

Creating a High School Internship Program

Vancity

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Vancity has been leading the way as an inclusive employer and is currently engaged in four projects specifically focused on hiring people with disabilities. In early 2017, Vancity partnered with the Vancouver School Board (VSB) and began a new project focused on creating inclusive opportunities for high school students with diverse abilities.

Four students in grades 11 and 12 joined Vancity’s Head Office for seven weeks on a rotating schedule from late January to mid March 2017 (completing approx. 50 hours of work experience). They joined the office of the CEO, Community Investment, People Solutions and Procurement, supporting business operations in each of these departments.

Students were provided employee numbers, given work stations and developed professional working relationships with their colleagues and others on their floors, throughout their time at Vancity. They participated in a mini-orientation session where they learned about Vancity values and the cooperative business model.

Based on the positive feedback from VSB, Vancity’s business leaders, and the students that participated, this initiative is now set up to continue to run on a larger scale. One of the participating students, Sarah, has now accepted a part-time summer employment opportunity with Vancity and continues to add value to the teams she works with and the organization as a whole – a true example of what sustainment should look like for this initiative.



"It was a great pleasure to have Natalie with us in our business unit earlier this year. She was curious and interested in our work and helped complete a number of projects that involved cataloguing, reconciling and organizing materials and financial records. She was well-organized, worked independently and did excellent work." – **Catherine Ludgate, Community Investment.**

"Sarah was very professional and eager to take on new and more complex tasks every day, even leveraging her creative talents to write and post articles for us on YAMMER, our employee networking site. The greatest impact from Sarah's presence was our team's engagement as well as providing a mentoring opportunity for Vancity's first Job Carve employee, Paddy." – **Tanya Morrison, People Solutions.**

"Hosting a student was a phenomenal way to understand how the power of effective communication can nurture inclusivity. I was consistently impressed by Janicy's curiosity and desire to deepen her understanding of Vancity as well as her own drive to have a positive impact in our office. The opportunity also opened my own eyes to the style in which I communicate and how I can contribute to a diverse workplace." – **Brendon Dawson, Office of the CEO.**