

YOUTH, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

Work experience, pocket money and community spirit are the three driving goals of an education program developed by Pacific Coast Savings, a credit union located on Vancouver Island.

Since 1993, the company has had a youth advisory committee made up of Grades 11 and 12 students recruited from Greater Victoria area high

schools. In addition to logging part-time hours at Pacific Coast's branches, the students act as ambassadors for the credit union through their volunteer roles at local community events. The company says that its Youth Advisory Program also pays dividends in terms of keeping management and employees in touch

with the younger generation.

Students gain improved communication skills and a better understanding of leadership and teamwork in the workplace.

REPORTING TO THE COMMUNITY

VanCity is the largest British Columbia credit union, representing approximately 240,000 members including 14,000 members of the Teachers' Savings Credit Union who joined VanCity in 1997. The credit union has published its first social report described as an initial attempt to measure its "social, environmental, and ethical performance."

A social report, which is becoming increasingly common in business, is a way for a company to set some clear standards for its performance as a citizen in the community and report on those standards in a measurable fashion. Much of the effort by VanCity to improve its citizenship performance involves support and encouragement for individual citizens, particularly young people, to make a commitment to the community. Each year for example, VanCity awards 30 scholarships at \$500 each to students who have taken an active interest in their communities through activities in the fields of environment, social justice, and economic development. These are not essay contests but instead require solid proof, backed up by references, that students have performed volunteer community work in these areas.

Each year, six environmental service awards are also offered by VanCity to honour both young people and environmental educators who have contributed to environmental well-being in the community. Youth awards are offered for ages eight to 12 and 13 to 18. Those nominating a student must identify a specific environmental issue which was addressed, clear actions taken to address the issue, the creativity of those actions and any resulting impact. The learning outcome achieved through VanCity's programs teaches students that communities, like financial institutions, can only flourish if stakeholders are making knowledgeable investments.

on the set, and the program concludes with a follow-up survey of participants and production companies.

Now in its second year, the program has doubled the number of student participants; and, the industry is enthusiastic about the pool of potential, professional talent being created.

WHERE

A study commissioned by the CIBC found that between 1989 and 1997 one in every five jobs filled by young people had disappeared. Youth unemployment is a national problem with serious dimensions in British Columbia.

WILL Official estimates place unemployment for the under 24 group at around 15%. These numbers are based upon the percentage of young people who actually "participate" in the workforce. When

THEY non-participants in the workforce are included, estimates for unemployment for young males under 24 from some sources range as high as 33%. Non-participants are people who are eligible for work but have stopped looking.

WORK?

In response to this challenge, CIBC recently launched its Youthvision program designed to help high school students overcome education and



- Stuart Davis

Left to right: Rick Brown, Regional Dir., Sales & Service, CIBC, Ruth Curran, Sr. Mgr., Employment Initiatives, YMCA, Sarah Watson, Grade 10 student, Langley Sec. School, Gordon Therriault, Exec. Dir., Big Brothers of Greater Vancouver, Marc Witney, King George Sec. School (Van.).

employment challenges. The program combines research, educational funding, mentoring and job programs to encourage high school students to complete school and focus on a career.

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For the BC component of the CIBC Youthvision Scholarship program beginning next September, six Grade 10 students will receive scholarships covering four years of post-secondary education and a concurrent six-year internship. Additionally, BC students will participate in Frontier College's national youth literacy program, offering mentor support and tutoring for young students at the primary and secondary levels.



- Pacific Coast Savings

Young ambassadors through their volunteer roles at local community events.

REEL LIFE EXPERIENCES

...students working with make-up artists and producers.

- All photos by Marilyn Geblum

Students in North Vancouver are getting roles in one of BC's fastest growing industries - film production. The North Vancouver Youth in Film program, spearheaded by the City and District of North Vancouver in cooperation with the BC Film Commission, the Actor's Union, and the Director's Guild, gives local students an opportunity to learn about careers in the burgeoning movie industry by participating in the production of movies being shot in the community.

The program is coordinated by the Seymour Community Services Society; and last year during its introduction, 20 students had placements working with technicians, directors, make-up artists, costume designers and producers.

The program has five components. It begins with a selection of secondary school and out-of-school youth who are interested in the film industry. Participants are then offered a pre-employment workshop to ensure professional behavior on the set. This is followed by a two-day industry-recognized course at Capilano College called *Introduction to the Film Industry*, which covers all types of careers in the film industry. Students are then assigned to specific placements

