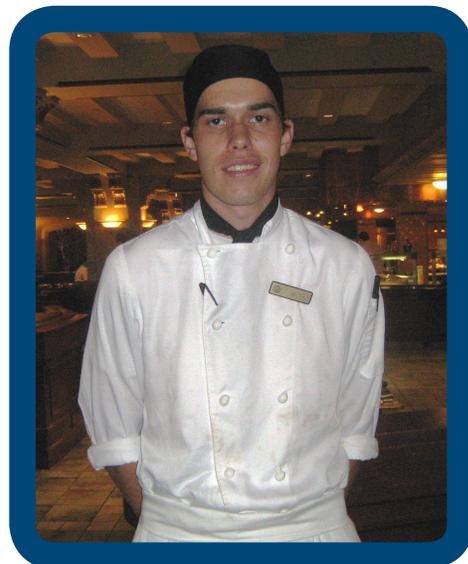


NAVIGATING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS GRADUATE

"The Navigating Employment Pathways Program was one of the best things that happened in my life for a while and it has opened up a whole new life for me. I have gained tons of skills from the program, I have to say my confidence has hit the roof, I have never felt so great about myself and I never would've gained such great skills in the Hospitality and Tourism industry."



Canadian job seekers are finding it increasingly difficult to find employment, and even harder to find employment they are passionate about. This trend is even more accurate for inhabitants of Northern Ontario where the unemployment rate is 12.8%. Like many others, this was the situation Brett Hawke of Victoria Harbour, Ontario found himself in earlier this year. Even with 3 years' experience working in the food service industry Brett found it extremely difficult to find employment.

"I always had such a hard time looking for work. I would apply to so many places and get interviews but never seemed to fit the position."

That was until Brett's aunt and uncle presented him with a possible solution; the Navigating Employment Pathways (NEP) program offered by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) in partnership with the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) and funded in part by the Government of Canada.

"My aunt and uncle were the ones who introduced me to the Navigating Employment Pathways program. They were the ones who inspired me to take the course. I decided to apply because I felt the program could upgrade my skills and knowledge in the hospitality industry."

Designed to provide Aboriginal people looking for a career in the tourism and hospitality industry with industry-specific training, the course includes certifications in Service Excellence, Smart Serve, In Good Hands food safety training, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems (WHMIS) and emerit Workplace Essentials. In addition to skills and knowledge development, the program offers practical training through related internship placements within the industry.

"I feel everything I have learned in the program in the last 10 weeks has made me more aware of what the industry cares about, but also how to be professional and keep a safe work environment. The program gave me all the skills to be confident, professional and well managed. It gave me knowledge on interview questions, how to show you're professional to the employer and to research the company you are applying to. The training for sure helped me seek employment. I had to turn down two jobs so far because I am moving to Banff for work. But if it wasn't for the training, I have to say I might not be going to Banff."

With the skills he gained from the NEP program, upon graduation Brett obtained full-time employment in the Hospitality and Tourism industry. Next month he will begin the adventure of a lifetime working at The Fairmont Banff Springs as a Second Cook and shredding the hills in his time off.

Brett Hawke

For more information about the NEP program:
Visit the MNO website at www.metisnation.org or
email Rae-Anna Gardner at raeg@metisnation.org

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