

KAMLOOPS
PROFILES
OF

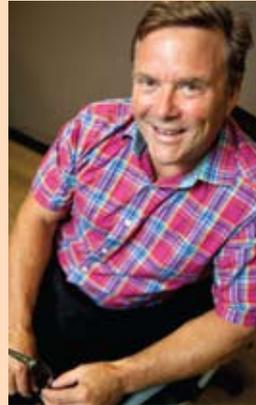
Excellence



KAMLOOPS
THIS WEEK

KAMLOOPS
PROFILES
OF *Excellence*

“Desire is the key to motivation, but it’s the determination and commitment to unrelenting pursuit of your goal – a commitment to excellence that will enable you to attain the success you seek.”
- Mario Andretti



Vibrant communities and prosperous societies are built on the foundation of excellence. However, pursuing excellence is no easy task and is only achieved when the pursuer has the will to win, the desire to succeed and the fierce determination to overcome all barriers.

Profiles of Excellence showcases businesses that hold themselves to a higher standard. These businesses pursue greatness through initiative, creativity and being the everyday hero in our community. Whether it is through volunteering, charity work, staff initiatives and/or exceptional standards for customer service, each business has achieved a level of success that is noteworthy.

A successful business does not get there without the support of its community and the businesses featured within this publication feel a deep commitment to honouring that support by giving back to their community. These companies share their success by volunteering, fundraising and donating money to help support the needs of our city and the people who live here.

Kamloops This Week invites you to join us as we feature profiles of Kamloops’ businesses that have achieved excellence. These outstanding companies give back to our community in many ways and make it a city that we can all be proud to call home.

Enjoy,
Kelly Hall
Publisher, Profiles of Excellence

K A M L O O P S
THIS WEEK



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Kamloops Seniors Village

At every age, people always value a nice place to come home to. For seniors living in residence, that place is no longer the house they built a life in, but at Kamloops Seniors Village, they try to make it so — a campus of care where the residents are your neighbours and the staff are your family.

With three levels of living — independent, assisted and residential care — the Village accommodates those who are ready to live simply and enjoy retirement and those who need more help than they used to.

For Betty Ruddock, the decision was simple. Her adult children were taking time from their days to finish odd jobs at her house, so she decided to relieve their efforts and get her own apartment at Kamloops Seniors Village. Ruddock didn't put her Pineview house up for sale until four months after the move, just to make sure she liked it, but she didn't take much convincing.

"I can't think of a problem with this place," she said with a laugh.

The dining room resembles that of a high class hotel, her self-furnished apartment overlooks a beautiful courtyard filled with flowers and trees and she is kept busy from dawn to dusk with crafts, games, exercise and social activities. Across the hall, the apartments and patios overlook Kamloops and the weaving South and North Thompson rivers from the Aberdeen hills.

With a state-of-the-art exercise room, library and internet lounge, outdoor gathering areas and walking path, expansive deck, beauty salon and general store, there's no shortage of places to go to find a new scenery.

"I enjoy it here," Ruddock said. "There is so much to do. You could be busy from first thing in the morning until you go to bed at night."

The intergenerational program, crafts and osteofit are among her favourite activities.

The kitchen serves lunch and dinner — plus a breakfast with fruit and coffee — and features two meal choices at every feast. Ruddock can't eat gluten and said chef Danny Thompson puts an effort into fixing meals he knows she can eat, and sometimes sends her dishes that are suited for her diet, even though the Village doesn't offer customized meals. It's just one example of the staff's effort to go above and beyond their call of duty.

It's a place for people who love people.

"The staff couldn't be better," Ruddock said. "They just love everybody."

A priority for the staff is to not only learn the name of each resident, but to also learn their story. Did they raise a family on a farm, teach generations of students or maybe spend many years overseas? The seniors' way of living up until they joined the Village is prolonged by the staff who do their best to make their life in residence just like home. Pets are welcome, as are frequent family visits.

Ruddock said there is other senior housing in closer proximity to her children, but after finding herself at home at Kamloops Seniors Village, she has no desire to move — "No way! I'm not leaving here!"

As a campus of care, Kamloops Seniors Village is able to accommodate residents for the duration of their senior life. Staying under the same roof, they can move from independent living to assisted living or a private room in residential care.

Kamloops Seniors Village is also connected to cutting-edge developments in senior care. Its owner, Retirement Concepts, recently opened the Innovation Centre for Healthy Aging in Surrey. In partnership with Simon Fraser University and the British Columbia Institute of Technology, it will accelerate research and development of new products and services, such as dementia and fall-related concussion monitoring and mobility-assistive devices.

"There is so much to do. You could be busy from first thing in the morning until you got to bed at night"



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Abbott Wealth Management

Wealth management sounds like it's all about money, but for the team at Abbott Wealth Management, it's not about the money, it's about the purpose.

At the very core of their mandate is their goal to help people live their dreams, whether that dream is buying a home or a vacation property, starting a business or a hobby, raising a child and sending them to university, travelling or leaving a legacy.

"Money is for a purpose," said investment advisor Mark Bertoli. "So, if we can discover what that is, then the team at Abbott Wealth can design a personal plan that accomplishes the purpose."

The team at Abbott Wealth works with business owners and families to plan every aspect of their financial future. In some instances, the relationship can span three generations. Abbott Wealth Management is committed to these enduring relationships.

"We have a very unique relationship with our clients," Bertoli said. "It's a real honour because when you're working with this type of client, you can do such amazing things for them."

If the number of thank-you cards at the front desk is an indication, then in-depth relationships are what set Abbott Wealth apart from other firms. They create personalized wealth-management plans that go beyond telling you where to invest your money — they provide direction, strategy and peace of mind.

Their uniquely designed programs have many levels, from advanced tax planning to advanced estate planning, professional asset management and investment planning. The program looks at retirement income, tax strategies, risk-management reduction and progress tracking. The team utilizes multiple specialists — advisors, accountants, lawyers and business and estate specialists to work with clients that act as accounting and legal liaisons.

"Our programs are not off the shelf," Bertoli said. "They are proprietary programs that we build for our clients."

But, what does that mean for the client? It means being comforted in knowing they will always be taken care of. Abbott Wealth works exclusively with clients who are completely engaged in their wealth management, and care as much about their future as the dedicated team behind them. Whether it's retirement, estate planning or long-term care, the team can ensure the best outcome for clients. Referring to a recent case, Bertoli remembers one client's response — "If something happened to my husband, Mark and the team at Abbott Wealth would take care of me."

"That's the kind of relationship you get to have," he said. "If you don't have tears in your eyes once a week in this business, something is wrong."

"The great thing," he said, "is the entire team carries the same values." Their vision, mission and value statements apply not only to the way they interact with clients, but in the way they interact with each other. Bertoli and his partners, Sandy Vollo and John van Limbeek, along with the rest of the team, meet weekly to ensure the success and financial prosperity of their clients.

In addition to helping clients across Western Canada, the team is nationally recognized for the work they do. They have been invited to speak at five national conferences about wealth-management practices and their dedication to their clients.

They are also involved in the community, through Kamloops Rotary, Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, and also support various local organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, Kamloops Salvation Army, Rotary International, Kamloops Food Bank, Masonic Cancer Car Project, Kamloops Brain Injury Association and others.

They are proud to be completely dedicated to their clients, their team of associates, and their community.

"It's a real honour because when you're working with this type of client, you can do such amazing things for them"



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Canadian Western Bank

Canadian Western Bank is more than a business banking solution.

“The question we get asked all the time is, ‘Are you a real bank?’” said Kamloops branch manager Joshua Knaak. Although the bank was founded on business banking and providing a Western perspective to financial needs, today it’s working to serve its communities in more ways than ever.

Canadian Western Bank has 41 branches in Western Canada and has grown to include companies such as Canadian Direct Insurance, Canadian Direct Financial, Canadian Western Trust, Valiant Trust, Adroit Investment Management, McLean & Partners Wealth Management and National Leasing.

It’s the only major Canadian bank with a head office in Western Canada. This regional focus certainly makes a difference when doing business in centres like Kamloops.

“The senior management of the bank know Kamloops, they visit Kamloops regularly and understand the needs of the community,” Knaak said.

This local knowledge has helped Canadian Western Bank deliver tailored financial services to the Kamloops community since it opened its doors 13 years ago. In its early roots, it was an equipment lending centre before going full-service in 2009. Since then, its staff has grown from 13 to 26 and it is now one of the largest and fastest-growing branches of the company.

Since no two businesses are the same, Canadian Western Bank has been tailoring its services to its clients since its inception. Management practices have always been based on local decision-making and common sense. It aims to provide levels of service similar to what clients experienced decades ago — service that is based on relationships.

But, don’t get sidetracked by the commercial history — Canadian Western is a full service bank, Knaak said.

The business community is well aware of the business banking services Canadian Western Bank features — from equipment financing to commercial lending — but they are quickly learning it also features the same array of personal banking services as its competitors while maintaining a tailored banking approach.

“If you walk in and you need a chequing account, we can do that. If you want to talk retirement planning, we can do that. If you want to talk commercial financing, we can talk about that,” Knaak said.

“When you do business banking, you really have to get to know the business,” he said. “You have to find out the needs of the company and design a solution instead of just pushing them into a product.”

When it comes to offering personal banking, Canadian Western Bank takes the same approach — customers are not just numbers. When you walk in the door, the staff will greet you by name. There’s no call centre and no redirecting to voicemail.

“If people are tired of automated and impersonal service, we offer a refreshing alternative,” Knaak said. It’s private banking services at an everyday banking cost.

When it comes to achieving excellence in banking, Knaak said Canadian Western Bank knows that excellence comes from focusing on relationships.

“Your customers know that you understand them and you care about their success. They feel confident to come and talk to you,” he said.

That’s what the Canadian Western Bank was built on, the basis on which it continues to grow, and the promise that it will continue to deliver.

“If people are tired of automated and impersonal service, we offer a refreshing alternative”



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cwbank.com

& Coolers

STIC 

DOMESTIC 

st Beer



JACKSON TRIGG



Fox'n Hounds Pub

Al Deacon was born and raised in the hospitality business, so it's no surprise why the Fox'n Hounds Pub is still busy after 30 years.

"Cutting our teeth in the hospitality business was set out for us," the owner said.

Opening in 1983 and evolving through variations of sports bar to neighbourhood pub, the Fox is a mainstay in Kamloops. Its regulars know they can always expect great, reasonably priced food, excellent service and an easy-going atmosphere.

Nine years ago, Deacon opened the liquor store to complement the pub. Sahali Liquor Store across from Fox'n Hounds Pub is one of the largest outside of the Lower Mainland at 6,000 square feet. It has the largest selection of cold product in the city, with 28 cooler doors and 800 varieties of wine.

Consistency is the name of the game, Deacon said. The liquor store is open 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. 365 days a year, the pub kitchen will always be open until midnight on the weekend, with 2-for-\$12 appetizers every night of the week, and high-quality event viewing is available, from the Stanley Cup playoffs to UFC fights. His lead server and manager have both been at the Fox'n Hounds Pub for close to 30 years, so the service is practiced and reliable. The pub will also remain an adult-only venue.

The Park and Ride Blazer Bus delivers patrons to and from games during every hockey season, free of charge — just one of the things Deacon said sets the Fox apart from others.

"We just do things differently," he said.

There's also a dedication to keeping things current, however. The pub menu is updated as longtime chef Floyd Ondang sees fit and renovations keep the venue fresh. Most recently, the bathrooms were re-done and a new Alexander Keith's lounge introduced, in addition to regular painting and upholstery updates. You wouldn't know the pub has been there for decades.

With new pubs and restaurants opening constantly and changes to liquor licensing affecting the way of the game, Deacon knows his customers expect them to keep up.

"There is no lack of choice when it comes to spending your entertainment dollars," he said. "We want our customers to check out our competition."

Deacon said they are very in tune with the wants and needs of Kamloops. The liquor store is also always promoting new local product as Kamloops becomes home to more vineyards.

"People want to buy locally. They want to see local people do well," Deacon said.

The dedication to supporting neighbours holds true at both establishments. Achieving excellence is all about service, Deacon said, and he puts a lot of effort into supporting the customers who support him.

Customer loyalty programs exist at the liquor store and the pub. Free products — bikes, lounge chairs, golf clubs, concert tickets, gift cards and more — are always up for grabs.

Deacon also has a commitment to supporting fundraisers in the broader community, such as golf tournaments, 4-H and dry grads, and offering barbecue fundraisers through the pub for charities, teams and school groups that are trying to raise money.

After already investing 30 years of doing business in Kamloops, Deacon said Kamloopsians can count on Fox'n Hounds Pub and Sahali Liquor Store to cater to their neighbours for many years to come. He knows he is fortunate to be doing business in Sahali and will be operating there long-term.

"We're here for the long haul. This is what we do."

**"We're here
for the
long haul.
This is what
we do."**



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Vitamins

Vitamins

Glover's Medicine Centre

He might run a pharmacy, but Aaron Glover is no pill pusher.

Leading a healthy lifestyle is mostly proper diet, nutrition and exercise, he said — medicine just fills in some of the gaps. People who value their overall health will find comfort in knowing the staff Glover's Medicine Centre feel the same. Beyond prescriptions, the 11-person team offers health advice from vitamins to weight regulation.

"I support my customers, some of them daily," Glover said.

"We're there for them and they know that. We know what we're talking about, and believe what we're talking about, and want to help people feel better and healthier. People value our opinion."

He's always wanted to run his own dispensary. Motivated by a desire to work in health care and interact with people, Glover started his career working at pharmacies around Kamloops after graduating from UBC in 1997. When he opened his compounding pharmacy on Summit Drive in 2005, he had already built a reputation for being a knowledgeable pharmacist. Naturally, many of his customers followed him.

Starting from scratch means struggling to build clientele, but Glover was busy the day his new business opened. Today, health-care practitioners and even other pharmacists send patients to Glover's Medicine Centre.

As a compounding pharmacy, Glover's can manufacture unique preparations, suspensions, capsules, liquids and creams from scratch.

His is the only pharmacy in town that can produce a sterile compound, such as an injectable medication or an eye drop. Royal Inland Hospital is home to the only other completely sterile workspace in Kamloops.

Fifty per cent of the compounding they do at Glover's is veterinary-related. They work closely with all vet clinics in Kamloops and many throughout the Interior to provide

specialized medication. They also work closely with the B.C. Wildlife Park, donating medicine for the animals when needed.

Since most medicines aren't in dosages children can handle, they prepare many pediatric compounds. When children come home from B.C. Children's Hospital, for example, they often require specialty medication that Glover's can formulate.

Glover's Medicine Centre also works closely with the Welcome Back Clinic to help people with pain management, both through prescriptions and over-the-counter solutions. They also specialize in hormone replacement and hormone testing. They work with dermatologists and produce topical ointments for psoriasis or eczema.

Although other pharmacies have taken up compounding, Glover said the level of knowledge held by his staff is what sets them apart.

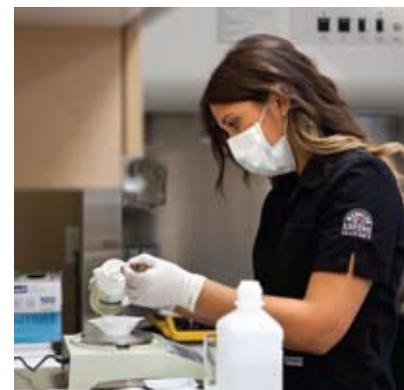
"Not just myself, but my staff are more educated in a broader scope of pharmacy," he said, adding they are up to speed on many new drugs, supplements and therapies that aren't widely known commercially.

For Glover, providing value is the top priority, but his effort doesn't end with the customer. As a Kamloops native and someone who is now raising a family in the River City, giving back is just as important.

"I like to support local business and support the community — and I think that's one of the big reasons people support me, as well," he said.

Last year, he spent upwards of \$30,000 in donations. He supports a vast array of organizations, such as the Kamloops and District SPCA, the Royal Inland Hospital Foundation, the Kamloops Brain Injury Association, the Kidney Foundation of Canada, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, B.C. Children's Hospital and Variety Children's Charity — just to name a few.

"We know what we're talking about, and believe what we're talking about, and want to help people feel better and healthier"



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medicinecentre.com



Dr. Michael Hansford

Dr. Michael Hansford is breaking down the stereotypes associated with dentistry.

When you walk in the front doors of Hansford's innovative practice, Smile Kamloops, you are instantly immersed in a different kind of dental experience. Take a seat in the comfortable and stylish chat room, where a member of his team will listen to whatever you believe you need done — even if you're not quite sure what that is.

"People will come in with an issue, a problem and they don't know what it is — and I'll fix it," he said.

Hansford has been doing cosmetic, implant and sedation dentistry for 16 years. He opened his state-of-the-art practice in 2011 and set a standard to offer industry-leading services. Not only is he committed to providing exceptional dental work — "We're quality-driven" — but he also prides himself on the level of care and professionalism he and his team offer.

"You realize people are coming to you because they want to be treated well and they expect to be treated well," he said.

The fear and anxiety associated with the dentist is all too familiar, but he is combatting each myth with a handful of unique services — a package of how patients want to be treated. His practice is designed with a welcoming atmosphere in mind. The team will hear about your interests and your needs and follow up with an it's-possible-to-fix attitude. In fact, Hansford said people don't realize how much reconstructive dentistry he does or how easy it is.

But what is reconstructive dentistry? Well, he said it could mean whatever you need it to mean — full-mouth reconstruction, cosmetic rehabilitation, arches of implants or crowns, bridges or maybe wisdom-tooth extraction.

Plus, it can all be done with more ease than has ever been associated with the dentist. With intravenous sedation you can relax

and drift off to sleep for the duration of your appointment and wake up with no memory of the procedure. It's unique to Hansford's practice. He has sedated more than 3,000 patients and spends the majority of each day working on sedated patients.

"We receive a lot of high-fives and hugs around here," Hansford said. "The environment of sedation takes away all the anxiety and apprehension."

This is critical for the many people who have been traumatized by a dentist in the past, and maybe haven't been to the dentist in years because of it. This anxiety will only get worse as time goes on, Hansford said, and he is happy to be able to offer some relief to those patients.

People are also often surprised at how efficiently reconstructive dentistry can be done, he said.

Hansford offers a teeth-in-a-day program — permanent, secure, stable teeth using the all-on-4 procedure for people who have dentures or need full upper or lower restorations.

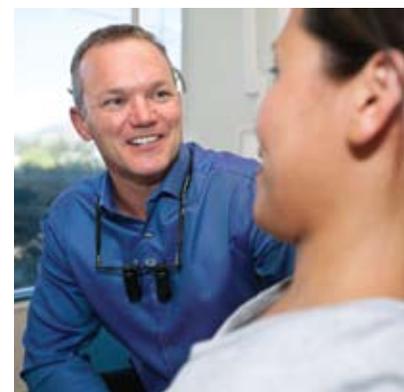
"In my opinion, this is the biggest bang for the buck procedure in dentistry," he said.

State-of-the-art to Hansford means the highest level of customer service and cutting-edge technology available. In addition to attention to detail, he also offers Cerec, a crown-milling machine that moulds crowns within an hour, eliminating the need for impressions, labs and multiple appointments. He also has one of the few CT scanners in town that produces 3D images, allowing him to properly examine bone structure for implant placement.

He offers all aspects of cosmetic dentistry, such as fillings and crowns, veneers and teeth straightening — all available with sedation.

"My patients leave happy with the services they've received and surprised at how efficiently and easily they got the smile they never thought they'd have."

"You realize people are coming to you because they want to be treated well and they expect to be treated well"



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smilekamloops.com



Health Quest

“Doctors don’t heal people, the body heals itself.”

This is the philosophy doctors Paul and Kelly Ouimet have in their chiropractic practice at Health Quest, where patient education is the No.1 priority.

“People need to understand, we don’t get them well,” Kelly said. “We educate them and give them tools to help get themselves well.”

Paul and Kelly have owned Health Quest for 15 years. The wellness and rehabilitation clinic provides multidisciplinary care for both acute and chronic conditions. By bringing chiropractic care, massage therapy, acupuncture and nutritional consultation under one roof, they can provide co-ordinated care for long-term results. It is their goal to provide a team approach to health care without the use of drugs or invasive surgery and with an understanding the patient is a part of the team.

Each health-care modality can provide a certain set of results, while another modality offers another set of results. By combining different modalities in a team approach, they hope to achieve a much higher quality of care than any one modality might provide. But it’s also about educating and encouraging people to be an active participant in their rehabilitation and health care.

Many people have a stigma about chiropractic; that once you go to the chiropractor, you always have to go to the chiropractor. Paul relates taking care of your body to maintaining your car — “once you go get an oil change on your car, you always go back for more oil changes on your car.” Everyone knows maintenance can save you a lot of time and money, but they never apply it to their body, or to their health, he said.

When Paul and Kelly first took over the practice, their aim was to transform the chiropractic clinic from a place where people go to get help when they were injured, hurt or sore, into a wellness clinic where people learn how to keep themselves healthy through wellness, prevention and stabilization. They feel it is their responsibility to educate patients about their diagnosis.

The clinic houses some of the current technology in spinal care. They offer non-surgical spinal decompression, which helps improve spinal-disc problems. Improving disc function can significantly reduce pain, increase range of motion and improve quality of life. The goal of decompression is to improve or fix the disc so it can provide cushioning and movement instead of surgically removing the damaged material and fusing the bones.

Health Quest also offers cold-laser therapy to reduce pain and stimulate the healing process. Cold-laser therapy can be used to treat pain that has previously been masked by medication, pain in deep tissues such as in the hips or shoulders that other modalities cannot get to or when other treatments have not worked. It is also a great option for people who are apprehensive about massage therapy or chiropractic care, Paul said. Cold-laser technology is scientifically validated to provide relief for a variety of chronic or acute conditions, he said.

Health Quest offers a variety of treatment options to treat a variety of conditions, children to professional athletes, from acute to chronic conditions. In addition to working with the various practitioners in the clinic, Paul and Kelly work to incorporate the entire health-care system, providing referrals whenever necessary to various resources, such as private MRI, neurosurgery, pain management, psychologists and pharmacists.

“People need to understand, we don’t get them well. We educate them and give them tools to help get themselves well”



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healthquestchiropractic.ca



Kelson Group

Kelson Group is making residential property management less about the location and more about the people.

Now the largest private landlord with its head office in B.C.'s Interior, the family owned and operated company bought its first building in the years, it has expanded to eight cities and now owns and manages 45 apartment buildings.

But, the company's success is not tied to the number of suites it owns; it's rooted in the people who work to make each of the buildings a community. General manager Jason Fawcett said to achieve excellence, there has to be a great deal of commitment to the people who work for the company and the ones who live in each apartment.

"This is a people business. I think the building managers add a lot of character to the buildings," he said. "Without good managers, the buildings aren't nearly as successful."

Val Wouters and Rose Lemieux have been building managers for Kelson Group for many years. Wouters has worked for the company for 36 years, while Lemieux has been with the company for 25 years. Both ladies have built a career with Kelson Group, something Fawcett said is a rarity in the business. Because Kelson Group strives to lead by example, the relationship it has with building managers is reflective of the relationships the managers have with their tenants.

"I've worked in property management for years. It's been a good fit," Wouters said. "We're family and friends."

Wouters, who manages buildings in Sahali and the North Shore, said the most important qualities a building manager can have are compassion and patience. Realizing and understanding you manage someone's home comes with its challenges, but she enjoys learning each person's story — where they're from, what they do and who they are. She gets the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and now houses the grandchildren of

some of her original tenants.

"I've made a lot of really good friends over the years," she said. "Even when they've come and gone, many of us have stayed in touch, or I can run into them anywhere else in their life and I remember them."

Lemieux manages three buildings in Sahali. Although many of her tenants are university students, she houses people of all ages, from families to seniors. She said there's never a boring day.

"The 25 years I've been with the Kelson Group have been great. You are really treated with respect," she said. "It's been a pleasure to meet people, from all nationalities, which is really interesting."

Building managers work with tenants to find the perfect fit for them, either near a school, the university, or their church, or close to shopping. Kelson Group runs professional buildings that are operated by staff the company and the tenants can rely on. Problems are efficiently addressed and rules upheld so everyone can live happily together. Lemieux and Wouters both said they run clean, quiet apartment blocks that are well-maintained. They commend Kelson Group for making sure renovations are completed as needed and maintenance is prompt.

"We don't sell our buildings, we invest in them," Fawcett said. "We have a very long-term view for each property, so we are always trying to improve them."

Kelson Group runs 20 reasonably priced buildings throughout many of the city's neighbourhoods, from Aberdeen to downtown and Valleyview. It has expanded its expertise to Kelowna, Prince George, Abbotsford, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Leduc and Sherwood Park.

"We have a very long-term view for each property, so we are always trying to improve them."



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Lyons Landscaping

Colin Lyons started landscaping when he traded his mountain bike for a pickup truck. Since then, he has built Lyons Landscaping into a business with 56 employees, a full retail outlet, a full-service snowplow division and a reputation of which he is proud.

He might have started as a one-man show, but today it's all about the team.

"Today's motivation is the drive of the team. It's become a really fun animal on its own" he said. "It's pretty fun when everyone aligns themselves and we're all pulling in the same direction."

The focus is to exceed customer expectations. When someone comes to them with a project, big or small, Lyons said they work closely with clients to bring their visions to reality. Customer referral is the best testimonial they can get, but Lyons said watching the team complete a project they are proud of is just as gratifying.

"We're really good at making people's visions and dreams become a reality and staying true to what we do along the way," he said.

Lyons Landscaping does any kind of landscaping, big or small. Projects range from \$500 to \$500,000, commercial and residential. They become project managers for outdoor renovations, seeing the project from design to completion and will then maintain it as much as the customer requires. They will design outdoor renovations to meet any number of needs — a natural swimming pond or hot tub, vegetable garden, low-maintenance landscaping, outdoor lighting and more.

Lyons opened the retail outlet in 2003 when the business had grown big enough to require its own products and services. In addition to the plants, water features and rock products on display, they can order any number of speciality items — if you want it, they can get it. Lyons does projects throughout the B.C. Interior, all the way to Fort St. John.

One of Lyons' greatest achievements has been winning a British Columbia Landscape Award of Excellence competing against every landscaper in the province. They have also won multiple Keystone Awards in Kamloops and a Gold Georgie Award from the Canadian Home Builders Association of B.C.

Utilizing green initiatives such as synthetic turf and drip irrigation, Lyons can create low maintenance, sustainable landscapes.

They have created green roofs for commercial and residential projects and once built a 2,000-square-foot swimming pond. The pond has specialty lighting, a beach, no chlorine and no chemicals — you can swim with the fish. The team brought in up to 9,000-pound rocks for the project. Lyons recalls the client choosing them over another contractor, who predicted it would take up to five weeks to finish.

"I made them a bet I would have it done in five days and we did," he said.

They once worked with Ford Motor Company to create landscapes at four different locations in the Interior when the company was introducing a new Explorer. The team created full landscapes and water features that appeared to be permanent fixtures, maintained these sites for one month, then put them back to the original condition — just one of the more interesting projects Lyons has had the opportunity to be a part of.

Lyons said it's rewarding to hear from customers who are impressed with the work the team has done and at the end of the day he's just proud to be making the world a little bit greener.

"We really looked at our business and what we're doing and realized we're really one of the only companies that gets to green the world one house at a time."

"We're really good at making people's visions and dreams become a reality and staying true to what we do along the way"



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Sun Ridge Equipment

When the bell rings, it's all business — that's the motto the crew at Sun Ridge Equipment lives by and the motto that has led them well on their way to their goal of being the first-rate First Nations contractor in the mining industry.

Sun Ridge Equipment was proud to have been named the First Nations Business of the Year by the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce and was also named the B.C. Aboriginal Business of the Year in 2013.

Sun Ridge Equipment is operated by Carrie Leonard and husband Cliff Loucks, with an office on Tk'emlups Indian Band land. They have been involved in the local and regional hauling and trucking business since 1994. Starting with only one truck, Sun Ridge Equipment has grown to include 20 pieces of equipment — loader dozers, excavators, water trucks, gravel trucks, rock trucks, packers, rock crushers and more. It has hauled everything from aggregates and topsoil to Canada Post mail.

As a member of the Tk'emlups Indian Band, Leonard is a fierce advocate for her community. At times, her staff make-up has been 80 per cent First Nations, providing employment for members from her own band and surrounding bands. Sun Ridge Equipment has been able to recruit and train First Nations employees via their healthy relationship with the British Columbia Aboriginal Mine Training Association. Leonard is not only dedicated to supporting her First Nations employees, but the broader community as well.

She has donated \$15,000 to the Kamloopa Powwow and has contributed to Aboriginal Day celebrations to support the cultural heritage of her people.

“My foremost goal is to focus on providing First Nations employment and training opportunities and giving back to the community at large,” Leonard said.

Leonard supports various local charitable groups. Sun Ridge Equipment donated

\$20,000 to the local First Nations Education Council for bursaries for First Nations students and also supports the annual Howling Coyote Golf Tournament fundraiser.

Sun Ridge Equipment also donated \$20,000 towards the first-ever endowment fund for Aboriginal students in the trades and mining industry at Thompson Rivers University.

“Our First Nations students are our foundation and you have to give them opportunities,” Leonard said.

Through the years, Leonard has worked with various Aboriginal economic development partners, without which she said she wouldn't be as successful as she is today. The first was Community Futures, which helped her develop her original business plan in 1994, and the next was the All Nations Trust Company that gave her a start-up grant. She encourages Aboriginal business owners to take advantage of such opportunities.

Since 2011, Sun Ridge Equipment has been working on a contractual basis with New Gold's New Afton Mine, providing a variety of equipment and contracting services in the mining industry. It also has other local contracts and is in the process of expanding and growing the business.

Sun Ridge Equipment takes great pride in the company's ability to get the job done. At the very core of Sun Ridge Equipment's success is their dedication to being community-minded business people dedicated to providing cost effective and efficient services.

“I'm a First Nations business woman and I am proud of the success of our business and of how we are growing in the industry,” Leonard said.

“First Nations people are very capable and reliable business partners. It's all about developing your business plan, being successful, and giving back to your community. We are proud to say that we have accomplished that and we look forward to the future ahead of us.”

“My foremost goal is to focus on providing First Nations employment and training opportunities and giving back to the community at large”



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Thompson Rivers University

Founded in 1970 as Cariboo College, TRU has evolved from a small community college to an university of more than 24,000 students, almost 200 on-campus and online programs and more than 650 online courses.

Many of the people who built their careers from their experiences at Cariboo College have returned to TRU as staff, passing on the values they learned as students to the ones they teach and support today.

Katherine Sutherland, associate vice-president academic, calls TRU the “university that could.” She will celebrate 23 years at the institution this year and has held placements throughout the university, from a sessional faculty member in the English department to vice-president academic.

When she attended TRU straight out of high school, she said the experience was transformative.

“I know from direct experience what this university has done for me, for the community,” she said. “I see what it does for people every single day.”

She is proud that TRU has maintained high levels of interaction between professors and students — class sizes remain small and experts from each discipline are regularly invited to teach. Sutherland called TRU a “best-kept secret,” but makes it a priority to promote it further.

“We offer an excellent education. The world has to know that,” she said. And that is starting to happen. Last year, TRU hosted some 2,589 international students from 85 countries.

Home to the country’s newest law school, TRU saw its first law class graduate this year.

Law professor and 2008 Distinguished TRU Alumni award winner Craig Jones graduated from TRU Open Learning, formerly the British Columbia Open University, with a bachelor of general studies degree.

“I see TRU as a school that is in a constant growth phase. There’s a sustained energy and

desire to do things differently,” he said, noting he wouldn’t have been able to go to university if it hadn’t been for Open Learning. While degrees from UBC and Harvard changed his credentials, Open Learning changed his life, he said.

Success stories like Jones’ are rooted in TRU, Open Learning’s history of providing highly accessible, open, online and distance education for over 35 years. This year more than 12,000 students are enrolled in courses that offer flexibility, convenience and a gold standard of student support.

TRU offers a vast array of trades programs. Paul Simpson teaches in the piping department and did his plumbing apprenticeship through TRU in the late 1990s. He returned to TRU as an instructor in 2010. As a student, he recognized a sense of camaraderie amongst TRU trades students, something he encourages and sees his students enjoy today.

“There is great pride and students are very motivated to get a trade under their belt,” he said.

As trades people are increasingly in demand, Simpson said the program is quick to keep up with industry-leading practices and equipment. He refers to TRU’s trades facilities as “state-of-the-art.”

Wendy McKenzie obtained her diploma in nursing from TRU in 1984 and returned to join the nursing faculty 10 years ago.

“I hope that I’m the same type of instructor as the ones that motivated me,” she said. “I want to be a partner in their education.” As a student, she found the professors at TRU to be exceptional and continually encouraged her to push the boundaries of her education. McKenzie does the same for her students by regularly leading a field school in the small African nation of Lesotho, where they see first hand the health-care challenges families face in other parts of the world.

Four unique stories — each proving that excellence at a university is all about the people who make it so.

“We offer an excellent education. The world has to know that”



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Jessica Klymchuk

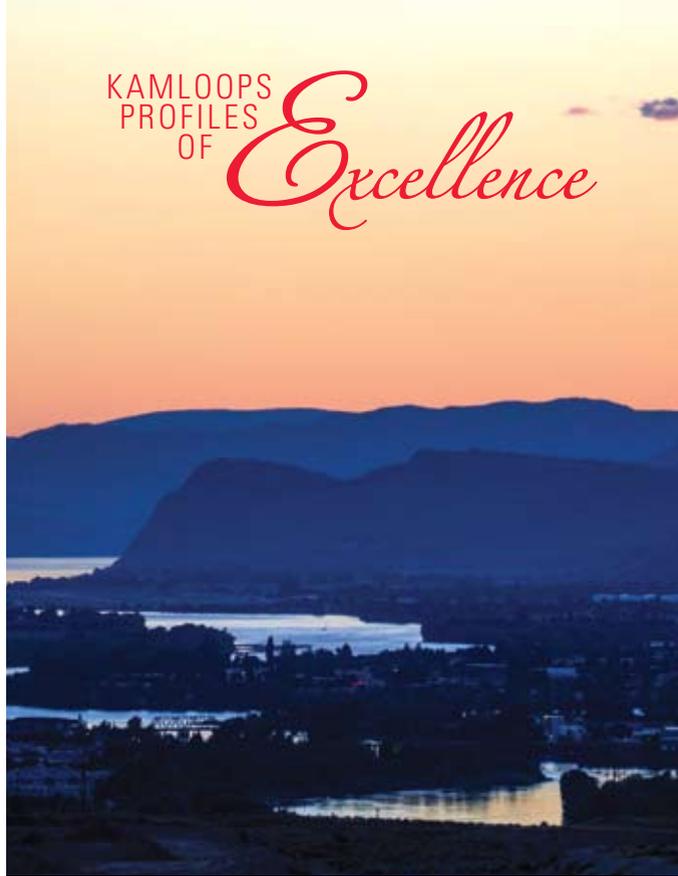
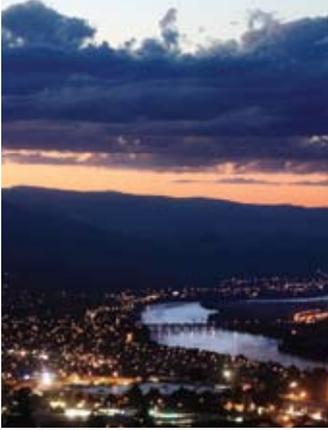
Jessica Klymchuk is the writer and co-ordinator for special sections and supplements at Kamloops This Week. While going to school at Thompson Rivers University, Jessica got her start in journalism by contributing to the student newspaper, the Omega, and later became news editor. She worked as a summer intern in the editorial department at the Salmon Arm Observer in 2013 and graduated from Thompson Rivers University's bachelor of journalism program in 2014. Her work has also appeared in Maclean's Guide to Canadian Universities.



Hugo Yuen

Hugo Yuen is an award-winning photographer specializing in commercial and editorial work. Hugo started as a contributing photographer for the Omega, Thompson Rivers University's student newspaper, where he later became the photo editor. While pursuing his fine-arts degree at Thompson Rivers University Hugo, became passionate about visual story-telling and went on to work as a staff photographer for the Kamloops Daily News. Hugo's freelance work has appeared in various major Canadian media outlets, including the Vancouver Province and the Globe and Mail. Based in Calgary, Hugo is currently a freelance photographer with the Calgary Sun and the QMI Photo Agency.

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