

HOST: BUSINESS OBJECTS

ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS AND EMPLOYABILITY IN VANCOUVER'S DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

MARCH 4, 2007

LEADERS:

Greg Wolfe, Executive VP, Operations, Business Objects

DELEGATES:

Patricia Bjerrisgaard, Senior Director, Community, Business Objects

Gurval Caer, CEO, Blast Radius

Rob Cruickshank, President, BC Technology Industries Association

Wendell Harlow, Community Relations Manager, Electronic Arts

Evaleen Jaeger-Roy, VP, Global Talent & Community Relations, Electronic Arts

Caroline Jellinck, Partner, Ray & Berndtson

Amy Rajan, President & CEO, Orbital Technologies

Bijan Sani, President & CEO, INETCO Systems

Keith Spencer, Partner, Fasken Martineau

Wendy van Donkelaar, VP, Apparent Networks



Tour lead Greg Wolfe leads delegates between tour stops on the Downtown Eastside.

This sector-specific tour for technology executives examined the issue of homelessness and employability in Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES) - an area that has gained notoriety as Canada's poorest postal code. The neighbourhood is plagued by high crime rates with many residents facing multiple barriers to employment including drug addiction and mental health issues.

The tour began at **Potluck Café**, a social enterprise in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) where catering revenues subsidize employment programs and meals for local area residents. At Potluck Café, tour delegates discussed the issue of food accessibility and employment for at risk populations residing in the area.

The tour continued to **United We Can**, a social enterprise, recycling depot. United We Can creates jobs for inner city residents facing multilevel barriers to traditional employment. Employees shared their stories of re-entering the workforce and explained how the enterprise has generated 24 full-time jobs and channeled millions of dollars into the local economy through refunds on returned bottles and cans.

Next delegates spoke with youth from **Directions Youth Services Centre**. Directions Youth Services Centre is an organization that supports Vancouver's homeless and at-risk youth by providing a single entry point to access tools and resources needed for youth to make positive, healthy life changes. Here delegates spoke with homeless youth about the organizations support for basic housing needs and pre-employment assistance.

Delegates then visited **Tradeworks Training Society**, an organization that helps foster sustainable independence by providing job-related skills training, counseling, and work opportunities for women. Delegates spoke with women employed through a trades program that helps women from the DTES transition from social assistance to independent employment.

The tour ended at **Building Opportunities with Business (BOB)** a non-profit organization that is championing an inclusive revitalization process for the inner-city. At BOB, delegates were introduced to the 'Social Purchasing Portal': a list of vendors and social enterprises contributing to sustainable economic and community development.

CBSR recognizes Coast Capital Savings and Vancouver Foundation for their contribution to the Seeing is Believing program.