

Wawatay News: Project Beyshick underway

Twenty-five entrepreneurs from Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) are in the midst of job shadowing top executives in Toronto. Project Beyshick, a job-shadowing project that focuses on nurturing entrepreneurship and career development among First Nations youth, got underway July 13.

“Project Beyshick has been an important step in promoting business skills among young people in Nishnawbe Aski territory and those who’ve taken part in this invaluable job-shadowing program are the best examples of the program and its benefits,” said NAN Grand Chief Stan Beardy.

The goal of the program is not only to encourage Aboriginal entrepreneurship, but also to change the perception of the Aboriginal community within corporate Canada.

“It is critical that we begin to see more interaction between the community of Aboriginal people in Canada and the corporate executives and organizations that comprise our economic engine,” says Aditya Jha, chairman of POA Educational Foundation, who partnered with NAN and Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund to offer the program.

Participants will follow a grueling schedule over the course of the program. Upon arriving on Friday, July 13, participants entered into three days of mixed training by professors from Trent University, Ryerson University and Dale Carnegie business training group.

The job shadowing started July 16 in Toronto after participants were matched with senior business executives of corporations and organizations that best complement the participant’s personal goals and interests. Job shadowing will run to July 18.

A debriefing will be held at Ryerson University July 19. Participants will then attend an appreciation dinner with participating CEO’s, First Nation and political dignitaries. At the conclusion of the program, a competition will be launched where participants have a chance to win \$15,000 grant to implement a business plan.

Launched in 2005, the program was the vision of Jha, a self-made millionaire and active philanthropist who was struck by the plight of Aboriginals who were living in what he described as “a third-world within a first-world nation.”

Feeling a personal connection with the challenges ethnic minorities face, Jha wanted to empower First Nation youth to become successful businesspeople that could uplift their own communities.

“Project Beyshick is designed to provide insight into the dynamic and culturally diverse mainstream business environment in Toronto,” said Jha. “It will also demonstrate how the members of the ethnic minority

communities have become successful in corporate Canada.”

For more information on Project Beyshick visit the POA Educational Foundation website.

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