Silver City’s Shining Star!
Ami Chawla

The next time you decide to see a movie at Famous Players Silver City in St. Vital, you might have the chance to meet Ami Chawla. She could be the staff person who takes your ticket and directs you to the correct theatre.

Ami began her position at Famous Players Silver City in St. Vital in 2004. As a Cast Member, Ami’s duties are many and varied. In addition to taking tickets, Ami conducts theatre checks where she is responsible for ensuring that the temperature and volume are suitable, the picture is focused and scratch free, and the guests are not talking.

Ami’s favorite task is having to ask guests for their I.D. before viewing a movie rated 18A. She takes pride in making sure that theatre rules are followed.

Aristotle Cabredo, one of the Managers, had wonderful things to say about Ami.

“She takes great pride in doing a good job, whether it is asking guests for I.D. before entering an “18A” rated movie or cleaning a theatre. She is very polite, and works extremely hard.”

Ami’s fellow cast members also had praise for her hard work.

“Ami treats each and every guest with courtesy and respect. She is an extremely willing learner who always asks questions if she does not understand something. Her positive attitude and happy demeanor make her a fantastic employee.”

“Ami has strong people skills. She builds a small but strong relationship with all the guests that interact with her. As a company, this is very important to passionately deliver an exceptional entertainment experience.”

“She is very reliable, on time — a great example of a model employee.”

“She is the first person who says “hi” to me when I come in to work, and her enthusiasm rubs off on the rest of the team.”

Aristotle and the rest of the management team feel the relationship they have with SCE LifeWorks has been very positive.

“We’ve been working with LifeWorks for over 3 years now and have a great relationship with them. It’s great to know that there is an organization that helps individuals find employment where they can feel comfortable and be successful.”

Ami enjoys the diversity of her position, as well as the relationships she has made along the way. “I really like the employees there,” she says. “We work as a team and we get along with each other. Sometimes there are hockey games or Blue Bomber games that we can all go to together.”

Recently Ami had the opportunity to try working in the box office. Her future goal is to one day be working in the box office full time. Ami has also started to make plans to move into her own place.

When she isn’t working, Ami can be found participating in bowling for the Special Olympics, and at the theatre with her family and friends.
A few years ago, we wrote an article about a participatory action research project called "Perspectives in Change". This research was funded by an anonymous donor, and involved the partnership of SCE LifeWorks, Connect Employment Services, Janet Forbes from Community Living Winnipeg, Dr. Zana Lutfiyaa, Dr. Jennifer Mactavish, Dr. Christine Blais, and the late Bob Manwaring from Continuity Care. The essential question asked in the research was “how can individuals with intellectual disabilities be better supported in work, life and community?”

This article is about “Phase II” of this initiative, which was primarily made up of action steps to respond to research findings in “Phase I”. It also included some follow up research that responded to outstanding questions that came out of the “Phase I” research (this will be shared in future newsletters).

The following are initiatives that rolled out in “Phase II”:

0 ptions and O pportunities Initiative: In response to research that indicated that individuals, families and support networks experience an ongoing challenge acquiring helpful information, struggle to navigate systems, and struggle to make informed decisions, especially in the transition from school to adult life, Perspectives in Change developed a booklet called “W hat Are Y ou G oing T o D o W hen Y ou G raduate?”. This was designed for high school students with intellectual disabilities and those in support roles, to support informed decision making during the transition to adult life. This booklet, written by Karen Schwartz (Project Coordinator of Phase II of Perspectives in Change), has proven popular. Over 5000 booklets have been distributed throughout the province, most of which have been directly requested by resource teachers and the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth. Perspectives in Change also co-sponsored a session facilitated by Community Living Manitoba discussing transition challenges at the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children Conference in 2007. Perspectives in Change findings were also used to help frame a proposal resulting in a provincial transition working group, a coalition of partners from many sectors and provincial departments, whose mission it was to improve transition practices in Manitoba. This is an ongoing area of attention, with the working group just recently releasing its findings and recommendations.

Various stakeholder groups were invited to be a part of a dialogue to address the “transition” challenge, particularly to ensure that individuals and support networks were receiving information that would support informed decision making regarding life after school. One group that stepped up was the Metro Winnipeg Council for Exceptional Children. With its own resources, it expanded its efforts to have evening information sessions for students and families, having three sessions per year in various school divisions in the city. At these sessions, representatives from Family Services and the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth speak of their role in the transition process, a representative from Community Living Winnipeg speaks from an advocacy perspective, and a parent shares what she has learned from her family’s own transition experience. There is also a “fair” where students and families can meet service providers to better understand the range of services available.

Congratulations to the Metro W Innipeg Council for Exceptional Children (particularly Dean (Jonasson and Dave Weller) for championing these opportunities to share information.

The challenge of supporting successful and informed transitions from school to adult life is an ongoing one. Perspectives in Change did not develop a “magic bullet” solution to conquer this challenge, but it has played a supporting role in a larger community of partners working toward the improvement of practices and accessible information for individuals and families. Employers to Employer and Marketing Initiatives: In Phase I of Perspectives in Change, one of the most compelling messages was heard from employers of individuals with disabilities. In essence, business leaders in focus groups said that they believe that hiring individuals with intellectual disabilities has worked well for them. They know that we are trying to win the hearts and minds of other employers; these current employers of individuals with disabilities said that we have to find a way to tap into their credibility to win over new employers.

Business people are more inclined to trust the opinions of other business people, so we have to leverage the credibility of our current employers to win over new employers. We also heard from other stakeholders of the importance of giving the general public a better understanding of the significant contributions that individuals with intellectual disabilities make in society.

In response to these findings, and with the help of the market research company kisquared, Perspectives in Change, in partnership with the Manitoba Supported Employment Network, pulled together focus groups with enrolled employers to get a better understanding of what exactly they would be willing to do (and not do) in reaching out to their business contacts. The resulting report with this more nuanced information can be found at http://www.msen.mb.ca/perspectives.pdf. Karen Schwartz and Oly Backstrom presented this information at the National Supported Employment Conference held in 2005.

One way that we wanted to “leverage the credibility of our current employers” was to have a marketing endeavour that would not only give employers and employees with disabilities a “pat on the back”; we also wanted to ensure that this was an opportunity for employers to say, in their own words, why hiring a person with a disability worked out well for them. Were myths busted? Were there unanticipated benefits? What would the employer tell another business person about the idea of hiring a person with a disability?

As we were considering next steps in 2006, there was a Multi Sector Forum (including members of the business community, provincial government representatives, consumers with disabilities and service providers) that was convening to sort out how to improve the employment of people with disabilities in Manitoba. Part of what came out of this forum was the idea of a marketing initiative. Oly Backstrom, representing Perspectives in Change, approached the Multi Sector representatives to work together on a marketing initiative. A Multi Sector Committee was struck (which O. Backstrom subsequently joined). Since the fall of 2006, the Multi Sector Committee has met to sort out priorities (in the process making a marketing initiative a “front burner” issue), and to develop a marketing initiative.

story continued on page 3
At the same time, provincial representatives tried to identify and tap into a funding source. Because Perspectives in Change needed to set in motion a plan to meet the requirements of the anonymous donor, and since the Multi Sector initiative required time to work through a federal funding setback, it was decided that a plan would be executed while still maintaining a connection with the Multi Sector initiative. As a result, space was secured in the Winnipeg Free Press (Saturday Business Section) once per month, allowing for a series of stories called “Celebrating Progressive Employers and Capable Employees”. Employment success stories are solicited from service providers throughout Manitoba, and successful stories are chosen by a committee of individuals drawn from service providers’ advocacy organizations and Manitoba Family Services and Housing. As of May 2008, six stories have been published: Perspectives in Change has the resources to perpetuate this endeavour for another 18 months. These stories have resulted in employer interest that has lead to at least two full time jobs for individuals supported by one of the feature agencies. In addition, Canada Safeway, one of the employers celebrated in the success stories, shared their story via satellite with their Safeway colleagues across North America. Special thanks to Manitoba Marathon for providing financial support to provide for writing and photography services related to this endeavour.

Meanwhile, the Multi Sector initiative continues to develop a marketing strategy. Though a plan has not been formally approved, financial resources have been secured through Manitoba Family Services and Housing, and it is our hope that a plan will be unveiled later this year. Perspectives in Change will continue to work together with the Multi Sector initiative, which may provide additional forums for success stories collected by Perspectives in Change.

Other initiatives have evolved where Perspectives in Change has played more of a supporting role than a driving or primary role. One initiative is called “The Diversity Challenge”; this is a partnership between the Manitoba Supported Employment Network and the Manitoba Business Leadership Network that challenges enrolled employers to play a more active and direct role to share their success stories hiring individuals with disabilities. This idea was the brainchild of our friends at Connect Employment Services (the sister organization of SCE LifeWorks). Perspectives in Change played a modest financial supporting role for the 2007 launch of this initiative.

SCE LifeWorks is proud to be playing an integral role with the Perspectives in Change endeavour, and it has been exciting to see our efforts through Perspectives in Change bear fruit. It has also been gratifying to see how other organizations, coalitions and endeavours have been able to partner with Perspectives in Change to work toward common goals. There have been examples where Perspectives in Change research has given credence to the need for change, as well as direction (such as with the proposal for the Transition Working Group). There are also examples where materials developed by Perspectives in Change have been incorporated into initiatives to further common goals (as with the Council for Exceptional Children transition information forums). Our partners in the community, who are too numerous to mention, deserve our ongoing gratitude. Thanks to our anonymous donor for his/her/their generous financial support.

SCE LifeWorks Holiday Closures

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The 1st Annual Snowflake Soiree

The Notre Dame Recreation Centre was the place to be on December 16, 2007. A great time was had by all who chose to attend the SCE LifeWorks Snowflake Soiree. Doors opened at 6:45 pm and the steady stream of people did not end until every seat had been filled. The room was filled with glittering snowflakes, icicle lights hanging from the walls and ceiling, and cleverly decorated tables.

After the pizza, salad and dessert were served, guests had the pleasure of dancing to the music of live band “W Without A Trace”. Ten lucky guests went home with door prizes that evening, including a 40 piece tool set, a spa-pampering package, and the American Idol — All Star Challenge DVD Game.

There were quite a few staff from SCE LifeWorks who came to the Snowflake Soiree expecting to mingle with guests and enjoy the surroundings after spending the day preparing for this event. Instead they were quickly put to work as the crowd grew larger than we ever could have hoped. These generous staff members (and even their spouses!) spent the evening selling tickets, serving food, pouring drinks, clearing tables, and making sure the night was enjoyable for all of our guests. To all of these staff, your selfless acts did not go unnoticed! Each one of you are the very proof that we have so many generous team players at SCE LifeWorks! Your efforts were, and still are very appreciated.

JEFF HARDT AND SHANNON LEGGE

The 9th Annual Golden Plate Gala

July 16, 2007. A great time was had by all who chose to attend the 9th Annual Golden Plate Gala at the Delta Winnipeg Hotel. The event was a huge success, raising over $100,000 for the Centre for Change.

The Gala was attended by over 400 guests, who enjoyed a delicious dinner, live entertainment, and a silent auction. Proceeds from the evening went towards supporting the Centre for Change, which is dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities find employment and live fulfilling lives.

The event was organized by the Centre for Change, with the support of the Manitoba Business Leadership Network and the Manitoba Supported Employment Network. The Gala was also sponsored by a number of local businesses, including the Delta Winnipeg Hotel, which provided a generous donation.

The Centre for Change would like to thank everyone who attended the Gala, as well as the sponsors and partners who made the event possible. With the proceeds from this event, we are one step closer to achieving our goal of providing employment support to individuals with disabilities in Manitoba.

SCE LifeWorks

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JEFF HARDT AND SHANNON LEGGE
Families Make a Difference

SCE LifeWorks has been fortunate to have a number of friends who recognize the value of investing in our future through the SCE LifeWorks Endowment Fund.

One particular family made it their mission to donate to the fund every month in 2007. Brian and Linda Ormonde made systematic deposits at the beginning of every month. What might have seemed like a modest amount quickly accumulated by the end of the year. Why did they choose to do this? Brian put it this way: “Linda and I want to help ensure that SCE LifeWorks will be able to continue supporting the endowment fund seemed like the perfect way to do this.” To further enhance the Ormondes’ contribution, The Winnipeg Foundation contributed one dollar for every five dollars donated.

Our thanks to the Ormonde family for their ongoing support!

If you would like to learn more about the SCE LifeWorks Endowment fund, call Oly Backstrom at 775 9402.

Thanks as to The Winnipeg Foundation for their ongoing support and management of the SCE LifeWorks Endowment Fund.

Employer Partnership

Brett-Young Seeds

Brett-Young Seeds is Canada’s largest Forage and Turf Seed Company, and Canada’s largest Independent Canola seller. Brett-Young takes pride in being a privately held company that cares about its 200 employees, the communities they work in, and the relationships they form.

With that philosophy it isn’t surprising that in 2003 Brett-Young was named one of the 50 Fastest — Growing Companies in Manitoba.

Brett-Young currently has five staff within the company who have been hired through SCE LifeWorks. SCE LifeWorks assisted Jared to find his job at Brett-Young in the year 2000, Mark in 2002, and Josh in 2005. Jared, Mark and Josh all use a forklift as part of their daily job. Each of these young men have become more confident and successful in their positions and as a result, are now fully independent at work.

In October 2007 Henri began working at Brett-Young, followed closely by Chris in January 2008. Even though the tasks completed by these five gentlemen are independent and carried out in different areas of the warehouse, their jobs are all closely linked.

Henri and Chris

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Chris and Henri work on the small packaging line with two other staff members. These four staff work as a team to take large bins of grass seed and package the seed into smaller 4kg/10lb bags that you would find at a local store. These packages of grass seed are stacked into boxes constructed and labeled by the small packaging line staff.

Josh separates large bins of grass seed into 50lb bags, which are sold for commercial use.

Jared takes pallets of prepared packages and shrink wraps them to be shipped out. He also mixes and blends bins of grass seed to create the correct mixtures.

Mark uses a forklift to place the wrapped pallets onto outgoing trucks where they are then taken to the correct store/ location.

Each of these five staff brings a diverse set of skills and abilities to their position. Ryan Lamblez, Small Packaging Supervisor, commented on the positive growth he has seen in his employees. “Mark has come such a long way from starting in bagging to working full time in shipping. And Henri’s only been here for three months and we have seen changes in him already.”

Brett-Young is truly an inclusive workplace. Staff are given the opportunity to learn new tasks and to advance within the company while earning wages above minimum wage. “It’s a company that cares about its employees,” said Alison Moss, Chris and Henri’s Employment Consultant. “Everyone is offered the opportunity to work overtime when times are busy.”

Ryan feels the relationship between SCE LifeWorks and Brett-Young Seeds is a positive one. “I think it’s great! As a company we’re helping people out. It’s worth it to give people a chance.”
Services Negatively Impacted by Labour Market Challenges

By Oly Backstrom, President & CEO

As the labour market in Winnipeg heats up, we at SCE LifeWorks find ourselves struggling to maintain the high standard of service that the people we support deserve because of staff shortages (particularly for Individualized Support Workers). Despite the valiant efforts of our staff and managers, our services have suffered in this labour environment. We apologize to those individuals and families who have been negatively impacted. We will continue to manage this challenge as best as we can. SCE LifeWorks appreciates your support and understanding with this situation.

There are many ways that you can help. Consider this: do you know someone who might be interested in a rewarding job: that of supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities to find their valued place in our community? Interested individuals can call 775 9402 for more details (ask for Ann Kupfer); resumes can be sent to info@lifeworks.mb.ca. If you are wondering if there are other ways to help, feel free to call me (Oly) at 775 9402.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support!

Gala Sponsors and Volunteers!

Gala Sponsors
On September 27, 2007 SCE LifeWorks held the 8th Annual Golden Plate Gala at the Delta Winnipeg Hotel. The evening was a great success, and we would like to thank all our generous sponsors whose contributions made this possible!

Gala Volunteers
Thank you to all the volunteers of the Golden Plate Gala for your contributions! We wouldn’t be able to have this event without you! A big thank you also goes out to the members of the Golden Plate Gala Committee. Your time and efforts given year-round do not go unnoticed.
Canadian Lutheran World Relief has employed Dale Scheer, a participant supported through Individualized Support Services, since 1994. Dale works part time, 4–5 hours each shift, two days per week sorting soap for aid kits. These aid kits are then provided to other nations in time of crisis or need. Dale also does some seasonal work such as lawn cutting on warehouse grounds. For his efforts, Dale earns a flat rate above minimum wage, regardless of hours worked.

As an employer, Canadian Lutheran World Relief has an understanding of Dale’s needs and accommodate him as necessary. They tailored a work station for Dale that provides physical distance, yet allows for interaction with coworkers at the same time.

Dale is considered an important part of the team and is shown consideration for when planning special events. Functions such as retirement parties for employees are planned on a day when Dale is working. Canadian Lutheran World Relief makes effort to bridge social barriers for Dale, such as taking time to introduce new staff to him at his desk. They have provided Dale with the opportunity to succeed and grow and have taken the time to include Dale as a valued member of the team. They see his ability and the contribution he makes, and truly value his work. The efforts made by Canadian Lutheran World Relief to make a comfortable workplace that sees beyond the disability to the person are clear.

The second recipient, Sturgeon Creek Retirement Residence, is another great example of a supportive worksite.
the unwavering leadership of Michael Hart, Sturgeon Creek Retirement Residence has become one of SCE LifeWorks’ most progressive employers. In July 2005, Michael Hart, Kitchen Manager at that time, hired an individual through SCE LifeWorks to work as a daytime dishwasher. He immediately recognized the contribution this person made, and Michael’s enthusiasm was shared amongst the staff. The relationship between SCE LifeWorks and Sturgeon Creek Retirement Residence became so mutually beneficial that other individuals were offered the opportunity for employment there. This relationship has enabled six different individuals over the course of two years to work independently and competitively in several areas of the kitchen such as dishwashing, food preparation and baking.

Sturgeon Creek Retirement Residence sees every person for their unique ability and potential. They have been very accommodating, offering noon hour, daytime or evening shifts, depending on the preference of the individual working there. They have adjusted workloads to allow time to learn each position and will call us with a job opportunity even before it is publicly advertised.

Michael Hart, currently the Director of Care at Sturgeon Creek Retirement Residence has involvement with three different retirement residences across Winnipeg. Each of these three residences have hired someone through SCE LifeWorks.

Congratulations to Canadian Lutheran World Relief and Sturgeon Creek Retirement Residence for being worthy recipients of the 2007 Employer of the Year Award.

SCE LifeWorks thanks its volunteer Board of Directors for its steady hand of guidance and governance over the last year. In particular, we thank Joe Shedden and Rich Ludwick, our outgoing Board members, for bringing a great community presence to the Board table.

More Snowflake Soirée Fun!
WE AT SCE LIFEWORKS ARE SADDENED BY THE PASSING OF TWO INDIVIDUALS WE HAVE SUPPORTED OVER THE YEARS.

**Louis Dettanikeaze** passed away suddenly on September 8, 2007. Louis was an incredibly friendly and engaging person who brought a great deal of joy to family, friends and coworkers. He was active in the community, volunteering at Knox United Church and the Cindy Klassen Sports Complex. Louis is missed dearly. Our ongoing thoughts and wishes go to Louis’ family. SCE LifeWorks thanks Louis’ family for suggesting donations to SCE LifeWorks in lieu of flowers.

**Mary Jayne La Joie** died peacefully on March 13, 2008 at age 40, after being diagnosed with cancer in fall of 2007. Mary was kind and loving to others, taking the time to listen and empathize with those whom she recognized needed support. Mary was dearly loved by her family. She was a proud employee of W Inners (Regent Avenue), where she had worked for the last ten years, and was actively involved in her community. Our thoughts and prayers are extended to Mary’s family.

**New Partnerships**

SCE LifeWorks assists people in finding competitive employment that meets both the requirements of the employer and the abilities and interests of our clients. Do you have or know of an opportunity for one of our clients? To find out how your business can be involved, please call our office at 775-9402.

**NEW PARTNERSHIPS**

- Bee Clean, City Place
- Canad Inns, W indor Park
- Diva Delights
- Food Fare
- Globe General Agencies
- Grapes, Pembina Highway
- Interlake Salvage, Stonewall
- Maples Collegiate
- Munroe Fine Foods
- Niakwa Hair Salon
- Pizza Hut, Cavalier
- Roxy Lanes
- Safeway, Kenaston
- Sobeys, Main Street
- The Downs Children’s Centre
- The Sharon Home, Kanee Centre
- The Sharon Home, Simkin Centre
- Tim Hortons, Main Street
- UPS Courier

**SCE Lifeworks Stainless Steel Travel Mugs**

**THESE STYLISH TRAVEL MUGS ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES!**

Such a mug would be a great gift — perhaps for yourself! Maybe it is time to “retire” that old mug of yours. These mugs sell for $20.00 ($5.50 from each sale supports the services of SCE Lifeworks). Call Adell at 775-9402, or drop by the office!