

THE FLOWER CART GROUP NEWSLETTER

work with purpose

Winter 2019

Supported Employment Services: a new piece of the PIE



The Flower Cart Group Executive Director Jeff Kelly, 2019 Biggs Award winner Rachel Durno-Allen, and Family 1st Medical General Manager Kimberley Monette appreciate the significance of Supported Employment Services
—photo by Kirk Starratt

For many years The Flower Cart Group directly supported job seekers in Kings County through its Partners In Employment (PIE) program. It was a very successful program that partnered workers with employers for work site visits, interviews, training, and employment. The program also focused heavily on providing job readiness training to job candidates.

Over the years the program has evolved from direct client intakes to referrals from other community agencies. We still provide important links to employers, job readiness training, and support for clients at work, but the focus has shifted squarely to supported employment.

In 2020, the PIE program will rebrand as Supported Employment Services (SES).



Rachel filming a promo video for the SES rebrand.

Services for job candidates include employment counseling, career exploration and decision making, referrals to training and other services in the community, referrals to jobs and job search support, job placement, initial on-the-job orientation, training and support, employment maintenance, and more.

For more information on SES please contact the Supported Employment Specialist, Gary Roop, at 902-681-2614, or ses@flowercart.ca.





"It was an amazing experience and I'm excited to see what we can do when the forum comes to Halifax in 2020."

-Shelley Hopkins



A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE



Shelley Hopkins represented The Flower Cart Group at the 2019 Social Enterprise World Forum in Ethiopia. Next year the forum will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Thanks in large part to a bursary from Social Enterprise Nova Scotia, Shelley Hopkins, the Department Head of What's Cooking? Commercial Kitchen, was able to attend the 2019 Social Enterprise World Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She has graciously shared her impression of the city and the conference.

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is about four times larger than Halifax, Nova Scotia. There is a lot of air pollution and the odor of Frankincense drifts through lobbies as the coffee ceremonies take place. It's a bustling city - there is construction happening everywhere. Scaffolding is made of bamboo and you don't see safety harnesses on people even as they build high above the street. There are few stop lights and no assigned lanes so driving is a challenge for visitors.

Butcher shops feature the carcasses of animals hanging in the windows, but there are also many vegan and vegetarian options. Security is front of mind; armed men are scattered throughout the streets, looking intimidating and holding machine guns. There is a lot of poverty both in the city and rural areas and many places do not have running water. People walk to their homes with large water cans that are filled from a communal well. Mountain ranges dot the countryside with narrow roads that have animals roaming freely.

One of the social enterprises highlighted at the conference was in support of women who were hearing impaired. Recycling is big business in Africa and this organization makes products out of recycled paper, such as journals and bags. The name tags for conference attendees were made by this social enterprise. Another social enterprise owned ambulances and trained people to be either attendants or mechanics. The ambulance attendants assist people in medical need and the mechanics work on the ambulances as well as other vehicles that are broken down on the side of the road.



The 2019 SEWF was the first such conference held in a developing economy. A large focus was on gender equality and the increasing role of women in social enterprise.



Halifax, Nova Scotia will host the Social Enterprise World Forum in 2020. At the end of this year's forum a contingent of Canadian attendees came on stage during the closing ceremonies to welcome the world to Canada next year.

One message made clear during the conference was that the types of social enterprises vary greatly throughout the world, but many of the main concepts that make them successful are the same: Items must be sold on their own merits first, and the social impact comes second. For example, if you are selling granola bars, they will not sell if people don't think they taste good, regardless of who it benefits. Shelley learned that social enterprises "speak to the heart and feed the mind."

Likewise, the potential downfalls to social enterprises are very similar throughout the world. Social enterprises need to negotiate all the rules, regulations, and costs associated with running a business, all while re-investing into the community. Scaling-up or building a social enterprise is essential, but also challenging. The right partnerships are crucial, and so is timing.

Social enterprise needs to be driven by people who recognize and value the social impacts of the work, but also have business-savvy people who see the numbers and know the realities of operating a business. Rushing into a scaling up project can cause a successful social enterprise to fall apart.

Social enterprises often hire people who have barriers to employment. Employees must show commitment to the project. Skills can often be taught, but real commitment is something people must have to be successful in a social enterprise. It is essential that work – however it is defined – is empowering to those who do it and not minimized. People with varying abilities have proven themselves to be effective and dependable in the work place. These qualities of employees can be highlighted to the community at large who support the social enterprises.

The overall message that Shelley brought away from the conference was that investment in people is happening all around the world. Globally, businesses are showing that they can be profitable while making positive social impacts. Social enterprises are experts at using the resources at hand and mentoring people in the community. Shelley is excited to share her enthusiasm for this conference as the next Social Enterprise World Forum will be held in Halifax in 2020. This will be a wonderful opportunity to showcase The Flower Cart Group and how we thrive in our own social enterprises.



What do you do with a Drunken Sailor?



Find these recipes at www.drunkensailor.ca



WHAT'S COOKING?

COMMERCIAL KITCHEN & CO-PACKING SERVICES

The donair is an exclusively Atlantic Canadian treat, and now you can enjoy the taste of Halifax donairs in your kitchen with Drunken Sailor Donair Spice.

Drunken Sailor Donair Spice is mixed and packaged by the What's Cooking? team and it's proven to be a delicious, versatile product used in dips, nachos, meatballs, and more. So, what do you do with a Drunker Sailor?