



Gitxsan
Development
Corporation

NEWS RELEASE

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Meet Bill Gorrell and the future of Carpentry apprenticeship training

In November, Gitxsan Development Corporation (GDC) and ITA signed an MOU to announce a collaborative relationship to strengthen opportunities in trades-based careers. Sharing a collective goal to train more Gitxsan community members up to become Red Seal Endorsed trades people and leaders in their respective trades.

We would like to acknowledge and congratulate Bill Gorrell on his application for Supervision and Sign Off Authority receiving ITA approval. Bill can now direct and supervise the work-based training of apprentices and recommend apprentices for certification in Carpentry, as well as, sign off on apprenticeship hours. This will increase apprenticeship opportunities in community.

GDC has sponsored 8 carpentry apprentices working in South Hazelton with Bill so far. These apprentices and others from community will continue their technical training through Coast Mountain College this coming February, a program offered in partnership between Coast Mountain College, ITA and GDC to offer the complete package of training to Red Seal.

ITA is committed to providing equal opportunity to trades training and careers for Indigenous people in British Columbia. ITA's Indigenous Initiatives team works closely with Indigenous communities, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) holders, training providers and employers across B.C. to make trades training accessible to rural and urban communities.

Bill was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and then moved to Greater Vancouver when he was four. He has been married for 15 years with two step-children and 3 grandchildren. He had a very tumultuous childhood and suffered from several addictions until he was in his early forties. Bill underwent, and continues to undergo, self-improvement therapies and is a born-again Christian. He has been completely sober for over seven years. His wife is Gitksan and from Gitanmaax and she too had a very harsh childhood. Their marriage has been a tough journey, but together they have helped to heal each other but not entirely, because some things stay with you always, but they have learned and taught each other the meaning of true love. Bill wanted to include this, as personal as it is, because it is part of why him and his wife came to Hazelton.

Bill has been in construction for approximately 29 years. In his early twenties, he took a Steel Detailing drafting course with an Architectural component, but could not find suitable employment. He then started in landscaping, mainly hardscaping, such as paving stones and stone retaining walls. He then went into concrete forming, and while there, he was a rigger for Tall Crane Equipment in Vancouver for about three years where he learned many aspects of construction. Bill then found employment with a large prefabrication home company and worked there for many years, working his way up to Assistant Production Manager. At this company, his skills were developed in the framing, roof building, and the finishing aspect of carpentry. He also learned a good deal of custom carpentry skills involving large timbers and joinery. The company was downsizing so he decided to open his own business. He started by doing general handyman duties to get his name out there, but eventually ended up working for a custom build cedar company. Bill was a subcontractor and this is where he honed his communication and site layout skills. As most of the work he was doing was on commercial construction sites, he reacquired his drawing, reading skills and developed the ability to do material take offs and accurately estimate completion dates. That company recognized his skills with large timber/lumber and soon started giving him responsibility of very large commercial jobs which furthered his knowledge in all aspects of the construction world. This company offered him the Project management position in their Commercial division as the person previously in that role was getting ready to retire. Bill held the Project management position for several years before deciding to move to Hazelton.

Bill and his wife moved to Hazelton for several reasons, but the main reason was to help the community. They had been coming to Hazelton for holidays for quite a few years, and he absolutely fell in love with this place. He was born and raised in big cities and the feeling he had when he was here can only be described as "coming home". After

coming to Hazelton for a while they heard stories of drug addiction and help being needed in the community. Due to his past and what he had overcome, he felt he could do some good work in this area to try and help people.

In regards to the Industry Training Authority (ITA), Bill sees this as another avenue to meet people and encourage them to follow a different path. Some people don't even know there are choices out there unless someone presents a choice to them and gives them encouragement and support along the way. That is part of the reason he took employment with Gitxsan Development Corporation. They too have a commitment to helping the community, to see the community thrive and offer opportunities that perhaps were not available before.

Those interested in Carpentry Apprenticeship or technical training should contact Jeneen Woods (jeneen.woods@gitxsanbusiness.com) for more information about future opportunities.