

New book aims to help self-employed women

RESOURCE GUIDE eases transition.

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Women's Enterprise Centre released a new book entitled *Taking the Leap to Entrepreneurship: A guide to Help BC Women Make the Transition* to celebrate International Women's Day, March 8.

The release of this resource guide is part of the launch of a new mentoring program for women making the transition to self-employment.

Nanaimo entrepreneur Mindi Pettitt of HarbourLiving.ca is one of nine storytellers from around the province profiled in the guide who have faced different challenges when starting their businesses, yet still 'took the leap' to self-employment. Their stories help educate and inspire those who are considering following the path to entrepreneurship.

The *Taking the Leap to Entrepreneurship* guide is meant to lend support to women who are making the transition to self-employment, by giving them a sense of what being an entrepreneur is all about.

It explores the internal process of the transition to being one's own boss, and introduces them to the new skills they will need to learn, risks they will have to take, and

fears they will have to confront while they travel the path of entrepreneurship.

"The entrepreneurs featured in this guide, like Pettitt, are living examples of the challenges and rewards involved in starting and running a business," said CEO Laurel Douglas, of Women's Enterprise Centre.

"I was sure I had the skills to build this business, but I still had anxiety." Said Pettitt. "I still find that I sometimes doubt myself and question my abilities, but having someone in my life who knows me and who can remind me of my goals whenever I start questioning myself has helped me immensely."

The *Taking the Leap* resource guide is available for download from the Women's Enterprise Centre website www.womensenterprise.ca. It will be complemented at the end of March with an e-learning module, both of which are tools to help women decide if self-employment is right for them.

For women already in the first two years of self-employment, Women's Enterprise Centre will be launching Peer Mentoring Groups in Whistler, Terrace, Kamloops, Cranbrook and Kelowna, starting later in March. This will be followed up with other mentoring initiatives throughout the year.

"We were excited to have nine successful women entrepreneurs from these communities coming to Victoria for the launch and to be trained as facilitators to deliver the new Peer Mentoring Groups in their communities," said Douglas.

The Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services, whose ministry funded this mentoring project, was also at the Victoria launch on March 8.

"As British Columbia's economy prospers, more and more women may be thinking of launching their own business," said Chong. "Taking the Leap is an idea whose time has come. It taps into the power of woman-to-woman mentoring to help answer the questions and ease the anxiety of the new entrepreneur during her transition from employment to starting her own business."

To inquire about participating in the mentoring program, please contact Stephanie at 1-800-643-7014 ext 112, or email info@womensenterprise.ca