

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SYMPOSIUM: BREAKING BARRIERS, EMPOWERING YOUTH & UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Hosted by: JHSB's Employment Pathways Program



Friday March 15, 2024
10am - 3pm

Canada

EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO

Ontario



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Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario

OUR FUNDERS

We would like to thank the two main funders of the Employment Pathways Program:

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RBC Future Launch

Our works and this symposium would not be possible without your support.
We are extremely grateful!

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

15.03.2024 | 10:00AM-3:00PM

10:00am	Welcome & Land Acknowledgments
10:10am	Setting the Context: Selasie Ocloo & Alex Medeiros
10.15am	What is the Employment Pathways Program?
10:20am	Speaker Emily O'Brien: Founder & Creative Director of Comeback Snacks
10:50am	Speaker Dakota Jackson: JHSB Youth Peer Mentor
11:10am	Speaker Nick: My Employment Pathway Barriers
11:25am	Panel: Community-Based Employment Supports
12:00pm	BREAK - Colleen Kamps Video
12:20pm	Speaker Aileen Simon: Fair Chance Coalition
12:50pm	Speaker Bridget Purdy: Food for Futures
1:20pm	Panel: Local Employers
1:50pm	BREAK
2:00pm	Interest Groups
2:30pm	Next Steps
2:45pm	Wrap Up & Evaluation
3:00pm	Thank you!

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

10:00am - Welcome

Land Acknowledgment to be given by Bridget Purdy.

Opening remarks to be delivered by John Howard Society of Belleville's Executive Director Jennifer Cormier. Theresa Bailey will introduce the Employment Pathways team and will help us understand how the day will run!

10:10am - What is the Employment Pathways Program?

Why and how we are able to do what we do in our community. Let's take a closer look at the Youth Employment Pathways Program.

10:15am - Setting the Context for our Work

Selasie Ocloo, a representative from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, will explain how the Skills Development Fund provides support for our Employment Pathways program at the John Howard Society of Belleville.

Alex Medeiros from our local Royal Bank of Canada branch, will take us through how they support programs like our Employment Pathways Program.

10:20am - Speaker: Emily O'Brien

After getting mixed up with the wrong crowd and the wrong substances, Emily made the mistake of attempting to import narcotics into Canada. She was sentenced to 4 years in prison, where she started Comeback Snacks with the purpose of creating a social enterprise that could also provide reintegration opportunities for the formerly incarcerated. Emily is a strong advocate for fair treatment in society after individuals have served their time.

10:50am - Speaker: Dakota Jackson, Youth Peer Mentor

As a Youth Peer Mentor at the John Howard Society of Belleville, Dakota will help us understand her role, why we need youth at the table, and what it really means to engage with youth in our community.

11:10am - Speaker: Nick, A Youth's Perspective:

Nick is a former client with the Youth Employment Pathway program. He is a mature student, completing his third and final year of a Computer Security & Investigation college program. He is currently working toward his field placement in the Computer Security field. He also holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

11:25am - Panel: Community-Based Employment Supports

How other local organizations are working together to ensure barriered youth are supported on their employment pathways. This panel includes:

- Christine Durant (Inspire Program - Prince Edward Learning Centre)
- Mike Hewitt (Elevate Plus - Loyalist College)
- Jason Powell (WorkPath Program - JHS Hamilton)

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

12:00pm - LUNCH BREAK

During lunch break, we will show Colleen Kamps video on Understanding Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

12:20pm - Speaker: Aileen Simon

Fair Chances Coalition Initiative that champions fair hiring practices and breaking down barriers for individuals with past criminal involvement.

12:50pm - Speaker: Bridget Purdy

The Food for Futures program strives to create hands-on learning opportunities, within the culinary industry, for youth and young adults in Belleville (and the surrounding areas). Through these opportunities, our clients achieve meaningful job readiness skills, learn vital leadership skills, work toward financial independence, and create important community connections.

1:20pm - Panel - Local Employers

Learning how local employers are working to support youth to overcome their barriers to employment.

The line up includes:

- Jeff McKerracher (Co-Owner of A1 Plumbing),
- Hilary Sweet (Human Resources at JBS Foods)
- Stephanie Rayton (Owner/operator of Mops Inc)

1:50pm - BREAK

2:00pm - Interest Groups

Let's jump into smaller interest groups to further discuss:

1. Mental Health
2. Youth
3. Women
4. Court Involvement

2:30pm - Q & A and Next Steps

Let's come back together and talk about where we go from here

2:45pm - Evaluation & Wrap Up

Thank you for participating! Theresa Bailey will close out our day and provide attendees with the opportunity to evaluate your experience at today's symposium.

3:00pm - See you next time!

MEET THE SPEAKERS

Selasie Ocloo, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training & Skills Development

Selasie Ocloo, a rep from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, will explain how the SDF funding provides for our Employment Pathways program.

Alex Medeiros, RBC

Alex Medeiros from our local RBC branch, will take us through how they support programs like the Employment Pathways Program.

Emily O'Brien, Entrepreneur/Founder of Comeback Snacks

Emily O'Brien is an entrepreneur and the Founder of Comeback Snacks — a specialty popcorn company that challenges the status quo. After being sentenced to a four-year jail term following an abusive relationship, Emily set out on a mission to transform herself and make her time in jail as meaningful as possible. Using her entrepreneurial pre-sentence background and experience, Emily created the idea for Comeback Snacks (formerly 'Cons and Kernels') — a popcorn brand that uses high-quality, health-conscious ingredients to create unique flavours inspired by the ones Emily developed in prison. In June 2021, Emily opened Comeback Commissary, Comeback Snacks' first-ever retail store, with a focus on telling her story and the stories of other inmates in a physical setting.

Nick, My Employment Barriers: A Personal Perspective

Nick is a former client with the Youth Employment Pathway program. He is a mature student, completing his third and final year of a Computer Security & Investigation college program. He is currently working toward his field placement in the Computer Security field. He also holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Panel: Christine Durant, Prince Edward Learning Centre - Inspire Program

Christine is currently working with Prince Edward Learning Centre coordinating the Inspire program breaking down barriers for youth to find quality employment here in our region. Previously she has worked on anti-poverty programs and projects in Canada and Internationally. She holds a Masters in Adult Education and is passionate about supporting holistic livelihood approaches and transformational growth.

The Inspire program works with youth 15 - 30 to gain training and employment. The program supports the individual's goal and works with youth to break down barriers to training, independence and employment.

MEET THE SPEAKERS

Panel: Mike Hewitt, Elevate Plus

Mike spent twenty years in the chemical industry in Canada and the US before taking the Manufacturing Resource Centre job with Quinte Economic Development Commission in 2008. For the last 15 years, Mike has been responsible for supporting the Bay of Quinte Region's 110+ manufacturers by accessing programs, facilitating interactions between manufacturers and with other organizations, supporting workforce, productivity and sustainability initiatives and actively representing the manufacturing sector at numerous local and regional organizations. Mike's passion for workforce development has seen him as the project lead on the Elevate Plus workforce development program since 2016.

Panel: Jason Powell, JHS Hamilton - WorkPath Employment Services

Jason Powell has been working as Job Developer/Employment Counsellor with JHSHBA. Jason has direct experience coordinating the Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Home Renovation Construction program in 2022. Jason has also worked with the WorkPath Employment program as a Job Developer/Employment Counsellor providing a range of pre-employment, employability, employment placement, maintenance and retention supports to address labour shortages within the manufacturing sector in the Greater Hamilton Area and support individuals with criminal justice involvement to attain and maintain employment. Prior to joining the Employment Services Team, Jay has worked over 15 years with at-risk youth who were involved with the youth criminal justice system, providing employment supports. Jason has also worked with the St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton with adults who are released from a Federal Institution therefore understands the barriers justice involved individuals face in obtaining and maintaining employment. Jason has a Recreation Leadership Diploma from Mohawk College and a Management Studies Certificate from McMaster University. He has taken several professional development seminars, webinars and workshops throughout his extensive career.

Speaker: Aileen Simon, Fair Chances Coalition

Aileen Simon from the John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) has sent a video on the current landscape for justice-involved job seekers in Ontario and on the tools available through the groundbreaking Fair Chances Coalition—an initiative that champions fair hiring practices and breaking down barriers for individuals with past criminal justice involvement. Aileen is the Education & Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at JHSO. Aileen works to translate JHSO's research and policy work into engaging and interactive educational materials, tools and content. She also plays an active role in JHSO's employment portfolio, working with various stakeholders on unlocking opportunities for job seekers with criminal records. Sharing information through symposiums like these is crucial to generating awareness around the stigma of a criminal record and can help remove barriers to youth accessing meaningful employment.

MEET THE SPEAKERS

Employer Panel: Jeff McKerracher

Jeff McKerracher is the co-owner of A1 Plumbing, Pumps & Water Treatment Inc. His time is spent in a management capacity, overseeing the operations of a 20 plus employee home service business. However, during his time working in the field and "on the tools", Jeff earned his Journeyman Plumbers License, Class 4 Well Technician License, Septic Installer and Water Treatment Specialist designation. Jeff is an advocate for small business and the trades, he speaks at events and takes part in programs that encourage careers in the trades and supports business owners. Jeff draws from his past experience in social work to support this cause. He is a graduate of the Child & Youth Care Program at St. Lawrence College and worked in the social services field for six years, supporting youth aged 16-24 with housing and life skills. Jeff sits on the Board of Directors at the Quinte West Chamber of Commerce and is also on the Government Affairs Committee and Membership Committee. Jeff lives in Stirling with his wife Brittany they enjoy working on their home, travelling, food and music.

Employer Panel: Hilary Sweet, JBS Foods

Hilary is a Human Resources Manager at JBS Foods Ontario Inc. with 10+ years of experience in the human resources field. Hilary is a graduate of Queen's University majoring in sociology which ultimately led to her career focusing on helping to create a difference for people's employment experience. During university, Hilary worked for the John Howard Society connecting with youth and young adults through their various programming.

Employer Panel: Stephanie Rayton, Mops Inc.

Stephanie began her entrepreneurial journey launching Mommy Mops as a way to support her three amazing children. Now rebranded as Mops Inc Stephanie manages an award-winning team of over 30 people. Stephanie takes a human-first approach to how she manages her team because she believes everyone should feel excited to come to work.

MEET OUR JHSB TEAM

Jennifer(JJ) Cormier

Jennifer J. Cormier (JJ) is a passionate advocate for social change and the executive director of the John Howard Society of Belleville and District that is focused on community development. With a Doctorate degree in Theology and Psychology, JJ has dedicated her career to addressing issues of education, poverty, and affordable housing. She has successfully led team initiatives that have transformed the lives of vulnerable populations and empowered communities. JJ has fifteen years as a speaker at non-profit conferences and has served on the boards of several community-based organizations. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, exploring trails with her horses, and supporting local produce producers..

Liz Bosma-Donovan

Liz is the Community Connector at the John Howard Society's Employment Pathways program assisting barriered youth 16 - 29 year old to take steps on their employment pathway. Liz specializes in working with Cross-Over Youth (those dually involved with a CAS and the youth criminal justice system). Having worked for a decade in child welfare, Liz facilitates collaboration across legal & social service sectors to remove roadblocks and develop new employment routes for youth with Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Holly Read-Fleming

Holly is the Employment Connector for the John Howard Society of Belleville's Employment Pathways program. She has provided wrap around supports for many of the youth in our community since 2016. Since graduating from Developmental Services Worker program and the Child and Youth Care program at Loyalist College, she has been the resident Youth Worker at JHSB for all youth programming. Holly also supports students in our Quantum program by providing a learning space for alternative learning, mental health supports, being an active part of their community, and so more.

Bridget Purdy

Bridget Purdy has a long history of caring about her community, starting at age five when she began volunteering at her local seniors' home. She studied Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University, in her home province of Nova Scotia, before moving to Ontario and attending Loyalist College's Culinary Program. After running her own food production company, Snappy Snacks, nationally for several years she returned to Loyalist College to enter their Business Sales & Marketing program. Bridget is a mother to four children, a dedicated volunteer with the cat foster program at the local humane society, and a survivor of both cancer and domestic abuse. In her free time, you can find her exploring the woods with her dog Cricket, under a pile of cats, creating art, or tending to her many plants and turtle pond. Bridget lives her life by the motto, "To contribute to the world's work, in the community I am placed, because the joy of service thereby bestowed, and the talent of leadership multiplied."

MEET OUR JHSB TEAM

Dakota Jackson

Dakota Jackson, a passionate professional rooted in Child and Youth Care, is on a mission to uplift the lives of young individuals. Hailing from the charming town of Sharbot Lake, Ontario, Dakota's journey is deeply tied to community engagement and reconnecting herself as well as youth in their indigenous heritage. From volunteering with the Leo's Club from 2014 to 2016, embodying a spirit of service from a young age, Dakota moved to Belleville in 2021 to pursue further education. Early experiences involved working with barriered teens in a home setting, followed by a transformative 5-month stint in a grade 5 class, gaining valuable insights into the educational landscape. In 2023, Dakota received the prestigious United Way Community Impact Award, recognizing her commitment to being a future leader dedicated to enhancing the health, well-being, and inclusivity of marginalized citizens. Eager to create positive change at the grassroots level, Dakota joined a non-profit organization in May 2023 as a Youth Peer Mentor, continuing to be a beacon of support and mentorship for youth, fostering an environment of empowerment and growth.

Rhee Glasius

Rhee is a Community and Justice Services student from Algonquin College, currently completing a 12-week placement with the Youth Employment Pathways program at JHSB in the position of a Youth Peer Mentor. As of April 2024, Rhee will be a graduate of the Community and Justice Service program. Similar to this career route that she is now on, Rhee also has completed 1/3 years of the Child and Youth Care program at Algonquin College in the past.

Theresa Bailey

Theresa Bailey is the project coordinator for the Employment Pathways project and strongly believes in the power of youth engagement to change systems and lives. Theresa started with John Howard Society Belleville as coordinator of the Youth Collective Impact project and is also the founder of Starfish Synergies Inc., the exclusive provider of PLAY-DOH POWER SOLUTIONS corporate training.

RESOURCES

The Employment Pathways project is proud that the following resources were designed for youth, with youth, and by youth alongside trusted and caring adults.

Trauma – Boys and Girls Club of Calgary

A Brief PowerPoint that provides an understanding of the origin of trauma, trauma responses and triggers.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/sgxs5hzi364tpht/EMPLOY%20PATH%20-%20LIT%20REVIEW%20-%20Calgary%20Trauma%20Informed%20Care%20-%20Trauma%20Training%20for%20Employers.pdf?dl=0>

Colleen Kamps – Trauma Informed Practice

This is a 20 minute video that provides an excellent overview of trauma and how it impacts youth.

<https://youthrex.com/video/trauma-informed-practice-with-cross-over-youth/>

Crappy Childhood Fairy

YouTube channel that helps people recognize and heal the symptoms of PTSD.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCZIDCbFTqHkzV_rUP4V5bg

Anti-Oppressive Practice

A brief video that demonstrates how anti-oppression can be defined as the lens through which one understands and addresses how "Race, gender, sexual orientation and identity, ability, age, class, occupation and social service usage), can result in systemic inequalities for particular groups.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwkgJ8xTPnM>

Court 101- Loyalist College

A brief video that explains to youth what they can expect when they go to court.

RBC FUTURE LAUNCH RESOURCES

About RBC Future Launch

Overview of the program, partnerships and thought leadership content

RBC Future Launch at Home

Virtual programs and resources for youth at home

RBC Future Launch Scholarship

\$1,500 Scholarship is for anyone from 15 to 29 who wants to learn something new

RBC Upskill

Discover how the skills you have today can open up a world of career possibilities

RBC Future Launch Live Workshops

For youth to engage with others and ask questions live to help with their career journey!

Launching Your Career Playbook

A toolkit designed to help all stakeholders - young people, managers, and HR teams - make early career experiences great

RBC Future Launch Partners

A list of over 500 partners RBC has partnered with to bring Future Launch to life across the country

Students and Recent Graduates Careers at RBC

A portal with job opportunities and tools to help youth and new graduates as they begin their careers

INTEREST GROUP NOTES



Lined area for notes, consisting of 20 horizontal black lines.