



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**DECEMBER 4, 2009**

## **Bridge Women with SUCCESS**

Burnaby, BC - S.U.C.C.E.S.S., in partnership with the 'We Can' British Columbia Campaign, co-hosted an event called "Women of Courage and S.U.C.C.E.S.S." at the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Employment Services office.

The primary goal of the event was to promote awareness of the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Bridging Employment Program for Women, celebrating the achievements of the participants, as well to raise awareness to the 'We Can' Campaign and 16 days of Activism.

The S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Bridging Employment is a 26-week employment program for women who have experienced violence and/or abuse. The approaches include Community and Aboriginal, both of which are holistic and client centered. The program is designed to assist participants to overcome their barriers and make positive changes in their lives, to employment or back to school. This program started in January 2009. This event was the 1st annual Women of Courage and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. graduation celebration with 13 graduates.

Two participants shared their experiences at the Graduation Ceremony. "The Bridging program helped me alot, giving me some structure to my day. The topics covered throughout the program highlighted areas in my life I was having challenges with, and the staff encouraged me along the way," said Amelia Manitobenis, one of the graduates from Aboriginal Bridging Employment Program. "This program helped me overcome my fears; I was able to see a light at the end of the tunnel. I am arranging to go back to school, and my goal is to be a counsellor. It's still a lot of work ahead of me, but now I know I have a plan. This entire experience has been very exciting for me," indicated by Blanka Mikulic, graduate from Community Bridging Employment Program.

The 'We Can' Campaign works through a coalition of diverse organizations capable of mobilizing large sectors of the community to take a stand against violence against women. The campaign is to build a broad social movement to reduce violence against women, and to make British Columbia a safer place for all. It consists of activities throughout the 16 days between November 25 (International Day Against Violence Against Women) and December 10 (International Human Rights Day). The dates have been chosen to symbolically link violence against women with human rights violations.



“This campaign recognizes that change is the responsibility of the individual and that change is possible,” said Lali Pawa, Justice Education Society - Program Coordinator. “Violence is endemic in so many communities in BC and this violence against women needs to stop and we believe the ‘We Can’ Campaign can trigger the necessary change in attitudes and behavior. Further, we believe this can happen on a scale sufficient to generate a mass social movement. We’re excited to be involved in such a process and know that as a Coalition determined to make a change - We Can make a difference.”

The event was strongly supported by various levels of government and the community. Officiating guests included MLA Raj Chouhan, MLA Kathy Corrigan, and MLA Richard Lee. Guest performers included the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society Elders Group, and the Solidarity Notes Choir.

“S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is a strong supporter of the “We Can” Campaign, and believes in the importance of partnering, and hosting an event during the 16 days of Activism,” said Thomas Tam, Chief Operating Officer of S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Founded in 1973, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is one of the largest social service providers in British Columbia with over 20 locations and 2 overseas offices. For more details please visit [www.success.bc.ca](http://www.success.bc.ca). For more information about the 16 Days of Activism and the ‘We Can’ campaign visit [www.wecanbc.ca](http://www.wecanbc.ca)

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