



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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NEWS RELEASE

March 5, 2012

Creating solutions to youth unemployment

Celebrating Launch! Wednesday, March 7th 7-9pm Da Vinci Centre, 195 Bay St

Victoria- The Community Social Planning Council and the Community Micro Lending Society are taking action on youth unemployment with Launch! a new youth community business start-up program. Youth unemployment in BC remains high at 13.5% - almost double that of the population overall. And, small businesses make up 98% of businesses in the province, but only 17% of self-employed business owners are under 35.

"Young people in our communities are at the forefront of a new generation of entrepreneurs that see business as a way to create positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes in our communities", said Lisa Helps, Executive Director of Community Micro Lending. "Our Launch! program harnesses this energy by helping young people get their business ideas off the ground." The Launch! program provides business training, mentorship and access to small loans to young people under the age of 30 who want to start a local business. The first graduates of the Launch! pilot from last fall include a non-profit that provides market to women's cooperatives from developing countries, a sustainable jewelry and clothing design company, a photography business and a falafel food cart. "At our Launch!75 event Wednesday we'll celebrate these young entrepreneurs and cultivate support for new local businesses."

"In the face of persistent tough economic times, communities throughout the world are creating innovative solutions to poverty and pressing social and economic issues", Rupert Downing, Executive Director of the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, "this program, along with our developing Community Investment Fund will ensure that our region continues to prosper in the face of global uncertainty."

WHAT: **LAUNCH!75 Looking Back/ Launching Forward** – Launch party for youth community business program, **LAUNCH!** and celebration Community Council's 75th anniversary. <http://launch-75.eventbrite.ca/>

WHEN: Wednesday, March 7, 2012 | 6:00pm to 9:00pm

WHERE: Leonardo Da Vinci Centre | 195 Bay Street, Victoria, BC

WHO: Young entrepreneurs and pilot program graduates/Members of the business community invested in the local economy, sustainable businesses and social enterprises

Resources:

This Media Release: http://www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/2012March5_Launch75_Media_Release.pdf

CSPC Logo: http://www.communitycouncil.ca/images/CSPC_Logo_print_col.png

LAUNCH! pilot program participant snapshots: <http://www.communitymicrolending.ca/launch>

Social Planning Week proclamation: http://www.communitycouncil.ca/pdf/Social_Planning_Week_2012.pdf

To book an interview, please contact:

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Community Social Planning Council leads social, economic and environmental planning in BC's Capital Region. We engage community members and organizations, businesses and government to research and evaluate social issues and create sustainable solutions.

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