2008 Youth Conference

Visions North's first Youth Business Conference was held at the Jonah Roberts Complex on the Lac La Ronge Indian Reserve on April 24th and 25th. Over 40 grade 11 and 12 students representing High Schools from Northern Saskatchewan.

The students were able to hear from a diverse group of speakers. Our Premier, The Honourable Brad Wall, kicked off our conference with a keynote address. He welcomed the participants and encouraged them to take advantage of all the opportunities that were now available to them in Saskatchewan, including government programs helping to offset the cost of education. He also encouraged the entrepreneurs among the students by relaying his own experiences as a small business owner and informed them of the agencies that were there to help them, including the Community Futures Program in Saskatchewan. His speech was enthusiastically received by the conference participants. The Premier even took time to have supper with the students and patiently answered any and all of their questions.

The next day the Chief of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, welcomed the participants and relayed her own story of entrepreneurship, including the hard lessons learned along the way. Students mentioned how inspired they were by her address.

The first workshop was hosted by Lesley Scorgie of Calgary, the author of the bestselling book, Rich by 30. Her workshop centred on developing a financial plan and sticking to it to achieve your goals. She informed the participants that it was never too early to begin planning for the future. By the time that the students left her workshop they had all started their own individual plan!! The students of Sandy Bay were so motivated by Lesley's presentation that they presented her with a gift the next day.

Lesley was followed by Troy Payne, who also doubled as the emcee for the event. Thank you Troy, great job. Troy also continued the theme of planning by telling the students that they should start developing a life plan. What is it that they want to do and how do they want to get there? Troy also gave examples of successful young small business owners. He encouraged the students to get as much training and education as they could. It increased their chances for success.

Our last worksop was "The Lemonade Game" presented by Vickie Newmeyer of the Meridian Community Futures Development Corp. in Kindersley Saskatchewan. Vickie took the students through all aspects of starting their own small business. In this case, a lemonade stand. They were taken through location selection, stand decoration, financing, price selection, human resources, product development and marketing. The final radio ads written and performed by the students impressed everyone including the judges who awarded a $200 prize to the best overall effort.

Finally many thanks to the sponsors and volunteers without whose help none of this would have been possible. Our sponsors included Northern Affairs, First Nations Bank, Areeva, Cameco, CIBC, Can-Sask, Access Communications and Saskatchewan Community Futures Association. Our volunteers included Susan Folkersen, Shirley Harder, Yvonne Meekel, Kristen Bunz, Ron Powell, and Akadie Liskowich.

Great work Jean Powell in organizing the event!!

Premier Wall awarding a Laptop to a lucky student

Premier Wall having supper and answering questions from students

Students from Sandy Bay presenting Lesley with gift