

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

JOHN DIRLIK

After an absence of many years, Placement Potential's newsletter is back. To reach as many as possible, it is also available online on our website. Its goal is to provide news and information about our work and serve as a link connecting the many people involved in this organization.

Placement Potential's genesis more than 3 decades ago was a group of dedicated parents in Montreal's West Island concerned about the lack of employment opportunities for their children with special needs. Born as an Adapted Work Centre (CTA) funded by the Office des personnes handicapées of Quebec (OPHQ), Placement Potential eventually morphed into its current form of Adapted Enterprise accredited by Emploi-Quebec - with about 75 employees in Montreal, the South Shore, Laval and Vaudreuil.

Enough history. After over 20 years of dedicated service, Brigitte Cote has moved on. Her earliest accomplishments included not only being the cheery voice answering the telephone and transitioning from manual to computerized accounting, but preparing impeccable financial reports, providing invaluable administrative leadership and dispensing much-needed organizational analysis. With the arrival of Bonnie Pate as fulltime administrative technician, Brigitte assumed responsibility for the Human Resources department, which she did with the perfect balance of professionalism and empathy. She will be missed.

Placement Potential welcomes her replacement, Christine Layden, as Development and Human Resources Technician. We are confident she will also prove to be a valuable asset. Another addition is Melanie Faubert, hired in April of this year as an educator. Her role will range from training new employees to assisting in the day-to-day management of the growing Maintenance Division. Welcome both to the administrative team of Placement Potential.

Last but not least, we thank the Zeller Family Foundation for its generous financing of this newsletter. Enjoy.

A NEW CHAPTER

BRIGITTE CÔTÉ

I would first like to commend the initiative of John to put our newsletter back in circulation and I hope it will meet your needs and interests. I was invited to add a few lines in this edition, to inform you of an important change in my professional life. On the 29th of May, after 20 years of working with all of you, I will leave my position at Placement Potential to go in search of new challenges. This leap into the unknown has stirred up a lot of emotions and I already know that I will miss you greatly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have allowed me to live this adventure for all these years. First, our director, John Dirlik with whom I worked from the beginning. We were able to compare our ideas to bring out the best and I felt a lot of confidence and freedom in carrying out my work. When I look at our record, I see a lot of positives and I like to believe that it is reciprocal. I thank Bonnie Pate, my right arm, my personal memory aid and often my source of encouragement. Our collaboration has brought me a lot. I also want to acknowledge the work of all members of the Board of Directors because throughout these years, your support has been invaluable and your commitment inspiring. And a huge thank you to all employers and colleagues with whom I developed a great working relationship. It is through your involvement that our work finds its meaning and value.

Finally, to all the employees Placement Potential, it is to you that I address the biggest thank you. You are courageous people who have overcome your limits to work to the best of your abilities. I have many testimonials from your colleagues and superiors that you are for them, a source of inspiration and motivation. You have all my admiration and friendship. All that I helped build over the years, I have done with the greatest hope to assist you in your journey. This area of my work is from where I draw my fondest memories.

To all those who are interested, I would be happy that our friendship continue and I would appreciate that we stay in contact. Do not hesitate to contact me at the following email address: bricote@outlook.com. If you do not have internet or you are loyal to the old telephone, you can leave your number with Bonnie at the office and she will contact me. It will be my pleasure to stay in touch. I hope our paths cross again soon.

NEW FACES



CHRISTINE LAYDEN

I am delighted to be joining the team at Placement Potentiel. Prior to this, I was an employment counselor at l'Arrimage and worked at both the Laval and Montreal office.

Born and raised in Montreal, I studied psychology at McGill University and then at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. I grew up swimming and later spent many summers working as a lifeguard. I also love traveling and have lived in several countries. Among my travels are two volunteer internships in Africa and South America.

My transition from l'Arrimage to Placement Potentiel looks like a smooth, yet exciting one. I look forward to taking on a new role, meeting new people and discovering new challenges!

I am very proud to be joining Placement Potentiel's team. Before this, I worked at Maison Nouvelle Vie, a center for people who struggle with addiction.

I have studied addiction and I am now studying in mental health at l'Université de Montréal. I've always known I wanted to work with people. For many years, I worked at a day camp with young people and it was a wonderful experience.

This job is a new challenge for me, a new experience. I look forward to meeting you all in person.



MELANIE FAUBERT

EMPLOYEE LEAVES TO TAKE ON NEW CHALLENGES A SUCCESS STORY

JOHN JANTAK

Determination and tenacity are just two of the many attributes that former Placement Potential employee Latoya Duggins possesses. After overcoming many challenges, she is now completing her education that will eventually lead her into a new career in accounting.

Latoya's life hasn't been easy. She credits the 10 years working in various vocations through the auspices of Placement Potential for helping her to gain a solid footing. The different work environments in which she worked helped instill the confidence she needed to enroll in the Continuing Education Program at John Abbott College.

Latoya had turned to Placement Potential for help in August 2003 after teenage difficulties prevented her from keeping a steady job within in a regular work environment. She was hired and worked for five years in the Building Maintenance Division in several locations, including the Eaton Centre, Wellington Centre, L'Autre Maison Crisis Intervention Centre and the Montreal Association for the Blind.

In 2008, now a single mother, Latoya took one year off work to care for her newborn son and moved to the West Island. She returned to Placement Potential in 2009 and her new challenge was to find daytime employment so that she could take care of her son. Latoya began a new position at Shemoy Enterprises Inc. in Town of Mont-Royal, assembling light fixtures.

To be closer to home, a new position was found at Optikos Design in Pointe-Claire. As with all her previous jobs, she excelled in all her new responsibilities. "At Optikos, I started in the warehouse, sorting and packing products, and shipping them out," said Latoya. "About seven months, the warehouse manager left, and they moved me into that position where I was taking care of the warehouse, and supervising two employees. I also had my own office so I did office work, accounting, inventory, and got to know the computer system," Latoya said.

A sudden illness forced Latoya to take an unexpected leave from work in February 2013. Determined not to let anything hold her back, Latoya decided to take the bold step of continuing her education. After doing some research on the Internet, she found an accounting program offered at John Abbott College.



LATOYA DUGGINS

Latoya credits the staff at Placement Potential for supporting her decision to return to school and for helping to instill the confidence that enabled her to excel in all the various jobs she's held. "I always felt I was able to do more, I just didn't know if I could do it. Even at my lowest point, I always felt there was more in me, but how do I get it out?" said Latoya.

"It's been harder than I thought it would be, but it's also given me a lot more confidence because in a way I think Placement Potential became a crutch for me," Latoya added. "It was a safe place for me. In the past, even if my heart told me to try this, I would never have done it. Since I started school, I learned and grown a lot. I don't have to use anyone or anything as a crutch because I can actually stand on my own two feet."

She was recently selected by the teachers and coordinators from the John Abbott College Continuing Education Department as an outstanding student during Quebec Adult Learner Week.