

JUSTWORK

economic initiative

SEPTEMBER 2007

A STORY OF COMMUNITY

A new, unlikely community is emerging in the basement of Grandview Calvary Baptist Church. Each Tuesday, a group gathers in the church's pottery studio to make ceramic pieces for the production days of JustPotters. Most of these participants share a common standing on the margins of the neighbourhood, a standing brought on by poverty, mental illness, physical disability, and/or ethnic background.

Within this common place there is much diversity, and when diversity is present distrust is often close by. However, those gathering around the task of pottery are building trust, friendship, and community.

So, we celebrate the small signs of community that we see each week: the relaxed conversations around the worktable, the patience and assistance workers provide to others who are having difficulty with the day's tasks, the emerging friendships that cut across boundaries and cut through stereotypes. We are grateful for the individuals who regularly gather each week - Andrea, Anthony, Noah, Peter, Roger, Ryan, Tom, Tonia, and Tyler - and for the community that is being formed in their midst, a community being shaped by the grace of God.

JustWork fosters dignified, positive work opportunities for people facing multiple barriers to the traditional workforce.

For more information on JustWork or to find out how you can be involved:

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JUST STORIES

The life and times of social enterprise development



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The past year has been filled with the challenges that come with the development of an organisation. In the midst of these times, we are grateful for the confidence many of you have displayed as our partners, donors, customers, and friends. Thank you!

What, exactly, has changed over the past year for JustWork? While we have the same staffing and are supporting the same two social enterprises, we have also been building a foundation that we hope will support us for years into the future. We have:

- Reviewed and updated our vision, mission, and values statements.
- Completed business plans for both JustGarden and JustPotters.
- Applied for charitable status with the CRA and expect a positive response within the next few weeks.

- Received recognition as a partner ministry from Grandview Calvary Baptist Church enabling JustWork staff to participate in the benefits offered by the Baptist Union of Western Canada.

- Developed a partnership with the Tides Foundation (San Francisco, CA) to receive charitable donations from donors in the United States.

- Completed a Community Assessment and Project Design process with World Vision Canada as a partner in their Partners to End Child Poverty Program.

Of the items listed above, the last one is likely to be the most impacting. Once we receive our charitable status we will be in line to officially begin a three-year partnership with World Vision Canada. Funding provided by World Vision will allow us to add staff so that we can properly develop and support JustGarden, JustPotters, and at least one additional social enterprise.

JustGarden

JustGarden entered its second season of operations in February of this year. After operating on a part-time basis for the majority of 2006, we expanded our operations in 2007. Michael Burdge, JustGarden's Operations Manager, is now working 30 hours a week to facilitate the program after splitting his time between JustGarden and a hospital chaplaincy position last year. The expansion is possible because of the positive response we have received from our marketing efforts in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood of Vancouver. JustGarden customers, thanks so much!

Each week several employees assist Michael with the gardening

and landscaping work. The employees are learning valuable life skills, such as the importance of completing a task, as well as skills specific to the gardening work. These opportunities for development, we hope, will be stepping-stones to address the challenges many of them have faced—struggles including broken families, drug addictions, depression, and lack of education. As one JustGarden employee said, "I want to help others who are coming from a similar background... My background gives me understanding and insight into their situation."

JustPotters

In late 2006 JustWork partnered with the pottery studio located in the basement of Grandview Calvary Baptist Church to develop income-generating opportunities for low-income studio participants. In 2007 this partnership has developed into "production days" at the studio. Each Tuesday Shelimar Lakowski, the production manager, hosts a three hour drop-in time for a handful of beginning potters who come to craft pieces from clay. The participants are paid an hourly or piece rate wage. Shelimar, with the help of one or two others who are learning the craft, then finishes the pieces through firing and glazing.

The last few months have given us time to learn much about what can be accomplished through the production emphasis. Now, JustWork is seeking to develop marketing channels so the pieces can be sold. Currently, the product line pieces are available to the public at the studio as well as Regent College Bookstore, Canadian Bible Society, and A Rocha Canada.