

# Our Community's Future



Your community business  
finance corporation

## Experience the Connection



Local entrepreneurs **Erik and Miel Blaney** run **I'Hos Cultural Tours** out of Lund, B.C. Launched in 2010, the couple's dreams inspired them to take the risk and start their own business. Their first step was to create a business plan, which they did with the help of Community Futures. From there, they used their own savings to purchase a small 20' boat to conduct cultural tours. Their first summer was so successful that they made the decision to go bigger and purchase a larger zodiac.

Cultural tourism is booming in B.C., Canada and beyond, as travelers are turning more and more to the indigenous peoples to educate them on their cultural practices, beliefs and way of life. Erik Blaney is a trailblazer and a strong advocate of reviving the culture of the Tla'amin peoples. Erik feels that the education of others is a good way to learn and revive your own culture.

"Having people come and join you on a tour with the goal of learning the ancient ways is so rewarding and makes you strive to learn more, as they ask questions you might not know the answers to," says Erik. "Teaching people the history that has been left on the

land by the ancestors is very important in the path to reconciliation, as the public tries to understand the history of the first peoples and learn the lessons of the past."

I'Hos Cultural Tours is respectful and walks lightly over the lands that they use for their tours. They strive for a high quality and intimate tour versus loading their boats to full capacity and trying to get as many tours out in a season as possible.

I'Hos is named after a mythical two-headed serpent. The serpent was a protector of the lands and kept an eye on everything in the area. Erik says that enlightening his visitors while caring for our sacred lands is of the utmost importance to him.

What is it that makes this cultural experience truly amazing? Erik explains that learning from a passionate company about the rich pre-contact history of the area is key. Tla'amin's oldest village sites are over 8000 years old!

I'Hos is a genuine labour of love for Erik and his wife Miel. Miel works as the bookkeeper and Erik as guide, and they manage the business together. Additional staff include Drew Blaney, a full time guide and skipper, and Sosan Blaney, a master weaver who leads the weaving workshops. Gail Blaney assists Sosan with the workshops as well as the traditional food catering,

which offers their clientele a unique cultural experience.

The company's expansion was supported by Community Futures.

"We were able to take out a loan from Community Futures to purchase a bigger boat," says Erik. "This allows us to reach farther up into Toba and Bute inlets comfortably. Community Futures was pivotal in helping us grow in year two by loaning us the funds necessary to purchase the long distance boat."

I'Hos Cultural Tours' clients experience the beauty of Desolation Sound, where they can get a glimpse of wildlife in their natural habitat. The newest tour is a Grizzly Bear Adventure into Bute Inlet! Contact Erik and Miel about booking a tour at **604.483.1308** or **info@ihostours.com**, and online at **ihostours.com**.

Photos this page are courtesy of I'Hos Cultural Tours.



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 Kelly Edwards  
Illuminessence

If physical and mental well being is your goal, then **Illuminessence** is for you! **Kelly Edwards** offers multiple regenerative and healing modalities, including reiki, private yoga sessions, and Body Talk, in the comfort of your own home. As a reiki master, Kelly is trained in all aspects of this healing art. Kelly says that, “Reiki is an intelligent form of universal energetic healing that encourages a state of balance, harmony, and self-healing.”

Kelly is also a certified Body Talk practitioner. Body Talk is a healthcare system that respects the body’s natural healing response and creates better communication within the body, mind, and spirit. Both Body Talk and reiki sessions are available remotely to out-of-town clients.

Yoga disciplines include Yin, Hatha, and Kundalini Yoga. Her studio classes are available year round at the Cranberry Hall on Monday evenings. Kelly also teaches at Coast Fitness and the Powell River Recreation Complex. Other variations of yoga offered are aqua yoga, men’s yoga, warm yin yoga, restorative yoga, and the newest, aerial yoga.

Kelly’s skill as an excellent intuitive teacher is respected and appreciated by all of her students. Novices and lifetime yoga enthusiasts are motivated and assisted along their paths in their quest for health and wellness. Her favourite mantra is “hume hum brahm hum”, or “all that you wish to be, you already are”.

“Everyone at Community Future has been amazingly supportive at helping develop my business idea into reality,” says Kelly. “They have mentored me in the nitty gritty aspects of being in business. Just knowing they were behind me has allowed me to step outside my comfort zone, be inspired to try new ideas and move my business forward one leap at a time.”

Contact Kelly at: [kelly@illuminessence.ca](mailto:kelly@illuminessence.ca) or **604.223.3529** or visit her website at [illuminessence.ca](http://illuminessence.ca) for more information. All skill levels are welcome. 

—by Joanne Cameron-Nordell

## HONOURING OUR YOUTH



In 2015, Community Futures Powell River was proud to partner with the Tla’Amin Nation in the Sliammon Tribal Journey 2015, **Honouring Our Youth—Our Chu’-Chuy**.

In July, the Traditional Tribal Canoe Journey that filled the shores with paddlers from around the Salish Sea coast, stopped in at Willingdon Beach in Powell River. This Sliammon event honoured Coast Salish ancestors and the children of our future. 



# AERO DESIGN *Innovation & creative solutions*

**Aero Design Ltd.**'s fascinating and creative solutions drive their product design, making them a well-respected and sought after manufacturer of external transport equipment for helicopters. Their products include helicopter cargo baskets, steps and all of the associated components, including landing gear parts, mounting beams and many other items.

**Jason Rekve**, an M1/M2 aircraft maintenance engineer, now Aero's president and general manager as well as accountable executive and person responsible for manufacturing to Transport Canada, started in the aviation industry as an apprentice helicopter mechanic in 1999. What began as a carpentry job turned into much more when a local helicopter operator had a mechanic out for training and the owner asked Jason to help out. Jason stayed for nearly 11 years before starting his own company, South Coast Heli Support Ltd., and contracting his services throughout North America and overseas. He gained valuable experience in all areas of aviation and across many segments of the industry. In 2012, Jason approached then Calgary-based Aero Design to help certify a part he had designed for a Bell 206 helicopter.

Jeff Clarke, an engineering technologist and now vice president and quality assurance manager, had been with Aero Design since graduating college in 2001, performing drafting functions and developing projects. Throughout Jason's project, Jeff and Jason worked closely together and with the project nearing completion, the previous owner decided to retire.

With this new opportunity Jason, with his wife, Wanda, and Jeff decided to partner up and buy the company. Wanda and Jason already had the property with a shop at Okeover Inlet and the group couldn't think of a better place for the company to relocate. Jeff and his wife Angela visited Powell River, followed by Aero's now welder, Dave Martyn, and his family and the rest is history.

Wanda explains that, "it is a family-oriented business that also employs Jason's brother, Matthew, as a fabricator . . . even our kids help!"

These days, from their Transport Canada-approved manufacturing, design and development facility, Aero Design markets their products all over the world. Almost any industry can utilize their products: forestry, mining/exploration, search and rescue, heli-skiing, surfing and even private folks that just want to go fishing or golfing in their own aircraft. They have a very strong market in Canada and the U.S., with overseas opportunities growing all the time. They distribute products the world over, including New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Africa, Russia and Switzerland!

Community Futures Powell River is proud to have sponsored Steve Buskie, former manager of business innovation and commerce, to attend the Anaheim Heli-Expo Trade Show 2014. Jason and Steve had a strong working relationship and the entire Aero team felt Steve was a major contributor in supporting introductions to international trade commissioners and in opening discussions on their growing international distribution network.

"I've always enjoyed working with Community Futures," says Jason. "Pam and her team are true visionaries and regardless of the project large or small, they are there to offer advice and support in many ways."

One of this year's projects included hosting B.C.'s world champion mountain biker, Lorraine Blancher, the new face of the Aero Design Extreme Line of products. During her visit in August, Lorraine shared her passion for bringing together air and land - adventure biking to unexplored regions, biking where no other rider has biked before. Through her visit, Aero was able to not only showcase



**BACK: Matt Rekve, Jason Rekve. FRONT: Wanda Rekve, Katie Rekve, Jeff Clarke, Dave Martyn.**

their newly-designed helicopter bike rack but also the potential for a whole new heli-biking industry. As Lorraine put it, "It is a game changer for Powell River and the industry".

"Heli-biking came much the same way as the very first cargo basket," says Jeff. "We are simply creating an innovative product our customers are asking for!"

Jason is moving ahead and continuing to build working relationships both locally and abroad. However, he sees the need to plan well and be prepared for lean times.

"It is very hard work every single day right down to keeping yourself and those around you motivated when things become a grind," he says. He is a firm believer that you get out what you put in and, "though we may never achieve perfection, it's certainly worth the effort to try." Along with these words of wisdom, the Aero Design team follows this very basic philosophy:

- **Review** what you have.
- **Refine** it to make it better.
- **Build** what you need.
- Use it and **maintain** it so you get a sense of how it works in the real world.
- When the process is over, **start again**.

"I have been very fortunate to meet some fabulous people and see some of the most stunning places on earth," says Jason. "Thanks to the efforts that my family and I have put into my career, I now get to work from home doing what I want every single day with exactly who I want to do it with!"

Contact Aero Design at **604.483.2376**, [jason@aerodesign.ca](mailto:jason@aerodesign.ca) or check them out online, [www.aerodesign.ca](http://www.aerodesign.ca). 



Aero's new helicopter bike rack. Photo courtesy of Aero Design.



## If a tree falls in the forest...

**Kathy and Joe Pedneault** were raised in families working in the forest industry. They operate **Timbrr Enterprises Ltd.**, a manual tree harvesting company, which has expanded into rehaul as well. Timbrr works up and down the coast. They hire between two and ten subcontract fallers per project, depending on the location and amount of timber to be felled.

Joe's passion for tree harvesting and the work ethic instilled in him by his dad and uncles are the driving force behind Timbrr Enterprises. As a young man he worked alongside Karl Hagman of Hagman and Sons. His experiences with Karl's company inspired him to focus his love of the bush, particularly tree harvesting, into starting his own company. So in 2003, he established Timbrr. Joe is involved in all aspects of administration, management and harvesting. To him, this is not just a job but a lifestyle choice.

"It's not a 9 to 5, but a 24/7/365 lifestyle. When you own your own business it has to be this way. But truly loving what you do makes it all so much simpler."

For Kathy, having grown up in a local family business, it was just an extension of what she had already known. The importance of giving back to the local community was instilled in both Kathy and Joe growing up.

This is reflected in their company's emphasis on utilizing as many local subcontractors as they can and purchasing as much locally as possible. Recently, they were able to add Kip Brown Trucking as a subcontractor on their newly purchased Bill 13 Evergreen Contract.

"As we are part of this community we need to take care to make sure that we support it however we can."

Working from this philosophy, the company has grown in size and is well-respected in the forest industry. Timbrr was ready to grow and diversify when they approached Community Futures in 2014 for financing.

"Our experience with Community Futures was phenomenal!" says Joe. "The staff are knowledgeable and supportive. They went the extra mile to ensure that we were able to accomplish what was needed in the time frame we had. This is an understatement, truly. Community Futures is there for just that reason. It helps support the future of our community. Their committees are made of business people. They are knowledgeable in many varying aspects of business and we were met with open and willing ears as they endeavored to understand what we were trying to do. Community Futures made it work for us!"

Contact Timbrr at **604.485.7701** or [timbrr@shaw.ca](mailto:timbrr@shaw.ca).



**COMMUNITY FUTURES** plays a key role working alongside local and regional community leaders for the development of a sustainable future. Along with our community partners, we invest in activities and projects designed to allow our community to be resilient and successful.

### THE SELF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Your answer for:

- Business Concept Development
- Business Coaching
- Training and Workshops
- Business Launch
- Up to 48 weeks of financial support
- Monthly intakes

Contact us for details.

**We can help you do it!**

### BUSINESS LOANS

Community Futures provides small business loans advice to entrepreneurs on business concept, plan development and financial management topics. Whatever stage of development your business is in, we are available to assist you in the establishment and growth of your business.



## Contact Us:

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