

BC's Northwest region: another hotbed of women entrepreneurs

More than 65 women from Prince Rupert to Telkwa and from Kitimat to Terrace met to network, learn and share their business successes, challenges and strategies at the Celebration of Northwest BC Women Entrepreneurs held on May 18, 2006 in Terrace, BC.

Five successful business women were the guest storytellers in two workshops: Going Solo, a Workshop for Aspiring Entrepreneurs and; Moving Up! Strategies for Growing your business, while three others joined in to share their experiences in the Business Unplugged session.

"The Terrace Chamber of Commerce put together a great group of volunteers and helped us find local women whose business stories really enhanced the workshops," said Brenda Tournier, Manager of Skills Development.

"We had an incredible variety of women business owners including representatives from a construction company, a medi-spa, a bookstore, a photographic studio and two retailers that sold sporting gear and gift baskets. Each one of them shared their triumphs, their challenges and even some of their business secrets with the participants," she said.

The day-long celebration kicked off with an inspirational opening address by Stephanie Forsyth, President of Northwest Community College. A former entrepreneur turned academic, Stephanie calls herself an 'intrapreneur', a person with entrepreneurial ideas who works inside a corporation.

At lunch, Colleen Nyce, the Manager of Corporate Affairs and Community Relations for Northern BC shared her three keys to success – which included volunteering time for your community, finding time for yourself and continuing your education.

During the peer mentoring program in the last part of the day, the women worked diligently on one of their table-mate's business issues and by the end of the day, that woman walked away with a plan to implement the ideas her table-mates suggested. For some of the women this plan will make a huge difference in their business.

This Celebration event is the last in a series of events held in 11 communities around the province however judging by the response in each of the communities the celebration of women entrepreneurs is really just starting.

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