great that we can have an interchange of ideas."

*Florence Amundson, Mystic Dreams - Kamloops*

"The challenges of running my own business, which I've never done before, are greater than I ever imagined. This group is something that I need so badly to help me and guide me to become a successful business in Whistler. Any knowledge that Sue Adams can pass on is priceless."

*Keri Earnshaw, Whistler Therapeutics Inc. - Whistler*

"The *[facilitator]* is warm, understanding, encouraging and skilled. The co-participants are smart and lively and fun. Although I'm still convinced I have implemented about every option out there, the first session triggered surprising shifts in my mind and heart, making room for me to start moving in new directions. I'm excited about what is going to come out of this process."



To meet the needs of women who have been in business for less than two years, Women's Enterprise Centre has designed a 3-stage mentoring program, beginning with Peer Mentoring Groups, which have been launched throughout the province this spring. With an anticipated launch date of September, 2007, Women's Enterprise Centre will offer one-to-one mentoring for women around BC. The three stages involve:

1. Peer Mentoring Groups being launched in Terrace, Kamloops, Whistler, Kelowna and Cranbrook in spring 2007, led by local volunteer facilitators.
2. One-on-One Mentoring Program, which matches mentors and mentees throughout the province, being launched in fall 2007.
3. Mentor Advisory Forums, starting in winter 2007. A panel of mentors from around the province will address in a teleconference format the most common topics of concern to women which have arisen through the peer mentoring groups and the one-to-one program.

While there are a wide range of mentoring programs available, the priority for this program will be given to women outside Vancouver and the Capital region, where mentoring programs are not readily available.

If you are a woman in the first two years of business and would like to apply to participate in our mentoring program, please go to the [mentoring section](#) of our website. Visit us online at [www.womensenterprise.ca](http://www.womensenterprise.ca) or call 1.800.643.7014. Women's Enterprise Centre serves women around BC from its offices in Kelowna, Vancouver and Victoria.

Financial support for our Mentoring Programs has been provided the BC Ministry of Community Services. Women's Enterprise Centre is an initiative of Western Economic Diversification Canada.