



“Stopping Poverty Through Career Education”

**Executive Director’s Report
2005-2006**

They year of 2005-2006 proved to be a successful one for Career Trek. A significant contribution by the Province of Manitoba allowed Career Trek to expand both its capacity and focus, while maintaining the quality of its programming.

Phase One

Staffing

Stable funding provided Career Trek with the opportunity to increase its full-time staff by one. As a result, a position was created for dedicated Program Manager position. This allowed for a marked improvement in curriculum, staff training and development, as well as communication with schools and families.

Career Trek also achieved another “first” with the hiring of the year’s Campus Coordinators. For the first time in Career Trek’s 10-year history, all four of our Campus Coordinator positions were filled by Career Trek graduates.

Career Trek continues to provide part-time employment for students enrolled in post-secondary study. This past year saw Career Trek provide meaningful employment for at least 60 young people. Many of these were Career Trek graduates. In fact, Career Trek is now facing a situation where the number of Career Trek graduates seeking to work for the program has exceeded the number of available spots.

Program Upgrades and Expansions

Career Trek was please to welcome William Whyte School back to the program after its absence.

Career Trek was delighted to add another Faculty to its program at the University of Manitoba. This year marked the successful introduction of the Faculty of Agriculture. Career Trek would like to acknowledge the support of the Dean, Dr Michael Trevan, and all of his staff for making their introductory year a success.

Program Outcomes

This year, Career Trek achieved a very respectable 88% graduation rate this past year. This means that 220 young people, and their families, were able to *experience* 80 careers in 17 different fields. As well, participants were able to familiarize themselves with the City’s three largest post-secondary options.

Career Trek continues to strive meet the needs of Aboriginal People. This past year saw fully 32% of the program participants self-identify as being of Aboriginal ancestry. While the graduation rate of these participants was lower than mainstream participants and last year’s Aboriginal participants, these young people and their families still finished with a 72% graduation rate.

Skownan First Nation

2005-2006 marked the second year of the “Apinochek Pasaquok (Children Rising)”. The year was marked by a number of major project breakthroughs. These included:

- Elder Jules Lavallee agreeing to work with both the project participants and the community of Skownan
- As a significant number of project participants do not complete homework at home, it stands to reason that many of these students are behind academically. In order to help address this situation, a Study Club was established to assist students in their academics. The Club was operated at lunchtime twice per week and supervised by local community members. Participation was open to all students in the school. Career Trek students who did not attend Study Club at least once per week were ineligible to participant in the trips to Winnipeg.

- Fourteen students, on the basis of attendance at school and Study Club, earned a summer trip to Winnipeg. Twelve students were able to experience living in residence at the University of Manitoba while attending Min-University, while the other two participants were billeted with relatives while attending a video-making camp through the Women in Media Foundation.

- Three participants were able to spend the year with Darryl Nepinak, an Aboriginal movie producer//director learning the art of video-making.

- A three-day camp in Skownan that was open to the community arts-based, the camp allowed community participants to spend two days working in the field of theatre and/or one day in improvisational comedy.

Project Outcomes

As part of the long-term planning of the project, expectations of participants and their families were increased. Determined on a monthly basis, participants had to maintain an attendance level of 85% in school, as well as attending study club once per week (minimum). These standards resulted in the loss of two participants for the year as well as several students on an occasional basis, but overall were successful in motivating the students and their families to maintain regular attendance. As well, previously excluded students were allowed to vie for those openings that were available. This resulted in many other students improving their attendance in order to participant in the project.

Challenges

When this project was originally developed and implemented, there were concerns stated by many that the project was “overly ambitious”, especially given our organization’s lack of experience working in reserve communities. As it has turned out, the challenges presented by the project to date have been the opposite of what we were told to expect. The project has been strongly embraced by many community members and in fact, so strongly that the project, given its current staffing and resource base, is unable to keep up with the pace at which participants are growing. This means that during the past year, there were opportunities to accomplish more than was done. Proper resourcing is critical to our continued progress. Otherwise participants will be come unchallenged, stagnate and lose their motivation.

Phase 2

Building on last year’s successful pilots, Phase 2 was expanded to six projects this year; (two) sport event management projects, Aerospace, Radiation Therapy, Theatre and Engineering.

Project Outcomes

- A graduation rate of 83%
- Tremendous personal growth occurred, with participants clearly becoming more mature over the course of the project
- Seven of the nine graduates are returning this coming year as Junior Staff.
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- Theatre participants were also able to participate in Career Trek’s Improv comedy club fundraiser
- Outstanding reviews of the experience from participants and parents

New Projects

As always, Career Trek strives develop the opportunity to spread its programming to as many Manitoban's as possible. To this end, a number of initiatives were undertaken last year.

One of the trips to Winnipeg involved programming at the Health Sciences Centre. Working in conjunction with the W.R.H.A., Career Trek was able to allow participants of the Apinocheck Pasaquok Project the opportunity to experience select medical careers. This went very well for a new site.

Negotiations were completed to start a funding search for a pilot project that is to run in Brandon. The project would involve Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College, as well as select school divisions and identified Aboriginal communities.

The most significant undertaking of this past year was the development and hosting of the Lets Get to Work! Forum. This unique event, designed to start a process for developing human potential for the Province of Manitoba. Based on feedback received, the Forum was successful in meeting all of its target goals:

- Raising the profile of our organization
- Moving the career development agenda ahead in Manitoba
- Developing a revenue stream for our organization

As a result of a partnership that was formed with the Canadian Scholarship Trust Foundation, five, \$1000 R.E.S.P. accounts were set up for five lucky Career Trek families. Career Trek is currently negotiating with the C.S.T.F. to make this a permanent arrangement.

Recognition of Accomplishments

Career Trek continues to be recognized both provincially and nationally for its work. Requests have been honoured for presentations to organizations, school divisions, post-secondary departments and faculties, and classrooms. As well, Career Trek presented at numerous conferences, both locally and nationally. Career Trek was also honored to be part of the Premier's delegation that met with its counterparts in Ottawa to discuss the state of post-secondary education in Canada.

Sustainability

Career Trek continues to strive to operate its programming in the most cost-effective manner while simultaneously doing everything it can to pursue additional funding sources. To this end, a number of initiatives, in addition to those previously mentioned in the report, were undertaken. With the support of Healthy Child Manitoba, Career Trek developed its first display unit, which was used to promote Career Trek at numerous conferences.

A former employee has contacted Career Trek wishing to set up a memorial scholarship fund in her Uncle's name. The fund, will still in its developmental stages, will establish an R.E.S.P. account for a fortunate recipient.

Career Trek once again successfully held its annual fundraiser (improv comedy night).

Donations to Career Trek, despite still not possessing an organized campaign, continue to grow. This year, a donation for \$3200 was received from the Engineering Society of the University of Manitoba.

Countless meetings were held with potential partners and funders. These meetings resulted in funding being gained from such sources as Indian And Northern Affairs Canada, The Thomas Sill Foundation and the Manitoba Community Services Council.