



NSCDA Communiqué

March 2015

NSCDA Graduates Assessors for Certification Programme

A major milestone in the history of the Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA) occurred on January 16th, when the Certified Career Development Professional (CCDP) designation was awarded to the first 11 Certification candidates. Not only is this an important step in the careers of those who graduated on that day, but for the Certification Program as a whole: these graduates will now go on to become the assessors for future Certification candidates, including the 55 currently going through the NSCDA's pilot of the certification process.



“We are very proud of our first Certified Career Development Practitioners here in Nova Scotia” NSCDA Executive Director and Registrar Paula Romanow states enthusiastically. “This is a very important beginning step as our certification programme really begins to take off. These graduates today will be assessing the 55 pilot candidates, ensuring that the high standards of this professional certification are upheld.”

Graduate Cindy Ryan, a career development professional who works with the YMCA Employment Centre in Halifax’s North End, is a strong believer in the importance of certification. “This process validates the professionalism of the field to those outside of it. It recognises

the skill level of those doing this work and makes a difference to those thinking of coming into the field and young practitioners in this career. In the workplace, it brings accountability, guidelines, competency and standards.” Cindy’s journey to this milestone began with her first degree in Early-Childhood Education, which developed into a career helping young people to find employment. After completing a second degree in business, she now applies herself to helping clients at the YMCA Employment Centre. “I’m excited about the community-minded aspects of this work,” she says. “We live and work in the same places as our clients. It’s an incredibly diverse community, and this is reflected in our cli-

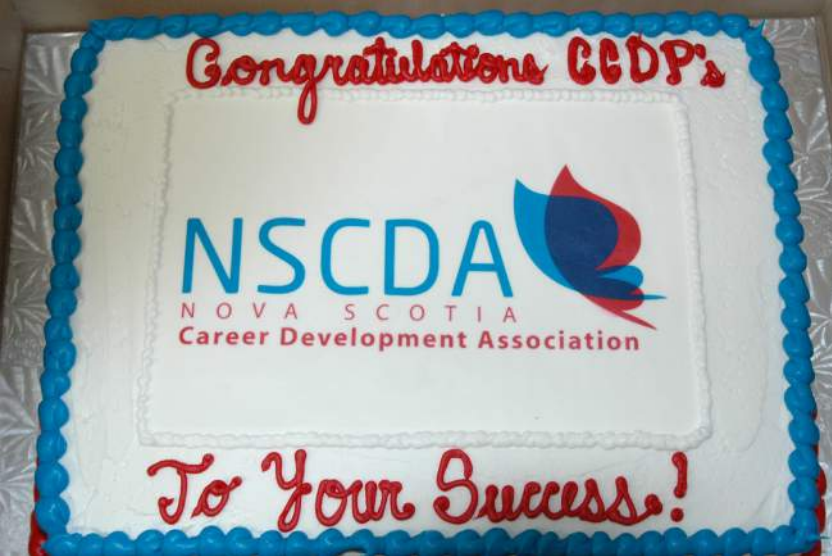
“This program is going to have a huge influence on career development practice here in Nova Scotia.”

ents and their individual needs. Becoming certified lets them know that we have a depth of knowledge and experience which we bring to our efforts on their behalf.” Cindy is thrilled to be one of the first to successfully complete certification in Nova Scotia. “I think that this program is going to have a huge influence on career development practice here in Nova Scotia in the future. Finally we are being recognized as the knowledgeable professionals that we know we are.”

Rui Ferreira is also a newly-minted CCDP who is looking forward to displaying his certification with his other diplomas, as an example for younger practitioners to aspire

to. Currently working at Futureworx Job Search Centre in Elmsdale, he arrived at this profession through his honors degree in Political Science and Labour Studies. “I came to this field through some self-exploration and study in my interest in labour relations. I came to realize as I was studying for my degree that I was more interested in helping the labour force employees reach their full potential that in helping the companies that employed them.” He believes this certification program is important because “there is no one clear path to this profession, there are many excellent professionals who have made their way here from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The fact that this certification process is a Recognition of Prior Learning and competency-based model makes it unique in the country, and well-suited to our own Nova Scotian context.”





Betsy Payne agrees. With a background in language arts and adult education through St. Francis Xavier, she was attracted to certification because of the model that the NSCDA has developed. “I have long been interested in prior learning assessment, the process of validating someone’s competence and learning. This just seemed to be a next logical step for me as it gave me the opportunity to see the complete ‘recognition of prior learning’ process roll out in my work.” Early in her career, she realised the benefits to having trained professionals ready to assist career seekers in their efforts to find meaningful employment. Betsy started in career training working with an entrepreneurship program where she provided coaching for the trainees. This led to her position as a case manager and program manager with the Job Resource Centre in Windsor.

As Rui and Betsy point out, the career development practitioner umbrella is a big one, covering everything from career counselors with a background in psychology to high school guidance counselors to job developers to human resources specialists to those who work in community development. The range of job titles represented by the applicants for the NSCDA’s pilot certification program shows that most under that umbrella recognize the ben-

efits of becoming a CCDP. This is also being driven in part by the growing desire and need among employers, clients, and funders for oversight and rigorous, measurable standards of professionalism and expertise within the field.

“I believe the professional certification is important for us here in Nova Scotia because it will help to give credit to those excellent people who have been doing the work over time,” states Betsy. “As a group we have come into the work from so many different directions that it is a good thing to have a way for our clients to understand who they are working with. As well, it is essential for the people who hire us to have a complete picture of what our jobs entail.”

Rhonda Sweeney, who has worked for over 10 years in the Career Resource Centre at the Nova Scotia Community College, supports this. “I feel it is important for the profession to be recognized. When clients access services across the province, they have to be comfortable in the fact that they are being assisted by a certified professional, and that the service they receive is consistent across the province.” Rhonda has a BA in Sociology, a certificate in Human Services, and a MEd in Educational Counselling. Her interest in

“The NSCDA has accomplished so much in the last few years, and continues to grow and offer on-going support and leadership to its members.”

the field of career development began as a Peer Support volunteer during her undergraduate studies at Acadia University. Spending time helping other students to make career path decisions led her to finding her own career as a career development professional. Like all the graduates, Rhonda is a strong ambassador for the NSCDA’s Certification Program. “I will assist others with getting information on certification.... The benefit for me is seeing my colleagues become

confident in, and recognised for, their abilities as a Career Practitioner.” Speaking to the certification work the NSCDA is doing, she says, Such a system not only increases the profile of career development professionals of all types, but it also promises reliability and peace of mind to job seekers who see the standardised qualification of CCDP business cards and diplomas.

One of the graduates has been not only a strong supporter of the NSCDA’s pilot certification program, but one of the driving forces behind its development. “I first heard about the possibility of certification over 10 years ago. I was so excited about this opportunity myself and other YMCA staff completed the “Taking Charge” self-assessment and started looking for ways to prove we have the competencies and identify any potential areas for learning. I remember calling and emailing Clarence deSchiffart a number of times wondering when we would have a tool, or a process to get started. Shortly after that I joined the Voluntary Certification Committee,” explains Rebekah Skeete, Director of Operations at the YMCA Employment Centres in Halifax/Dartmouth, where she has worked for the last 16 years. With



Treasurer Phil Long, Chair Kathy McKee, assessor Betsy Payne, and Cathy Casey of the NSCDA Board chat with Jenn Wagg of Employment Nova Scotia following the graduation

a Master’s Degree in Social Work from Dalhousie University, she believes strongly in the value of the profession in all its areas and stresses the importance of the role of the NSCDA in expanding professional development opportunities for practitioners of all kinds.

With the process now begun, Rebekah looks to the future, “The NSCDA has accomplished so much in the last few years, and continues to grow and offer on-going support and leadership to its members. The coming year is going to be an exciting one with all kinds of new initiatives and professional development opportunities related not just certification, but to our professional practice in general. People can stay tuned and visit the website and Facebook page often to be kept up to speed with PD opportunities, new membership benefits, and information on our other initiatives.”

Now that the assessors have successfully completed their certification they are hard at work assessing the 55 pilot candidates, who are expected to complete the process by the end of April. A call for the next cohort of candidates will be going out early in the summer. Rui Ferreira hopes that many of the province’s career development practitioners will apply. “For the many excellent professionals who have worked their way here, certification will bring them the acknowledgement of expertise and competency they have earned.”

Diane Gordon of the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education speaks with one of the graduates





From the Registrar's Desk

Hi everyone,

As you can see from this Communique, it's been an exciting and historic few months for the NSCDA. A huge congratulations to our 11 Assessors on being awarded their CCDP designations. They've worked very hard to get here, starting with receiving their Competency Assessor Program diplomas from NSCC, and then completing the three stages of the Certification Program. Since December, they've also been extremely busy doing the Structured Interview component of the process for our 55 pilot candidates. Without our assessors, we quite simply couldn't manage, and their commitment to the NSCDA and to Certification ... all as volunteers... is invaluable!

Pilot Update

As of this writing, the 55 certification pilot candidates have almost completed the certification process. Because the NSCDA Certification Program is still in the pilot stage, every step of the way is being evaluated through surveys and focus groups. Everyone wrote the General Knowledge Exam in December, with some unexpected results. Based on these results and the excellent feedback given on the evaluations, we asked the consultants who created the exam, and indeed all of the certification process / evaluation tools, to do a deep analysis of the exam and the results to see if any adjustments needed to be made. The results of that review resulted in some tweaks to the exam as it was written, which meant that some of the marks

had to be adjusted, and a number of candidates who had come in just below the original pass mark have now passed. Those who didn't will be rewriting a second exam in April. All candidates moved forward into the second (Structured Interview) and third (Work Experience Package) components of the process while we were waiting for the consultants to finish their review. A number of candidates have now completed everything and are ready to be awarded their certification. Everyone is on track to be through the program by the end of April.

All of the pilot candidates deserve a very hearty "Well Done!" They've been very patient as we've moved through the pilot process; it's been a learning curve for all of us, and their help and feedback will result in an improved program going forward. It's a big thing, becoming certified, and a lot of hard work; this initial group of candidates is to be commended for demonstrating leadership and commitment to their profession by their willingness to take part in, and persevere with, the project. Thank you to them!

Next Steps

Once this group of candidates has finished the process, and we've analyzed their evaluations of the process

as a whole, we'll be sending out a call for the next group of candidates. We're hoping to certify another 75 - 100 in the coming year, but will be doing it on a continuous intake basis. I'll have more information on that during our presentation at our NSCDA Conference at the end of May. There are currently 15 people on the waitlist for the next phase. If you'd like to have your name added, or want more information on certification, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

New NSCDA Office and Contact Info

As part of our evolution as an organization, we're pleased to announce that we've moved into our own office space. We can now be found at Suite 420, 1600 Bedford Highway (Sunnyside Place across from the RBC and Sunnyside Mall). My new phone number is (902) 832-0334. My e-mail address is the same, certification@nscda.ca.

Looking forward to hearing from you with any questions or comments,

Take care

Paula



MEET YOUR ASSESSORS

Rui Ferreira



Rui Ferreira is a Career Counsellor and Assistant Manager with Future-Worx Job Search Centre in Elmsdale. He received a B.A. in Labour Studies and Political Science from York University and a Labour-Management Relations Certificate from the University of Ottawa. Rui has over 13 years of experience in employment counselling, workshop facilitation, job developing, and advocacy. He is trained in Assessment Tools such as MBTI, Strong Interest Inventory, and Personality Dimension.

Marcus Jamieson has over 15 years of experience supporting adults with various disabilities in developing life and employment plans. During this period Marcus has worked closely with various health care systems as a family advocate providing intervention and support to individuals with complex needs. Presently Marcus is the Systems and Service Manager for TEAM Work Cooperative and The Workbridge.



Marcus Jamieson

Karen Kirk



Karen Kirk is an enthusiastic career practitioner who designs and delivers inspiring workshops to diverse groups. As a lifelong learner, Karen enjoys being both teacher and student and uses her knowledge as a life skills coach and adult educator to assist others in navigating the world of work. She is an origami enthusiast and was on the winning team for a national Stop Racism award.

Joanne McKenzie has worked in the Career Practitioner field for the past fourteen years. She is presently employed at the MetroWorks Lakeside Employment Centre where she assists clients reach their employment goals. Joanne has taken a keen interest in the Career Practitioner Certification process and recently completed the Competency Assessor Training program at NSCC.



Joanne McKenzie

Betsy Payne has been an Employment Coordinator with the Job Resource Centre in Windsor, NS since 1997. As a frequent NSCDA presenter and NATCON co-presenter, Betsy has a wealth of experience as an Adult Educator and facilitator.



Betsy Payne

Jenny Milligan



Jenny Milligan thrives where Career Development, Adult Learning, and Facilitation overlap. She fills supportive and evaluative roles, for learners, immigrants, women, people with disabilities, and others. Jenny is from New Brunswick, and holds a Master's in counselling, and a Career Practitioner Certificate from Dalhousie. She has been happily immersed in the Career Practitioner field since 2009.

Elaine Piper



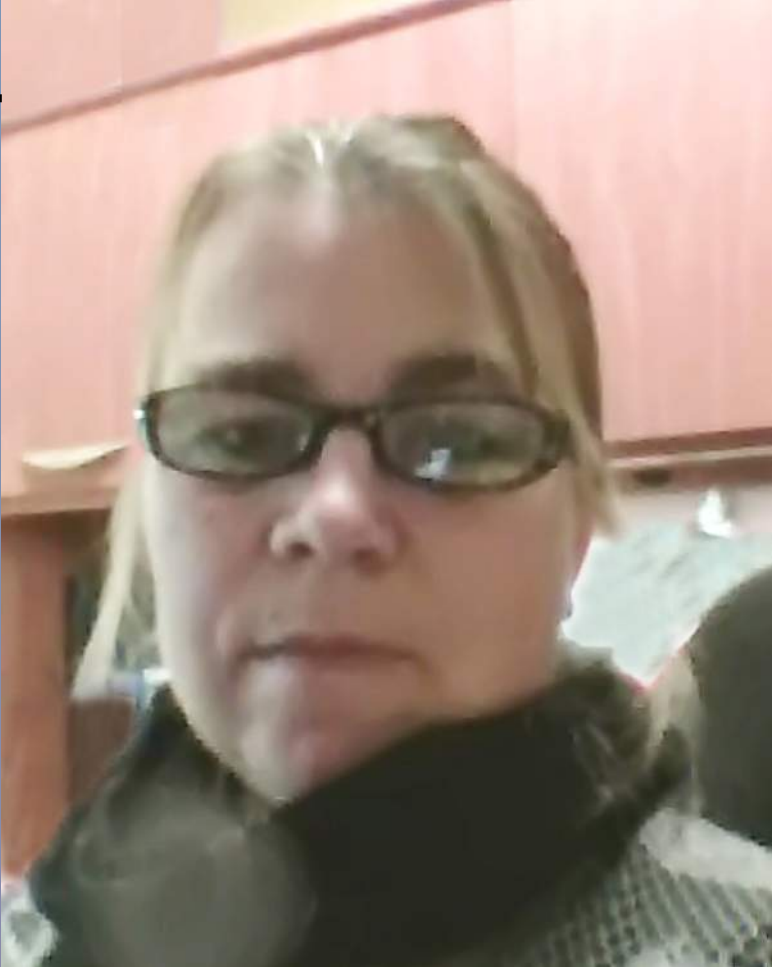
Elaine Piper has developed a dedicated following of satisfied clients who appreciate her integrity, drive, and career practitioner skills. She has performed a variety of roles including team lead, case manager, career counselor, quality control, facilitator, workshop developer, and transition centre manager. She truly enjoys giving back and assisting clients in navigating the labour market.

Cindy Ryan has been an active member of the NSCDA for over ten years. Her credentials include Adult Education with Dalhousie Continuing Education, BBA- Mount Saint Vincent University, certification as Diversity Trainer from the Human Rights Commission, Practitioner for Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) and most recently Competency Assessor Training at NSCC.



Cindy Ryan

Rhonda Sweeney has over ten years of dedicated experience in Employment Counselling. She is a past Board Member of the NSCDA, Chair of the local Career Network Group, and recent graduate from the MEd Counselling program at Acadia University. Rhonda is involved with building awareness for Competency Based Standards provincially. She is committed to helping clients return to work, finding their path and moving forward.



Rhonda Sweeney

Rebekah Skeete



Rebekah Skeete is Director of Operations for the YMCA Employment Centres of Halifax/Dartmouth. She has worked in the field for more than 20 years, and has a Master’s Degree in Social Work. Rebekah has been a member of the Voluntary Certification Committee since 2007, and has been an active NSCDA Board Member in the past. Rebekah has run workshops for the NSCDA in the areas of: Solution Focused-Framework, Diversity, Cross Cultural Communication, Inclusive Client Service, and Ethics.

Lynda Thomas



Lynda Thomas is presently the Director of Human Resources for the YMCA Employment Centres of Halifax/Dartmouth. She had worked in community development and the employment field for more than 30 years. Lynda is a registered social worker, and has extensive experience with mediation, and inclusive service.



NSCDA 17TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SHARE THE VISION.
SHAPE THE FUTURE.

May 27~29, 2015. Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia



- PRE CONFERENCE
CAREER THEORY

with Teresa Francis

Whether we're aware of it or not, there is a theory behind every strategy or tool we use as a career practitioner, and every decision our clients make. This half-day workshop, the first in a series, starts with the basics, exploring what theory is, why it's important, its impact on the evolution of the career development field and its relevance to your own career story.



- **ARE YOU READY?**

with Sarah Delicate

"Streamlining, one-stop, outcome based, ever-evolving service models, marginalized populations, supply vs. demand focus, precarious jobs, aging populations, multi-generational workforce, people without jobs/jobs without people, political 'showboating'..." Employment organizations across Canada are facing a tsunami of change. What's your plan?"



- KEYNOTE
WHAT EXACTLY HAVE I SIGNED UP FOR?

with Sarah Delicate

Across Canada, employee engagement (and dis-engagement) is a very hot topic, and the employment sector is no exception. Without engaged staff, you simply cannot perform in an Outcome-Based environment. With engaged staff, you will change the world (or your corner of it, anyways!). Sarah Delicate will convince you to re-new your commitment to the three key variables that drive performance and engagement: Purpose, Mastery, and Autonomy.

- CLOSING

with Cathy Jones

Master of a thousand voices, Cathy Jones is a Canadian television icon and an audience favourite for an unprecedented 25 years. Cathy is as popular with her peers as she is with fans, winning an incredible 18 Gemini Awards for her work as a writer and performer.



AND 17 OTHER SESSIONS ON LEADERSHIP, CONNECTIONS AND HEALTH & WELLNESS!

For more information: visit the conference webpage: <http://conference2015.nscda.ca>

Or contact us at NSCDA - 902.832.0335 - info@nscda.ca - www.nscda.ca