

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Calling All Visionaries, Mavericks and Outliers

ABBOTSFORD, BC (February 10, 2010) -- On the eve of welcoming the world to this beautiful province in celebration of the 2010 Olympic Games, forward-looking organizations in Abbotsford declare the welcome mat is set out - indefinitely.

In a precedent-setting move, 21 organizations voluntarily joined hands last Friday and took one large step back in a bid to invite new leaders to step into the spotlight. "If our role is to empower youth in their leadership and help Abbotsford businesses become strong contenders in a global marketplace, then our Steering Committee has not yet formed" observed Imbenzi George, pioneer of the Abbotsford Community Youth Employment Centre, as he gazed at the familiar white, mostly middle-aged, faces gathered around the boardroom table.

"For all groups there is a turning point where the dialogue becomes familiar, ordinary, business as usual, unless people are *intentional* about creating something new" says Tana Plewes, founder of the Discovery Center for Entrepreneurship. "Imbenzi spoke the truth; in doing so he tipped the conversation into the realm of creativity and connectedness" says Plewes.

For the next 18 months, three integrated projects lead by SUCCESS and supported by more than twenty community partners, will develop cultural, social and intellectual talents in support of Abbotsford's youth. The central focus of this initiative is a demonstration project called *Food for Thought*. Deirdre Goudriaan, project manager and facilitator with BC Healthy Communities noted that "Around the globe food is indicative of community celebration and is the mainstay of Abbotsford's agricultural economy. We will conclude this project in celebration by hosting a Food and Film Festival in the fall of 2010".

"*Food for Thought* provides a means for participation and leadership in our multicultural communities and allows the community as a whole to contribute to the future development of the agriculture industry" says Bill Beatty, Project Director Business and Economic Development with SUCCESS. "The legacy of this project will be a shift in how sub-communities relate to each other and a renewed intensity in terms of how local businesses compete in the global marketplace" noted Beatty.



Marilyn Hamilton of Integral City Meshworks Inc. is leading a team of multi-lingual post-secondary students who are helping to develop a values-based vital signs monitor (VSM) for Abbotsford. Data collected through surveys will map citizen values and the values of newcomers with special emphasis on youth and visible minorities. Citizen's of Abbotsford will be able to see our values, visually expressed on a map, showing us what is important in this place, what is working, what could work better and what we aspire to.

Diamonds of Diversity is the accompanying public education campaign. Diversity is shown to have a positive impact on innovation, productivity, profitability and employee satisfaction. Abbotsford employers will be left with a fresh perspective of what diversity means to the future of their business and how inclusive decision-making is key to success in a global economy. Entrepreneurs who have achieved mastery at cultivating a culture of inclusiveness, creativity and performance in their workplaces will reveal their challenges, secrets and over-the-top results. Practical implementation principles and strategies will be shared through a series of workshops, educational videos and syndicated newspaper articles.

To get involved please contact one of the project managers: **Youth, Food and Film** - Deirdre Goudriaan, (778) 891-8948 or deirdre@bchealthycommunities.ca; **Values-based research** - Marilyn Hamilton, (604) 855-8478 or marilyn@integralcity.com; **Business performance** - Tana Plewes, 604-824-1460 or tana@possibility.ca.

Food for Thought is made possible by the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program, a joint initiative between the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Government of Canada. You too can join the growing list of Community Partners breaking bread in service of *Food for Thought*.

- 30 -

For more information about this release contact Deirdre Goudriaan at (778) 891-8948 or deirdre@bchealthycommunities.ca or Tana Plewes at (604) 824-1460 or tana@possibility.ca.

The rapidly growing list of Community Partners is attached.

Abbotsford's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces (WICWP) community partners include (as of February 5th 2010):

- SUCCESS, (www.success.bc.ca)
- BC Healthy Communities, (www.bchealthycommunities.ca)
- Integral City Meshworks Inc., (www.integralcity.com)
- Discovery Center for Entrepreneurship Inc., (www.possibility.ca)
- UFV Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University, School of Horticulture
- City of Abbotsford
- New York Institute of Technology
- Community Futures South Fraser
- Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Youth Business Foundation (www.cybf.ca)
- Farm Folk, City Folk
- Farm Credit Canada
- Literacy Matters
- Abbotsford Food and Agriculture Connection Table (AFACT)
- Abbotsford Farm and Country Market
- Edible British Columbia
- Get Local
- Youth Employment Resource Centre (Myert Corp Inc.)
- BC Centre for Social Enterprise
- School District #34