

# CURRENTS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

SPRING/SUMMER 2011, Vol. 11, No. 2

## **Out of the Past**

Project revives a fading culture

## **Signing On**

Embracing a student by learning her language

## **On Solid Ground**

CNA's new mental health initiative

# Inspiring Innovation

CNA researchers step into the light



## Letter from the Editor

Spring is a time of year when beginnings are juxtaposed with endings.

As the sun starts to warm the soil and the daffodils tentatively poke their heads into the light, I can't help but draw a parallel with the students who are striking out anew. They may be filled with the promise of all good things to come, but yet they're still a little uncertain as to what their future holds.

For many of our faculty and staff the experience is different - spring is a time of endings. Year-end financials, annual reports, and the submitting of final grades for graduating students mark the end of the fiscal or academic year. Perhaps the parallel here lies with the winter sports enthusiasts who must now put away their skis, skates and snowmobiles.

Whichever group you identify with, one thing is certain. Spring is a time of change.

Inside this edition of *Currents* you'll meet talented researchers who are finding answers to some of the world's mysteries, and changing the way CNA is perceived in the world of science.

You'll also find stories of people who've greeted change with courage, and in some cases inspired change in the world around them.

Will they inspire a change in you?

Gina MacArthur

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**Cover photo:** Dr. Sanat Mandal is one of the College of the North Atlantic researchers who's looking for innovative answers to some of life's toughest questions.

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# FROM INSPIRATION TO INCORPORATION

By Gina MacArthur

## How CNA is supporting entrepreneurial women in Labrador

Megan Ford knows she wants to live in Labrador City. She knows she wants to start a specialty coffee shop and she knows that it's going to take a lot of hard work to get her idea off the ground. Now, thanks to the Inspired Women program, she knows more about how she's going to do it.

College of the North Atlantic is a partner in the program, which brought local women together with a facilitator who helped them develop their inspirations into solid business ideas.

The bilingual program is jointly organized by the Newfoundland and Labrador Francophone Economic Development Network and the Central Labrador Economic Development Board.

Richard Sawyer, CNA's Labrador West campus administrator says providing the classroom space and other services is just one of the ways the college supports its local community.

"Programs like this one help to strengthen the community, not just economically but even socially," he says. "We don't have a program like this in our area, and certainly not in French. It fills a gap in our programming."

For Ford, the timing was perfect. Having grown up in Labrador City, her travels took her around the country and as far away as Asia over the last eight years. Through that experience she began learning about Fair Trade goods and services, and got interested in promoting the concept of paying fair prices to producers in developing countries.

Ford eventually ended up working at a coffee shop in Edmonton, Alberta, where the owner followed socially responsible purchasing practices to run his business. There, she gained some experience and solidified her plans to start a Fair Trade coffee bar in Labrador City. When she moved back last August, she saw a flyer for the Inspired Women program, and knew it was just what she needed.

"The beginning part of the program is getting to know yourself, which is actually really important if you're going to be a business owner and working with other people," says Ford, adding that she also got to meet other people in the local business community.

Angie Cormier is the program's facilitator. She says it's about more than developing the hard skills needed to start a business. "It walks them through their idea in terms of 'How do I move this idea forward?' and 'How



Inspired Women facilitator Angie Cormier (left) and aspiring business owner Megan Ford.

does it need to change to be something that I can make money out of?"

She says the ideas that the women brought to the program were quite diverse, ranging from jewelry making to holistic wellness and even dog sledding.

"Women don't realize how much skill and knowledge they have and how transferable it is," she says. "(They) don't go into business for job creation they go into it for self-fulfillment, for independence."

Ford is continuing to develop her business plan and she knows that she still has a lot of work to do, but she says the Inspired Women program helped build her confidence so she could move forward.

"When I first went there I was so nervous to tell people what I was doing, but then I just became very comfortable and confident in my idea because the other women in the program were just very supportive."

The Inspired Women program has now expanded to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and may be offered in Labrador West again this fall. It is mainly funded by Status of Women Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. *~*



# Bridging the Gap

By Gina MacArthur

Dynamic Air Shelters had a problem. The burgeoning business located in Grand Bank had orders to fill, but not enough employees with the specialized skills required to fill them.

Vice President Kay Riggs knew there were people on Newfoundland's south coast who wanted to work, but she also knew they didn't have the training required to do the jobs she needed done.

"We pay industry rates, the same as you would make in Ontario or Quebec, but you can't attract people to come here for those wages," she explains. "So we needed to train people who are already living here. We were spending a lot of time with on-the-job training programs, which is very costly to do because it takes at least a year to reach a skill level where you're confident enough to work on your own."

That's where College of the North Atlantic (CNA) came in.

CNA was the successful bidder on a tender that was issued by the Random North Development Association (RNDA). Their Bridging the Gap project was designed to match people who wanted to work with employers who needed them, by providing the training that was required to get them hired.

Riggs says she was thrilled when CNA got the contract for the training component. "We already had a strong relationship with the college through co-operation for other projects," she says. "We have problems to solve from time to time, and they have some expertise on staff and they're kind of like a go-to place for us."

In February 2010 the project was up and running, with 14 people learning how to make inflatable shelters that can be used anywhere from a war zone to a disaster area to a job site. The classroom space was provided by Dynamic Air Shelters, and the instructors by CNA.

"The instructors were closely connected to our manufacturing team," says Riggs, explaining that the company provided a kind of 'how-to' manual and the instructors developed the curriculum to teach the required skills.

Students learned basic safety and first aid, along with some administrative and general life skills, like how to write a resume, in the general part of the program. Then they focused on the specialized skills required in the manufacturing process.

Although Dynamic Air Shelters didn't have jobs for all the trainees when they finished the program, most of them found

work because of the general skills they acquired during their time there.

"They get the specialized skills we need and we get a trained workforce," says Riggs. "We have a pool of potential employees to choose from. Only four got positions with us right way, a couple more got hired since then, and some got other jobs based on the general skills and job experience they got here."

Renita Dominaux is a business development officer at the Burin campus. She says the program was mutually beneficial to all who were involved.

"Bridging the Gap is a phenomenal opportunity for the community, local industry, the college and most importantly the students," she says. "It supports a valuable source of skilled labour—people who need help to obtain the skills required to fill the gap in the skilled labour market."

Riggs says the company would welcome future opportunities to work with CNA on similar projects. "If we have an increase in orders we might need 10 more people with those skills and it's hard to find people with the specific skills we need. This way we can establish a pool of qualified people so that we can fill those positions when they come up." 

# Exploring paths to success

## CNA helps at-risk youth find their direction

By Gina MacArthur

George Kelly is one motivated mayor.

Looking around tiny Burlington, on the Baie Verte Peninsula, he knows that career choices are limited for the young people in his community. He also knows it's difficult for them to accept that they might have to leave home to carve out a successful future for themselves. So Kelly has made it his mission to find ways to connect local youth to the many opportunities that lie outside the town's boundaries.

One of the projects that Kelly helped kick-start was the Youth Exploring Trades project, for which he found funding through the federal Skills Link program.

Youth Exploring Trades is aimed at people between the ages of 15 and 30 who are at risk, have already dropped out of school, or face other barriers to employment. Its goal is to help them develop the skills and confidence they need to explore their career options and get them back on track to a post-secondary certificate or diploma, and subsequently gainful employment.

Working with College of the North Atlantic, Kelly arranged to turn the local fire hall into a classroom. The college contracted an instructor, Larry Harvey, and the project was soon up and running, with 10 students.

Some of the students were hand-picked by Kelly, who says he was amazed to see how they flourished in the program. "I don't think they knew what they were going to get involved in, but when they got going and started seeing things they changed. They all just grabbed hold to it."

Over the course of the program, Harvey spent seven weeks introducing the students to job search skills, like how to write a resume and research careers online. He also arranged for a series of presenters to share their work experiences, and answer questions about their jobs.

"That's the only way that program is going to work," says Harvey. "It's not going to work by having one person stand up and lecture."

Three weeks of the program were also spent at CNA's Baie Verte campus, where the students visited the Industrial Mechanic, Welder and Machinist programs. There, they also earned six certificates including things like first aid, hazardous materials handling, and occupational health and safety. They also spent a day job-shadowing tradespeople, including meat cutters and mechanics, in actual work environments.

Peter Noble finished high school in 2008, but came up two credits short of getting his diploma. He was debating what to do next when he heard some people around town talking about Youth Exploring Trades and decided to give it a try. He says now he's decided to become a millwright.

"I didn't really know what it was before, but now I know more about it and that's definitely what I'm going to do," he says. "I was interested in a lot of stuff before, but now this gives me experience so I know what I'm getting myself into, so it was a good thing."

Noble says he also made some important connections during his time in the program. "I met a lot of new people and new contacts. If I need help typing up a resume I got contacts for that. If I want to find out stuff about the college I got names for that."

Harvey says that was an important part of the program as well. "They have contacts that people in high school don't have and I see that as a big thing," he says. "They have so many contacts now that they never had before."

As for Mayor Kelly, he's not done helping the young people of his community find their way to fulfilling careers. He's working on finding more funding opportunities for similar programs. "All those rural communities got young people. If we don't try to help them they're probably going to stay there. Some of them may not work, but we know (these students) are motivated. We gave them the boost they needed. This program was well worth the money." *nm*



# Out of the past

## Living Circle Project revives a fading culture

By Glenda McCarthy

The voices of the Mi'kmaq Elders rang out harmoniously in tune with the deep pounding of the massive ceremonial drum as they called on ancient chants from generations past. With each thump on the drum they were one step closer to reviving their disappearing culture.

The Elders were taking part in a sacred drumming ceremony, practicing skills they hope to pass on to younger generations through the Living Circle, a pilot project developed in partnership with CNA.

The Mi'kmaq culture is based on respect, etiquette and giving thanks to the Creator. Some feel the traditional ways are dying out so to keep this from happening CNA established the Living Circle project.

Created in partnership with the Flat Bay/St. Teresa Mi'kmaq Band Council, the project features a look at Mi'kmaq culture, language, daily life, spirituality, and traditional healing.

The Elders of the council contributed to the various activities, stories and experiences that make up the curriculum, and CNA will be providing them with the tools they need to carry out the teachings.

The Living Circle will examine the historical, political and economic relationship between the Mi'kmaq and the larger Canadian society from the native perspective. It presents a view which clearly indicates the negative influence the European culture has had on the Mi'kmaq culture.

"When we first started this program we weren't sure what we would be getting into so we started off with the normal template of how you would set up essential skills and literacy," says Susan Targett, administrative assistant and researcher for the project. "Once we got to know the Elders and speak to them about the holistics of their culture, we just trashed what we had and started over again. We were able to grasp exactly what they needed through sharing circles whereby they provide us with stories, quotes, pictures, and their great knowledge of their culture."

She says the team developed great affinity with the Elders and other members of the Mi'kmaq family who believe that sharing the knowledge of their forefathers will bring the culture back to life.

"The respect that was given to us as producers of this module made us appreciate their culture and made us more in tune with the spirituality of how they approach everything - with respect and humbleness. It is that dedication and respect to the culture that will once again make it prosper and grow."

Targett feels the most important part of the project is the respect and etiquette that is demanded of it.

"As we got further into the project and sharing more with the Elders, we felt the spirituality of their culture and it seemed like we just flew from there — everything started falling into place."

Activities will examine the ways traditional Mi'kmaq culture developed and how it is an integral part of everyday Mi'kmaq life.

"It also looks at how this vibrant culture was perceived by the Europeans — contrary to their own way of life — and had to be changed to meet their perspective," says Targett.

The program features discussions on the revival of traditional culture and how acceptance of the native perspective is growing within society.

"The entire Living Circle project is also referred to as 'A Holistic Approach to Literacy and Essential Skills Amongst Natives,'" says Jill Quilty, Living Circle instructor/coordinator. "Basically, that means that this program takes the nine essential skills as set out by the federal government and adapts them with direct meaning to embrace the Mi'kmaq way of life.

"After going through the Living Circle project, those 12 lucky participants will have gained a larger perspective on the essential skills through Mi'kmaq culture, enabling them to have increased confidence and employability qualifications."

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**"... it is like a rebirthing of our lost culture - it was almost lost to the point of disappearing..."**

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In addition to the direct cultural and essential skill components students will also receive free certifications in various CNA programs.

"For those selected participants, this opportunity will certainly be an experience of a lifetime," continues Quilty. "It really shows through that all of the people involved have really poured their hearts into truly making the Living Circle a meaningful program to remember."

"I think it is very important to the community, it is like a rebirthing of our lost culture - it was almost lost to the point of disappearing," says Carolyn Sheppard, elder with the Flat Bay/St. Teresa Mi'kmaq Band Council.

"I would like to see more traditional ways, such as basket weaving, eel spear making, and working with hides, and personally I would love to see the language come back."

"I totally agree," adds Targett. "The commitment that these Elders have put into regaining their culture is phenomenal. They put their heart and soul into everything they do and they include the children so that they can start at an early age to regain their culture. There are so few who are dedicated to passing on the cultural ways, that we really need to get more people involved so that the strain can be taken off those who have that dedication. The Living Circle is a step towards the right direction in this regard." 



Top Photo: Elders Fay White, Juanita Kerfont, and Calvin White gather at the Flat Bay/St. Teresa Mi'kmaq Band Council office.

Centre: A traditional Mi'kmaq drum

Bottom: Elders Calvin White, Jackie Snook, Carolyn Sheppard, and Juanita Kerfont take part in a sacred drum ceremony.

Right: Elder Carolyn Sheppard sings an ancient Mi'kmaq song.





Cathy Melee is an example of how a student can find success with the support of CNA's new Mental Health Initiative.

# On Solid Ground

New mental health initiative will help students succeed

By Glenda McCarthy

Imagine a world where walking through the front door of a college campus causes you such anxiety that you feel like running away. Or a world where you not only worry about fitting in and succeeding in school and in life, but where that worry consumes you. While it may be inconceivable to many, it can be an everyday reality for those who struggle with mental illness.

For Donna Kavanagh, the instructional coordinator of CNA's Waterford Bridge Road Centre, the profound words of one of her students helped her gain a greater understanding of that struggle.

"I cannot describe to you the feeling of standing by and watching your friends continue to march to adulthood as you stand paralyzed," the student told her. "I cannot describe the pain of observing their uncomprehending faces as they struggle to understand something that even you, the person going through it, cannot. I cannot describe the pain of being forgotten and discarded by most around you. I cannot describe the pain of accepting your status as written off. I may not be able to adequately describe the pain, but I can describe the effect on one's dignity. It is destroyed. Little remains."

In *Out Loud: Essays on Mental Illness, Stigma and Recovery*

"With my mom being ill and (hospitalized) a lot, I tried to cope on my own," she writes in *Out Loud*. "Bottling things up became my game. I just got used to keeping feelings and things inside."

At age 18 Melee reached her breaking point. While attending CNA, her anxiety skyrocketed and at her doctors' suggestion, she left school.

It was the beginning of an even harder road for Melee – she felt there was something wrong with her and started using drugs to self-medicate. Many ups and downs followed, and at one particularly low point she started seeing a therapist. She got clean, relapsed, made two suicide attempts, and eventually got clean again.

"I was a mess. I had become a prisoner in my own mind," she says. "I returned to my family doctor and she got me to see a psychiatrist who diagnosed me with a major depressive disorder and co-morbid generalized anxiety disorder. So I started therapy again."

It was her therapist who urged her to attend CNA's Waterford Bridge Road Centre. There, Melee refreshed her skills, did a career search, and decided to head back to CNA.

With the centre's help, post-secondary education didn't present the same roadblocks it did during her first attempt.

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## **"My teachers worked with me very closely at school. They encouraged me to go further into post-secondary to do Welding."**

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Kavanagh says her involvement with such students has taught her the true meaning of resilience. "It is through working together with the education and health care systems, and the person and family that I have learned that there is always hope and that recovery is more than possible," she writes.

Through her 37 years as a teacher of students with psychiatric illnesses, Kavanagh says she has come to recognize the challenges and barriers that her students face.

"I feel privileged to journey with them, from where they are, to where they should be."

Kavanagh has recently been seconded from her position at Waterford Bridge Road Centre to co-ordinate CNA's Mental Health Initiative, which will further build on the support currently in place for learners and college staff with mental health issues.

"Through the connection between the college and the mental health teams in the community, as well as through education and training for college staff, we hope to provide the support necessary for student success," says Kavanagh, adding that the pilot project will involve five of CNA's 17 campuses.

Cathy Melee of St. John's, one of Kavanagh's former students, is also featured in *Out Loud*. Melee knows first-hand the difference it can make to have the right support system in place.

Growing up was no picnic for Melee. Her mother was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was often absent from her life. Missing momentous occasions like birthdays and graduations, and the small things, like being tucked in at night, have had their impact.

Dealing with her mother's illness brought on anxiety for Melee at a very early age. She found school difficult, and as her anxiety got worse, so did her grades.

"My teachers worked with me very closely at school. They encouraged me to go further into post-secondary to do welding."

The communication between the school staff, the mental health team, and Melee and her family resulted in a new diagnosis of bipolar disorder, which has led to better control of her illness.

Working with the Waterford Bridge Road Centre, Melee is now working toward her diploma without the anxiety of a full course load. She has an 86 average in the first semester and has shown her ability to excel.

"Cathy is a good illustration of what we hope to do with the Mental Health Initiative," says Kavanagh. "One of the big things we strive for is working with health authorities to make sure the supports are in place before students with mental health issues attend the college."

Kavanagh says Melee's welding instructor has been a tremendous support.

"Curtis Abbott's openness to understanding her illness and his willingness to assist her has been paramount to her success. This frontline intervention along with co-ordination with Cathy's mental health services, has been a key in her ability to succeed in this program."

Even Melee credits it all to her remarkable support system.

"I am now working with an amazing group of different health care workers, and exceptional college staff," she says. "On my team I have my therapist, family doctor, psychiatrist, teachers and parents. Because we all work together all my needs are met. I'm in a much better place now than ever before. I still have a long road ahead of me, but with all my supports and my new belief in myself, I'm headed down the right path." 

By Glenda McCarthy

# Promoting a healthier workplace

Although it's still in its infancy stage, CNA's Smoke Free Workplace program is leading the way for those who have been looking for an example to follow. It's been widely promoted and wholeheartedly supported by advocacy groups and throughout the institution, and while it has been just seven months since it began, Occupational Health and Safety Manager Craig Boyd says the program is enjoying great success.

"The Smoke Free Workplace program no longer allows smoking on any property operated by CNA - including all campuses, field sites and buildings, office buildings, learning centres and their parking lots and grounds," he says. "It is a part of the college's health and safety program which we're always improving on. This is really innovative and is one of many programs we have to help improve health and safety at the college."

Since the college became a non-smoking institution in September 2010, Boyd and his team have been promoting the tobacco-free policy and reminding people the program is for the health and safety of all employees, students and visitors at CNA.

"Someone at each campus level has been promoting the initiative," he says. "The message I would like to see more is it's still about health education. At the end of the day it's for the health of everyone because no one wants to be subjected to walking through smoke. If you go to a meeting, and come back, you have a right not to have to jeopardize your health in that way."

He adds that the Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association recently heralded CNA as a great model for other institutions and employers to follow in their efforts to promote a healthier workplace.

The Lung Association is dedicated to achieving healthy breathing for the people of this province through programs in education, research and advocacy. "Everyone knows research shows that smoking can be hazardous to your health so the Lung Association came up with an initiative to go out to colleges and universities in the province to promote their Smokers' Helpline. The Lung Association was paramount in helping develop CNA's initiatives last summer and spring before we announced it Sept. 1," says Boyd.

"In addition to the Lung Association we have been working with the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco as well as other post-secondary institutions. Since the college has joined the increasing ranks of other employers such as education K-12 and Eastern Health, we have increased awareness to other post-secondary institutes to begin a Smoke Free Workplace program of their own."

CNA is encouraging anyone who wants to quit smoking to call the Lung Association's Stop Smoking Help Line.

"One thing (the Lung Association mentioned) was how pleased they are with the support from faculty and staff at the college. They did find College of the North Atlantic has been exemplary with the support they're getting, especially in terms of the Smokers' Helpline."

"We, as a college, aren't the experts to help people stop smoking. The people with the Lung Association are the ones who set up the support systems to actually help people kick the habit. We're getting the message to our employees that this support is available through the Lung Association."

While the college has enhanced its efforts in promoting the initiative provincially, Boyd says it takes time for everyone to be informed of and follow the new rules.

"There have been a few complaints and that is expected. I'm finding good support from management and human resources staff. If something comes in, I will go to the campus administrator or supervisor and relate them to the complaint, and then discuss what we can do about it."

The Smokers' Helpline offers help by phone, email or in person. For more information call 1-800-363-5864 or visit them online at [www.smokershelp.net](http://www.smokershelp.net).



# The green scene

## Oil's well that saves money

When Pernell Hallett came to work at College of the North Atlantic as Fleet Manager, there was a large blue bin in the maintenance garage full of used motor oil. The college was paying to have the oil trucked away by a recycling company, to the tune of more than \$4,000 a year. Meanwhile, it was costing about \$35,000 a year to heat the 1,700 sq. metre garage with propane.

Hallett knew there was a better way, and that he could save money at the same time. He proposed installing a special furnace that would burn all the waste oil that was being collected during maintenance of the college's vehicles.

"After nine months of lobbying, (management) agreed to purchase a furnace for the garage. They told me I was relentless," he says. "We started using it April 1, 2010 and as of March 31, 2011 we saved the college almost \$15,000 in heating fuel costs and transportation costs for the used oil."

Hallett says if the furnace returns the same kind of savings next year, it will have paid for itself in less than two years. He says the switch really didn't require much of an adjustment on the part of his staff. "The trick is the oil has to be clean, or it will clog up the furnace," he says. "You have to make sure there's no dirt on the outside of the oil pan when you're draining it, so you have to wipe it first. We've just made that part of our process, just like you brush your teeth every morning, it's automatic, and it only adds a minute or two to the routine."

Hallett says in addition to saving money, the furnace is also environmentally friendly. "The oil is heated to 210 degrees (Celsius) before it's combusted, so the emissions from the furnace are cleaner than what comes out of your oil furnace at home."

## A different kind of paper money

Liz Campbell just can't bear to throw books away. But last year, the Procurement and Bookstores Manager at CNA was starting to run out of space to store left over textbooks, and was facing the very real possibility that they would soon end up in a landfill.

"When I was in Qatar, our textbook provider was actually somebody who sold books to Third World countries. When I came back here I knew the obsolete textbooks were a problem. I couldn't cope with destroying them so they kept piling up."

Campbell turned to her colleagues for suggestions, and Storekeeper Tom Squires at the Clarendville campus recommended Better World Books.

Now, not only are the books staying out of the landfill, they're also supporting literacy programs in Third World countries.

Better World Books describes itself as 'the online bookstore with a soul,' and partners with schools to sell their unwanted or unneeded books online. "A portion of any revenues generated by sales of our obsolete books goes to our choice of literacy partners," says Campbell. "We chose Books for Africa and Worldfund."

Any books that don't get sold online are donated directly to literacy programs or recycled. A percentage of the proceeds also comes back to CNA.

In January 2011, Campbell shipped off six pallets of obsolete books that had come from CNA campuses across the province and were being stored at headquarters in Stephenville. In the future, each campus will get its own bill of lading and the books will be shipped directly.

"We don't have to pay for shipping and I don't have to store the books in one location. It's great!" she says. "It's such a relief just to know that textbooks aren't being destroyed. To destroy a book just doesn't sit well at all."

## How green is your garden?

It's more than the grass that's green in the memorial garden at CNA's Burin campus. Service Canada and CNA funded the creation of the garden several years ago, but starting in 2008 the care and maintenance of the space has been funded by monies raised through recycling.

"We've got probably 30 recycle bins throughout the building," says Academic Instructor Brian Walsh, who heads up the project. "We sort it here on campus and then we bring it down to the local recycling depot and the money goes into a bank account for the memorial garden fund."

Scrap aluminum, stainless steel, brass and copper from the trades shops are also collected for recycling, with proceeds going into the fund.

"We use the money to maintain and develop the garden, do repairs, buy flowers – that sort of thing," he explains, adding that otherwise the scrap metal would probably end up in a landfill.

Instead, the campus has a quiet place to sit and relax, where people can reflect on the students and staff who are memorialized by the garden.

"The Memorial Garden is a living reminder that our time in life is limited," says Walsh. "It is a tranquil and enjoyable place to spend a few minutes in quiet reflection, or to admire the wonders of our surroundings – a place where scrap metal is recycled into flowers." 



Margaret Thorne of Lifelong Learners (right) presents Cathy Byrne with the Lifelong Learner Scholarship. The award is presented annually to a student at the Grand Falls-Windsor campus who shows determination and inspires others.

## A Legacy of Good Will

By Glenda McCarthy

With an exuberant passion for life and an unending thirst for knowledge, Cathy Byrne had a profound impact on the people around her. Those closest to her fondly reflect on her will to achieve greatness and her unending ability to never let anything keep her down.

It was her enthusiasm in life that made so many want to be around her. An eternal optimist, neither her learning disability nor her illness could keep her from fulfilling her quest to better herself.

who was never late and never missed a day of classes until she was forced to by the progression of her cancer.

"Education for her was one of the important things in her life. I think because of that, she was a leader in her classroom. Everyone saw how strong and how determined she was to succeed and she led by example."

Byrne was the type of person who spoke her mind but was also quick to encourage those around her.

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**"If I ever get sick I hope I handle it with the dignity she did."  
- Campus Administrator Joan Pynn**

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Cathy was a graduate of CNA's Hairstylist program, and was enrolled in the Level One ABE program when she passed away from ovarian cancer in February 2011, at the age of 42. After she passed, Cathy's family asked that any gifts in memory go to the Grand Falls-Windsor campus to support an ABE scholarship in Cathy's memory.

Described as a beloved student, Byrne put her education and her responsibilities as a member of the student council first.

"Cathy was one of the first students I met when I came to the college in December 2008," recalls Campus Administrator Joan Pynn. "She always stopped to stay hello, she always had a positive comment about what someone was wearing, and she was always pleasant."

Pynn says above all Byrne was an extremely dedicated student,

"She was a little dynamo," says Pynn. "She was small in stature but that was the only way she was small. She was the first to tell you if you were doing a good job – and if you weren't doing something right, she would tell you that too. Oh my, you would never know she was sick – she was always so positive. She had energy to burn before she got sick."

In 2010 Byrne was honoured with the Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council award for Student of the Year. The award was presented in early October.

"We opened it up in the cafeteria for anyone who wanted to attend and the cafeteria was packed," Pynn says.

Brian Tobin, CNA's director of Academic Programs and Institutional Research, who had been working on a song but had hit a wall in

writing the lyrics, was inspired by Byrne's story.

"When we told him what we were doing for Cathy, he finished it that weekend and performed it at the ceremony," says Pynn. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house."

In addition to the Laubach Literacy Award, Byrne also received the Grand Falls-Windsor campus Lifelong Learner Scholarship for her determination and for inspiring others in the ABE Level 1 program. "It wasn't because she was sick that she got these awards. She worked hard for them," says Lillian Pinsent, ABE instructor and Laubach Literacy Council President. "If every student worked as hard as Cathy did they would all get As. She was quite an inspiration to others because she encouraged them. She would go out in other classrooms for the Level 2 and 3 ABE classes and she would tell them they could do it."

In December, Byrne's illness finally forced her to stop attending classes.

"She was a tiny girl with a very big heart. She would never give up," says Pinsent. "She had a strength of character and she motivated everyone – not only students but instructors as well. She was the type of person who always thought of others before herself."

Pynn adds that Byrne made many positive contributions to the college environment.

"Normally when you think of students in Level 1 Adult Basic Education they have a lot of barriers, so often it's more difficult for them until they're really comfortable to integrate into the campus," says Pynn. "But Cathy was everywhere. She wanted everyone to know how important school was – she considered it a great privilege."

When her illness was deemed terminal, Byrne still kept her determination.



Cathy Byrne

"Even when she was in the hospital she would still say she was coming back and would check with us to see if her seat was still available," says Pynn. "We kept her seat for her even when we knew she wasn't coming back. No one sat in it in the classroom because that was Cathy's seat. If I ever get sick I hope I handle it with the dignity she did."

Byrne's mom, Phyllis, says her daughter overcame many obstacles in her life— including a previous battle with cancer at age 18.

"She was mentally challenged from the time she was born. Even at the age of 42, she still really couldn't read or print a letter," says Phyllis. "That's the surprising thing with Cathy. She could retain anything you tell her but she couldn't put it down on paper — and that was what kept her back going through high school and university. She was very knowledgeable and she had a speech impediment, but there was a lot she could do herself."

Phyllis says her daughter excelled in so many other ways. For over a decade she travelled to and from the United States, where she was a teacher's aide in Indiana and worked in the school's cafeteria.

"She lived a very full life and wherever she went she always wanted to help. She didn't want to stay home and watch TV, she wanted to go out and do something. It was the same at the college. If there was a committee, she wanted to be on it – regardless of what it was."

Phyllis says it's the thought behind the scholarship that matters most to her.

"Whether its \$5 or \$500, the amount doesn't matter to me," she says. "There are hundreds of people in the college who idolized her. They'll keep her memory going." *ra*

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There is a lady that I know  
She can make dreams come true  
She has a heart that is so kind  
Unselfish ways so hard to find  
She teaches life she teaches love  
She teaches how to rise above  
And I can almost hear her say  
Like she teaches every day

How can you ever reach the sky  
If your heroes are on the ground  
How can you rise above each one  
How can you catch the rising sun

— From *Reach the Sky* by Brian Tobin

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# the spirit of giving



## Record-breaking year for donations

By Glenda McCarthy

When the Canadian Federation of Students released their 'Fund the Future' policy document earlier this year, one of the core recommendations was to increase grants, so that students would have less debt when they graduate. At College of the North Atlantic, an ever-growing slate of scholarships, bursaries and awards also works toward that objective. In fact, in 2011 the donors who fund those awards at CNA have exceeded expectations – producing a record-breaking year for contributions.

"Our students have benefited from the unprecedented growth in our awards program and continue to reap the benefits as they graduate into an economy which rewards them for their efforts," says Lisa Shallow, manager of Alumni and Advancement.

"Increasingly, corporate donors are understanding the importance of connecting with learners while they are still considering choices about their career path – and industry-driven awards are a key method of ensuring an educated and diverse work force."

As a commemorative action in March 2010, stakeholders in the oil and gas industry pulled together to establish the Flight 491 Legacy Fund at CNA, Memorial University, and the Marine Institute.

"As a result of this collaborative effort, \$1.4 million was raised and endowed to support scholarships and bursaries at each institution in perpetuity," says Corinne Dunne, vice-president of Development and College Advancement.

The Hebron Project co-venturers have established an endowment of \$750,000 at CNA for women, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

The Hebron Project Diversity Scholarship Fund will assist students from among these four groups with a preference for those who are enrolled in engineering, trades and technology programs. The fund will provide \$22,500 in annual awards for eligible students.

"Of course, it's not just industry players that have a role in the success of our awards program," adds Shallow. "This year, the Fry Family Foundation renewed and extended their commitment to our students, and have further established new awards in the arts, the health sciences, and a very prestigious provincial award for an all-around exemplary student."

The Fry Family Foundation has been a long time supporter of learners at CNA and in 2010 created the Fry Family Foundation President's Award of Excellence, which is considered the pinnacle of recognition at the college.

"Just a few short months after that time, the Fry Family Foundation once again demonstrated their keen interest in our students, and have committed to a renewed and enhanced scholarship package valued at \$180,000 over five years, including new scholarships for the health sciences, and an additional artist's scholarship," says Dunne.

The Fry Family Foundation also renewed their commitment to fund this year's New Orleans Construction Camp which will see students from a variety of disciplines roll up their sleeves to aid in the continued rebuilding required after hurricane Katrina.

The Gander campus will soon benefit from the recent gift of Rockwell Collins, which has committed to more than \$79,000 over the next seven years for students wishing to study aircraft structural repair or aircraft maintenance engineering. These new entrance scholarships

and awards will greatly aid the recruitment effort for these areas – thus contributing to the aviation industry in Gander and beyond.

The Princess Auto Foundation created an endowment at the college in 2009 for students in the Automotive Service Technician, Electrical and Welding apprenticeship programs. In late 2010, they renewed their commitment, contributing an additional \$40,000 to their endowment fund to ensure that it continues indefinitely.

The Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) commemorated the life of IOC employee Eldon Perry, whose life was lost in a workplace accident on March 19, 2010.

The inaugural \$1,500 scholarship will be awarded at the end of this school year at the Labrador West campus to a student who has a strong academic standing, demonstrated leadership in health and safety in the classroom and shop areas, and has been an active volunteer in both the college and local community.

The organizing committee of the 2010 Juno Awards has established a legacy fund to recognize the contribution of college students to the planning and delivery of the national event.

This \$40,000 investment in CNA students highlights the key connection between the college's programs and the music industry in the province.

"We know there is always more work to do as our programs and numbers grow, but we are well on our way to ensuring that each deserving student gets recognized for their efforts," says Shallow. 



# I nspiring nnovation

## **CNA's researchers step into the light**

Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvellous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day.

*– Albert Einstein*

If Einstein could peek inside the labs and classrooms at College of the North Atlantic, he might just be flattered to see that the college's researchers have taken his advice to heart.

It is here that some of North America's most dedicated scientists unravel mysteries like how to protect plants from insects while reducing chemicals in the food chain or how to design a drug to attack a specific form of cancer.

And while scientific research has long been a core business of universities, research at CNA has gained the respect of the scientific community – and is leading to some pretty significant breakthroughs.

Meet some of the researchers who are changing the world, one mystery at a time.

As a biology instructor, Dr. Barry Hicks is always seeking ways to bring science to life for his students. There is no better way to learn than by doing and with this in mind, Dr. Hicks set out to establish a facility where his students could do just that.

Founded by Dr. Hicks at the college's Carbonear campus, the Applied Entomology Laboratory is a hive of activity. It's here where he and his team investigate applied approaches to the impacts of insect activity on humans.

In the shadow of ever-increasing global concerns regarding pesticide use, Dr. Hicks is also researching production of an insect pathogenic fungus. It might sound like weird science, but the results will mean less chemical dependence for agricultural production, and reducing chemicals in the food chain is good news for the planet - and everyone on it!

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**"I'm inspired mainly  
by the pursuit of  
knowledge. I really enjoy  
discovering things that  
no one else has done."**

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Dr. Hicks studied Forest Entomology at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he received his PhD in 2001. His forestry research includes developing fungal biological control agents to combat forest defoliators, and examining the characteristics of potential disease-carrying mosquitoes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When not immersed in the laboratory or inspiring students in the classroom, Dr. Hicks can be found partnering with government agencies to educate the public on the importance of healthy pollination, biological control and environmental studies.

What inspires him about his research and the field of Entomology? "I'm inspired mainly by the pursuit of knowledge. I really enjoy discovering things that no one else has done." *u*



# Buzzing about biology



# Thinking *outside* the lab

Jon Joy's classroom includes the ocean, the coastline, the forest, the firing range and the biology lab.

As an instructor for the Natural Resources Technician program at the college's Bonavista campus, Joy's students take courses in everything from fish and wildlife biology to safe firearms certification and wilderness survival. The students often go on to pursue careers as technicians and enforcement officers for various natural resource management agencies within government and the private sector.

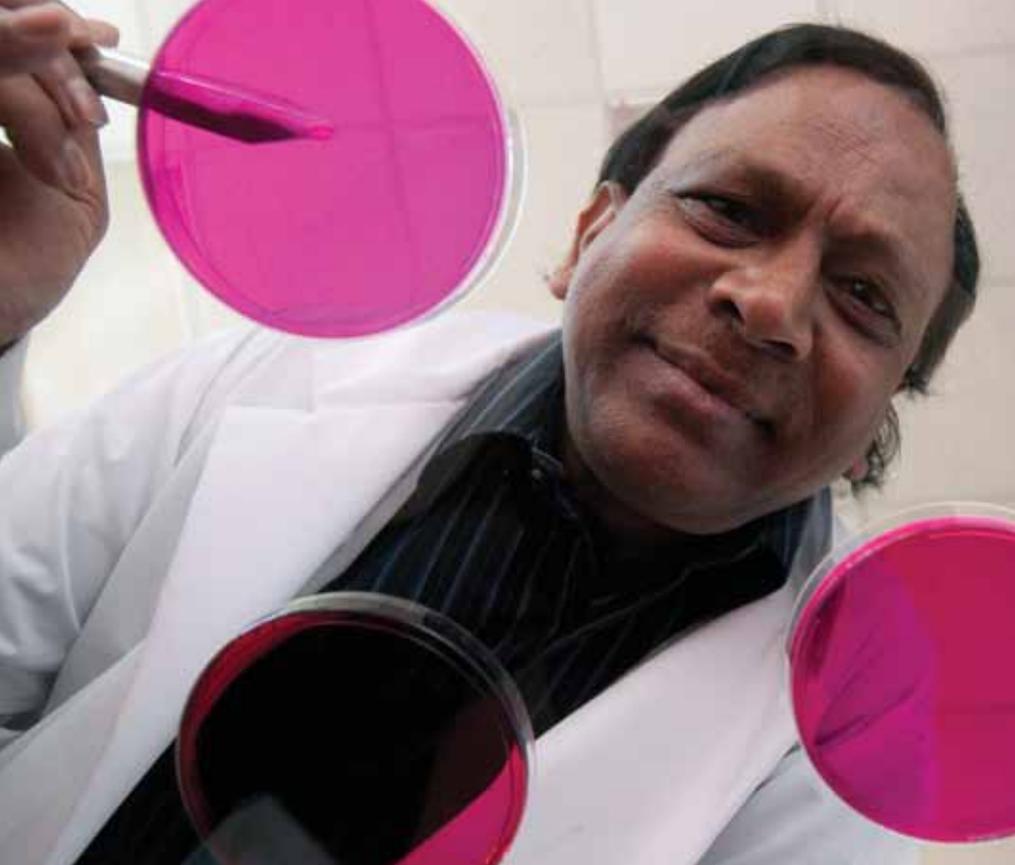
Recognizing a need for such a program, Joy was the driving force in striking an advisory committee to define the program and the curriculum in 1992, and the program was formally launched in January of 1993. The curriculum reflects the wide scope of natural resources management, and provides students with skills in all areas of monitoring and managing terrestrial, freshwater, and marine resources.

A Masters graduate of Aberdeen University, Joy's research interests range from renewable energy and marine ecology, to tourism and natural resources. Joy is often engaged by both government and private industry partners to conduct wildlife or natural resource research on their behalf. He has conducted avian surveys for Environment Canada, and has completed several avian surveys for proposed wind farms around the province.

One area of specific interest to Joy is the study of cephalopod (squid and octopus) remains from the stomachs of marine vertebrates including sperm whales, northern bottlenose whales, dolphins, porpoise and various fish species.

This research enables scientists to better understand the diets of marine mammals and their impact on the marine ecosystem. Joy also manages the inshore squid-sampling program for Newfoundland and Labrador, on behalf of the Canadian government's Department of Fisheries and Oceans. *~*





# CRACKING the cancer code

Dr. Sanat Mandal's goal is to find smarter weapons for the battle against life-threatening cancers and other diseases. He's found one in bioinformatics, the application of statistics and computer science to the field of molecular biology. A PhD graduate in Chemistry from the University of Calcutta, Dr. Mandal is a chemistry instructor at the college's Clarendville campus.

His main research interests are in developing potent tumour-selective drugs for breast, lung, and blood cancers. Drugs that are developed applying this approach are expected to be less toxic and be able to overcome drug resistance. Applying this approach, Dr. Mandal has been able to develop several target-specific molecules, resulting in treatments that are more effective and less harmful for the patient.

Dr. Mandal uses state-of-the-art techniques in his drug design and development research activities. He combines his multi-disciplinary skills in his approach to drug development, targeting drug docking profiles and interaction evaluations, identifying the marker (target) genes using bioinformatics tools, and molecular biological validation techniques.

The success of targeted drug therapies for human pharmacology is an exciting prospect for those at the frontlines of medical research, and these concepts are brought to life for Dr. Mandal's students, linking the study of bioinformatics to progress in the real-world battle against cancer.

## WANTED – EXPERTS!

College of the North Atlantic is developing an online database which will be used to connect our in-house experts with media or other information seekers who are looking for faculty and staff with specialized knowledge and/or skills.

The database will be searchable by last name, department or keyword and the results will include information about faculty or staff members, including their areas of research/academic expertise, contact details and links to their websites where available.

### Why are we doing this?

The Marketing and Communications department is often contacted by members of the media who are looking for an authority on a particular subject – often it's a hot topic in the news here, elsewhere in Canada or around the world.

This online resource will centralize this information and also help to raise CNA's profile through media exposure. To view an example of how other institutions present this resource, visit the Simon Fraser University Directory of Experts page at [www.sfuexperts.ca](http://www.sfuexperts.ca).

### Questions?

Want to participate? All we need right now is your name.

Let's show the world who we are!

Contact Roger Hulan  
[roger.hulan@cna.nl.ca](mailto:roger.hulan@cna.nl.ca)  
709 643 7938

### Office of Applied Research

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Tel: 709 758 7473 Fax: 709 758 7327  
Email: [oar@cna.nl.ca](mailto:oar@cna.nl.ca)

# **\* WANTED \***



## **CNA Experts**



**Are you a leader in your field?**

**Can you offer an informed perspective  
on a specific topic of interest?**

**Join our database of experts, and share your knowledge.**

**You may be asked to do media interviews  
or make presentations to special interest groups.**

**To participate contact:  
Roger Hulan, Communications Specialist  
roger.hulan@cna.nl.ca  
709 643 7938**

# When cultures collide, people connect:

## *The story of College of the North Atlantic in Qatar*

By Tanya Alexander

If you had heard a decade ago that Newfoundland and Labrador's public education system would be teaching the labour force of an Arab nation to process oil and natural gas, you might have thought you were dreaming. There'd have been no doubt that College of the North Atlantic (CNA) is adept at providing accredited, accessible, industry-linked training. But to deliver that training in the Persian Gulf to the richest country in the world? That may have seemed a little too ambitious for any educational system.

With CNA's graduates in demand across the globe, whether it be with Voisey's Bay Nickel Company, Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks in Hollywood, the RCMP, or the United Nations, it makes sense that the reputation of the college would follow.

CNA made history in 2001, when it was chosen by the Middle East State of Qatar — above all other educational systems in the world — to establish a world-class technical college in its capital city of Doha. Now, approaching the 10-year anniversary of this union, the partnership has grown far beyond expectations.

Since opening its doors in 2002, College of the North Atlantic-Qatar's student population has grown from 300 to 3,000 and the staff complement of 50 is now well over 600. It has also generated more than \$45 million in revenue for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which was reinvested into the public education system.

The Qatar experience goes deeper than the financial implications. This melding of cultures has had significant consequence for individuals — both the students of CNA-Q, the Canadians who staff the campus and their families who have accompanied them to the Middle East.

Young single people, married couples, retirees — the whole gamut is drawn to this beautiful place. And, as many will tell you, Qatar has come to feel like home.



Keith Bonnell

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**“Over time many of us realized that what brought us here was becoming a very small part of what was keeping us here.” - Keith Bonnell**

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Keith Bonnell taught mathematics at the campus for five years before he and his wife briefly returned to Newfoundland in 2009. In September 2010, they headed back to Qatar. “Over time many of us realized that what brought us here was becoming a very small part of what was keeping us here,” says Bonnell.

He notes that aside from the attractive package of pay and benefits, it is an opportunity to become immersed in an exotic country and culture, travel the world, escape from harsh Canadian winters and acquire the value of a career in international education.

“As time passed, our day-to-day experiences on campus and in the city and country were in some incomprehensible way subtly weaving themselves into the fabric of our very being. And for most of us these changes have been overwhelmingly positive, welcomed, and have enabled us to grow and mature both individually and as a collective of professional colleagues.”



Julianna Deveau was three years old when her parents decided to take jobs at CNA-Q. In the five years they were there, the family traveled to exotic places like Egypt, Kenya, Belgium, and Germany. Julianna, now 12, recalls some of her favourite travel experiences.

“In Africa we went on a safari and got really close to lions and crocodiles,” she says, her eyes lighting up. “And in Egypt, we walked into a pyramid right to the tomb. I thought I would see a mummy!”

The family lived in a villa in Doha, inside one of the gated communities CNA-Q provides for employees with families. The community has a pool, gym and playground, along with an after school program. Julianna’s mom Mary remembers it as an ideal place to raise her family.

“The kids had so much freedom — bike riding, swimming, back and forth to friends’ houses. We had to teach them about safety when we came back here to Canada!”

From the Qatari perspective, the project has also effected significant change. CNA-Q is the first international public education Institution in Qatar, the first co-ed Institution, and the first foreign institution with a predominately Qatari student body. These are significant feats in such an ancient culture.

The country also benefits through long-term economic

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**Since opening its doors in 2002, College of the North Atlantic-Qatar’s student population has grown from 300 to 3,000 and the staff complement of 50 is now well over 600.**

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diversification and sustainability, the opportunity for youth to study in their own country with specialized North American/English language-based training and the fact that they are gaining social and cultural savvy and sensitivity that will make them desirable job candidates at home and abroad.

Though there are over 30 nationalities of students at CNA-Q, the majority of the student body is Qatari. And though our cultures don’t appear to have much in common on the surface, these youth have similar issues and anxieties shared by students world-wide. What they find at CNA-Q, and a key to the State of Qatar’s choice of CNA, is at the core of what one finds in Newfoundland and Labrador – respect and warmth.

“The teachers give students great opportunities to learn,” said Mariam Al Mairza, who studied Business Management. “They’re hard teachers, but they make learning a fun experience. And at the same time, it’s intellectually challenging. I think the best thing about CNA-Q is how the teachers and students respect each other.”

The ripple effect of this project is beyond measure. The benefits to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada, are staggering and far-reaching.

With the collective strength of Newfoundland and Labrador’s burgeoning industries in oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, and now in education, these currents of change are bound to carry us to every shore in this global village we call earth. *u*



# A family at

**For the Cole family, CNA is another tie that binds**

By Glenda McCarthy

It's easy to say College of the North Atlantic is in the blood for the Cole family. Gerard and Mena Cole, and their daughters Jessica and Melissa have all attended CNA in one form or another.

The Coles are from Colliers, an hour's drive from St. John's, and all four commuted to study at CNA campuses in the city.

Mena took the Stenographer program, and graduated in 1979.

"It seemed to be the thing to do back then," she recalls. "It seemed like everyone was doing that mainly because it involves a bit of

sense of security. "I love what I do. I love my job. I know it inside out so what's not to love about what you do when you do it all the time?"

Mena's husband Gerard was enrolled in the Clerk Accounting program in 1978 and attributes their relationship to attending the same college.

"Mena and I just knew each other in passing but we started hanging out when we were at the college. It was during the following year that we started dating."

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**"It seems like we are the CNA family! Actually we've all done good  
and our two girls have done really well with CNA..."**

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everything - bookkeeping, accounting, office administration, and shorthand typing. I loved it."

Mena says everything she learned has been helpful in her career. She found a job shortly after graduation and has been with the same company for three decades.

"Actually I'm still doing the job that I was doing 31 years ago, working with Eastern Health." A two-time graduate of CNA, Mena also took some Accounting courses when the college had a campus on Topsail Road.

She says it was difficult to work full time, attend night classes and raise a family, but it was all worth it. Now she is just a few years shy of retirement, and after being in the same position for 30 years feels a

Gerard found employment during his two-week on-the-job placement at the Holiday Inn in St. John's, and although he didn't finish his program he still credits the college with giving him the tools he needed to build a successful career.

"The program was an excellent program. I only had a little more than half completed but the information I got during that time period really contributed to me getting my job at the Holiday Inn. The basic education was what was required to reach that particular stage. I went right into work and worked there for over 20 years." Eventually he moved up to the corporate level, and then moved on to a position with Delta Hotels and Resorts, where he still works today.

Like her parents, Melissa completed a program related to office

# Fair



The Cole family (from left) Jessica, Melissa, Gerard and Mena have all attended College of the North Atlantic.

work. She graduated from the Office Administration Executive program in April 2008 and had a job waiting for her upon graduation.

"I actually went to the college to do business," says Melissa. "I did general studies at first but after six months I realized it wasn't really for me." Her parents helped her make the decision to switch to Office Administration.

"My parents knew my strengths and weaknesses in high school. I was able to find a career that plays to my strengths, not my weaknesses. I think I would have struggled more if I had stayed in business. I loved English and grammar and there was a lot of that involved with Office Administration. I decided to do that course and I loved it."

Melissa was hired on at Canada Fittings and Flanges. Her work with the company brought her to Europe for training and she was promoted to administrative coordinator. She says she wouldn't have had these opportunities without the training she received at CNA.

"The program definitely prepared me for what I was doing at first. When I was here two years, I got promoted so it just shows that there is room for advancement (in the field of office administration)."

Even though she has moved into a higher position in the company, she still uses the base skills she learned at CNA.

"I did take some of the skills I learned from that course and use them in the position I have now. I have more interaction with people in my current position and I enjoy that more because I was very, very shy."

As the baby of the family Jessica went in a different direction and enrolled in Civil Engineering Technology. She began her studies in September 2009 and is in the second year of the three-year program.

"I just got into the engineering technology part of school and while I was going through my first year I realized I wanted to take something different. I decided I would be happier in the civil part as opposed to mechanical."

Again, family support was a big part of making the decision.

"My parents wanted me to choose what I felt I would be happiest with. The Civil Engineering Technology program is good. It has met all of my expectations so far. I like how we get hands-on learning. We have labs where we test the stress of different wood, do concrete testing, soil testing and things like that. I like the hands-on experience you get with it."

That hands-on training brought her to New Orleans in April 2011 to restore areas that were destroyed by hurricane Katrina in 2006.

"It seems like we are the CNA family! Actually we've all done good and our two girls have done really well with CNA," says Mena.

"We didn't really think about it before - it didn't dawn on us," adds Melissa. "We thought it was pretty cool that we all went to the same college, even if it was different campuses."

"It's been adequate for three of the four of us," says Gerard. "I'm working, my wife is working and my oldest daughter is working, and my youngest daughter is on her final year for her education program. I anticipate her being in the workforce shortly after completing her program at CNA." *u*

# Focusing on

By Gina MacArthur

# ~~disability~~



Early Childhood Education instructor Joanne Morris (standing, left) visits with her former student Kimberly Walters and some of the children at Confederation Building Daycare Centre.

To most people who knew her in junior high school, Kimberly Walters was no different than anyone else. She enjoyed music and hanging out with her friends, and like most teenagers, she had a love/hate relationship with school.

But by the time she got to Grade 8, Walters had started to notice that she was working a lot harder than many of her peers, and her grades didn't seem to reflect the amount of time and effort she was putting in. "I found it difficult when the teachers would talk, talk, talk and expect you to write, write, write," she says. "Another problem was just being able to understand what was going on in class and I would get frustrated with that."

Walters' parents could sense her frustration, and they weren't surprised when an observant teacher called them in for a meeting. The teacher showed them an essay that their daughter had written. It was one

up a meeting for herself and her parents.

"We were very upfront with the college," she says, explaining that they told the counsellor about the supports she was getting in high school, and shared the test results that identified her learning disability. "From the get-go they were very helpful."

One of Walters' instructors, Joanne Morris, says it really helped that she had support from home and was a strong advocate for herself.

"That made it easier to help her," says Morris. "Kimberly came to the college with a plan and that allowed me as her instructor to guide and shape that plan according to how she was doing, and how her learning was going as well."

That plan included a modified course schedule that would allow Walters to complete her program over three years, instead of the standard two.

"That's the time for us to engage in some meaningful conversation and talk about some of the things that they need to be successful," she says. "From there I'll get a profile of the student and, very likely, a psycho-educational assessment or anything they can give me so I can help them. Then we solicit supports for them."

Kendall says that could include anything from modified course schedules, oral testing and specialized computer software, to physical supports like wheelchair ramps and special equipment. It's all provided at no cost to the student, and often on the advice of disability groups.

"We network with experts and advocates in the field and take direction from them and do our best to accommodate accordingly," says Kendall.

As CNA graduates more students with

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*"I had a lot of great people behind me, the instructors and the administration - everybody helped and they were able to guide me through my program to help me achieve my dream."*

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long, rambling sentence that filled an entire page. Clearly, their daughter was different.

After a series of tests it was determined that Walters had a learning disability - she couldn't effectively process information and then reproduce it to demonstrate that she had learned a concept.

Eventually, her high school worked out a system of learning supports that included oral testing and the use of scribes. A teacher's aide would ask Walters the questions on a test or assignment and she would tell them her answers, which the aide would then write down for her.

The combination of learning supports and understanding teachers would get her through high school, but meanwhile, Walters was thinking further ahead. Would she be able to complete a post-secondary program and have a rewarding career?

"My high school teacher pointed out that working in a child care centre would probably be a good option for me because I like working with children," she says. So Walters set her sights on the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program at College of the North Atlantic's Prince Philip Drive campus.

One of the first things she did was contact the college's disability services office, and set

"It's a demanding program and spreading that out over three years was a great way for her to start," says Morris. "The combination of what Kimberly brought and her family's support and what I and other instructors helped her with, I think all together it was what created an opportunity for her to be successful."

Morris says she's only too happy to help students like Walters, who need extra support, and that she prefers to focus on those students' potential.

"It isn't about an inability to do it," she says. "It's about getting the right supports so they are able to do it."

Judy Kendall is the college's coordinator for disability services in St. John's, and she's one of the people responsible for ensuring students get those supports.

"We have a whole learner services department (dedicated to this)," says Kendall. "It's our job to help in any way we can so that students can leave here with a certificate and go on to find meaningful, gainful employment."

She says a proactive attitude goes a long way toward ensuring student success when there are special needs involved - and that starts with a pre-entry interview.

special needs, word is getting around that there is help for those who need it. "The challenge is that we have so many students asking for our services that we're always looking for more resources for them," says Kendall. "I see that as a good thing because that means what we're doing is working."

As for Walters, she says she's glad she asked for help and persevered to get her diploma.

"I had a lot of great people behind me," she says. "Even though I was doing more for myself at this point, I still had the total support of my parents, the instructors and the administration - everybody helped and they were able to guide me through my program to help me achieve my dream."

She's now happily working at Confederation Building Day Care Centre in St. John's, just steps from her old college campus. Walters says she sees a little bit of herself in the children she works with every day, especially when she's helping them learn to do something for the first time, like tying their shoes, or zipping up their jacket.

"I love seeing the look on their faces when they finally accomplish something," she says. "They feel how I felt - they're really proud of themselves and that makes it all worth it." 

# Fueling the future: The power o

**CNA Public Relations Specialist Tanya Alexander shares her experience as a participant in a ground-breaking conference.**

By Tanya Alexander

The air was electric at the St. John's Convention Centre the morning of March 8, 2011, when the doors swung open for the first international Fueling the Future: Women in Oil and Gas conference. Nearly 400 women – policy makers, educators and employers – gathered from around the globe on the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day with a treasure trove of stories and information to share.

Words like *diversity* and *trailblazing* resonated off the walls and into the consciousness of the captivated audience. It became apparent that the term diversity is replacing equity in this new age. And when keynote speaker Hege Marie Norheim, senior VP of Statoil Norway, spoke of diversity as a quality assurance investment, it just made sense.

"Norway has the world's highest percentage of women in the workplace – we make up 70 per cent," said Norheim.

She revealed that Norway's government requires at least 40 per cent of its members to be women, and that 50 per cent are. Having so many women in the workplace and at the helm has made a huge impact.

workplace impacted by the responsibilities of mothers and fathers, why should the issue of childcare fall to women?

And it wasn't just women raising the collective consciousness. Conference co-chair Caron Hawco says the organizing committee knew it was important to have men at the table.

"We knew we wouldn't attract a great deal of men but this could not be a room of women," says Hawco. "We targeted those male leaders who effect change in the industry, and you know what? They stayed, they participated, they took notes – they recognized the value. One company president said to me, 'I have some homework to do,'" laughs Hawco. "They will be our champions."

She spoke of a labour shortage in North America and the pool of talented women that would provide a ready solution.

"Businesses have to see how it's going to affect the bottom line. Doing this [hiring women] for the right reasons hasn't worked. If we don't have enough of a labour force, what's going to happen?"

According to the United Nations (UN) there is a direct link between increased female labour participation and economic growth. "It is

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"Working women were asking the question of responsibility in having children, and realizing that it is not a gender issue, but a workplace issue," she said, noting that Norway offers universal childcare for children from the age of one, including after school until age 10.

"This childcare system is the highest social economic return of all investments in Norway," she said.

Women in Norway receive 46 weeks of fully paid maternity leave and men take 10 weeks. As she spoke it became clear – with every

estimated that if women's paid employment rates were raised to the same level as men's, America's GDP would be nine per cent higher; the euro-zone's would be 13 per cent higher, and Japan's would be boosted by 16 per cent," says the UN report Facts & Figures on Women, Poverty and Economics.

John Connors, Executive Manager of the Council of Marine Professional Associates (COMPASS), lead a frank discussion about the need for more women in the labour force.

"This shortage of personnel is practically a crisis," he said.

# f diversity

From its inception, says Connors, COMPASS adopted the stance that the marine transportation industry must be equal opportunity in Canada, and they wanted to lead the way with a progressive gender equity program.

"We didn't hope to develop gender equity in the industry, we planned it," he said, "and COMPASS expects to set the standard for Canada and provide a template for other jurisdictions."

Mary Clarke, community outreach coordinator for Women in Resource Development, spoke of her work with programs that advance girls and women through education and job preparedness. She shared with the crowd her experience as the first girl in the history of her school to take 'shop.'

"That's when I became conscious of this issue. I fought to do shop and then more girls followed," shared Clarke. "I tell girls today it's just as easy to hold a jigsaw as a mixer."

It made me think of when I was a university student in the mid 1980s, working a summer job at a paper mill. I was the only female ever to have accepted a 12-hour shift inside one of the gigantic boilers; first breaking up the huge ash rocks with a sledgehammer, then shovelling them into a wheelbarrow and dumping them outside. I've been told that taking the job in the first place, and completing it in 10 hours, made me somewhat of an urban legend. I chuckle at that now, because today in our society, women are doing that every day while also managing a family and many other aspects of life at the same time.

I wasn't the only one who left the conference feeling elated. The energy was palpable. The word that plays over and over in my mind as I try to sum up the event is 'powerful.'

"Women have told me the real eye opener was when they looked around at all the successful women in the room and realized they aren't alone with the issues in this industry," says Hawco, about the impact of the gathering. "And I like how men could walk in our shoes for a moment."

The committee is talking about hosting the conference every three or five years and creating an annual speakers' series to talk about the big issues on a smaller scale.

"We're talking about how we can put a legacy in place so this doesn't stop here," says Hawco. "I don't want to lose the energy we found in that room." *ra*



Holly Baker, right, program administrator for Women in Science and Engineering Newfoundland and Labrador, shares information with a visitor to her booth at Fueling the Future: Women in Oil and Gas.



Tanya Alexander, Public Relations Specialist for CNA's Qatar Project, was inspired by the speakers at the conference.



Once State Secretary to the Norwegian Prime Minister, Hege Marie Norheim is now Senior Vice President of Statoil Norway. She delivered the keynote address on the opening day of the conference.



Ann Marie Payne signs the letter 'a' in American Sign Language.

# Signing on

Embracing a student by  
learning her language

By Gina MacArthur

With the help of video conferencing, interpreter Stephanie McGean (foreground), leads a class in American Sign Language from Stephenville. On the monitor, from the Port aux Basques campus (L-R) are instructor Robert Anstey, and students Ann Marie Payne and Dorothy McLellan.



Like a lot of deaf people, Ann Marie Payne of Port aux Basques is used to people feeling awkward around her. She regularly encounters people who don't make eye contact, because they're not sure how to communicate with her.

Besides that, it's rare for her to run into someone with whom she can have a casual conversation in American Sign Language (ASL) because there are only a handful of people in Port aux Basques who are \*Deaf. "Other people don't want to learn," says Payne, through an interpreter. "They don't really think about me; they just want to write back and forth."

When Payne enrolled in College of the North Atlantic's Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, she wasn't expecting it to be any different — but she was in for a pleasant surprise.

One of her instructors, Robert Anstey, was eager to find a more efficient way to communicate with her than writing on a piece of paper. With the support of Campus Administrator Jan Peddle he set up a system that included a microphone connected to a computer with software that transcribed his words into text, and projected them onto a wall. Now, when he was addressing the class, Payne could follow along.

But Anstey didn't stop there. He wanted Payne to feel more like a part of the class, and Peddle was right behind him. He says Anstey's initiative in finding ways to make his classroom more inclusive inspired him to get on board.

"You participate in idle chit-chat with students all the time and I was a little embarrassed that I couldn't communicate to her in the same way," says Peddle. "If I wanted to tell her something I had to have a pen and paper and I didn't think that was respecting her needs. All I could do, going by in the morning, was wave to her, and a lot of other people were feeling the same way."

Meanwhile, Payne was showing some initiative of her own. She began teaching her classmates some basic signs, and soon they were learning more than how to sign the alphabet. They were also

discovering that Payne was an interesting and engaging person.

As Payne's classmates showed more and more interest in ASL, Anstey started looking for a way to supplement their learning through a trained ASL/English interpreter. He found Stephanie McGean, who provides sign language services at Stephenville High School, nearly 200 kilometres away.

"I couldn't do the travel time," says McGean, who then approached Stephenville High about using their video conferencing equipment to connect with the college in Port aux Basques. "Jan Peddle was really happy to know we could do it."

Soon a group of students, including Anstey and Peddle, was meeting every Wednesday afternoon to learn ASL. Connected to McGean by video they learn the basics of sign language, expanding their vocabulary and getting to know Payne in a whole new way.

"We can see such a difference in her face since we started doing this," says Anstey. "She's so much happier and we're happier too. She smiles so much."

Anstey says it helps that Payne is willing to help her friends learn. "She is an amazing teacher and she's so patient. We spend eight hours a day together and she's a wonderful lady and I felt like I wanted to connect with her."

Anstey says learning ASL and getting to know Payne has changed his perception of her. "I used to think of Ann Marie as my deaf student but now I think of her as a student who just happens to have a hearing impairment. The deafness is not a key factor anymore. It was hard to get past the obstacle of her being deaf at first, but now it's kind of secondary."

As for Ann Marie, she's thrilled that her language has become a part of everyday life around campus.

"I made new friends and I'm making new friends every day," she signs. "They're learning how to communicate with me and we're practicing every day." *u*

\*Editor's Note: Deaf is spelled with a capital D in this instance because it refers to people "who are medically deaf or hard of hearing, who identify with and participate in the culture, society, and language of Deaf people, which is based on Sign Language" - as defined by the Canadian Association for the Deaf.

# Nanuk turns 10

College staff recently celebrated Nanuk's 10th birthday with cake and presents at Headquarters.

Introduced Jan. 20, 2001, the college's polar bear mascot spends his time travelling across the province, representing CNA at special events within the college and the communities the institution serves.

"Nanuk has been great for college events, but his success has been just as big within the communities and regions served by College of the North Atlantic," says Stephen Lee, manager of Marketing and Communications.

"We've had Nanuk at the Herder finals, at the Salmon Festival, and at many festivals and events all over Newfoundland and Labrador throughout the year. As a polar bear, Nanuk doesn't really hibernate so it's easy to schedule him in for winter events as well."

"Nanuk brings a sense of camaraderie to the students attending the 17 campuses within the province," adds Dave Decker, regional student development officer. "With the 10th anniversary of his unveiling, we felt it was time to throw him a party in appreciation of the impact he has made within the college."

For more photos from Nanuk's birthday party, check out his blog at [www.cna.nl.ca/nanuk](http://www.cna.nl.ca/nanuk).



## Ingredients

1 striploin steak  
Small amount of olive oil  
2 slices of focaccia, plus garlic butter  
Your favourite barbecue sauce  
Sliced fresh tomatoes  
Iceberg lettuce  
¼ cup of crumbled cooked bacon  
¼ cup finely chopped green onion  
½ cup cream cheese  
½ cup goat cheese

## Directions

Combine the bacon, green onion and cheeses and set aside\*.

Season the steak with salt and pepper and brush with olive oil. Place on hot grill, brush on barbecue sauce and cook to desired doneness. Remove from heat, place on a rack over a pan, and allow to rest.

Spread garlic butter on both sides of bread and toast on the grill. Spread both slices with bacon-scallion cheese mixture, and top one slice with lettuce and tomato. Slice the steak thinly against the grain and arrange on the other slice of bread.

\*Spread may be refrigerated for up to two weeks. Remove from fridge 30 minutes before using for easier spreading.

## Spicy Garlic Roasted Peanuts

### Ingredients

1 whole head of garlic  
2 dried hot chilies, or 1 tsp. of chili flakes  
2 cups unsalted peanuts, skin on  
Zest and juice of 1 lime  
1/3 cup peanut oil  
Salt to taste

### Directions

Separate garlic into cloves - do not peel. Give each clove a gentle crush with the side of a large knife to release the flavor. In a large skillet, heat oil until it starts to ripple. Add garlic, chilies and peanuts and cook, stirring and tossing until peanuts start to darken. Add lime zest, juice and salt, toss again and serve. *~*



# Barbecue Steak Sandwich

*with Bacon-Scallion Cheese Spread*

**When Chef Jay Stuckless needed a helper to prepare this classic summer favourite, he called on Matthew Samsair of Twillingate, one of his first-year cooking students at the Bay St. George campus.**

"I remember in Grade 8 and 9 we had Home Economics and I really liked it," says Samsair. "From there I just decided I wanted to do cooking."

Samsair says he's excited about learning everything his instructors have to teach him, but he's really looking forward to working with meat. "I can't wait to start doing the beef, pork, veal and lamb chapters. I like cooking meat - I'm a 'meatatarian' - I just love meat."

Samsair says once he's finished school he might sign on as a cook in a work camp, or he might go a more tropical route. "I'd like to work on a cruise ship," he says. *~*



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