

Chaplain Melita Champlain

Chaplain Melita Thornhill worked in the corporate marketing arena until 1994, when she chose to go back to school and become a minister focusing on a chaplaincy designation. She graduated in 1998, and became the volunteer Chaplain for Avalon Women's centers. During this time with Avalon, she became connected with people living on the Downtown Eastside. She felt that people living in poverty and/or addiction could benefit from the opportunity to work. Melita founded Emerging Hope in December 2001 to create employment for Downtown Eastside residents. Now in its seventh year, Emerging Hope has created tens of thousands of work hours and is still going strong. Landscaping, wreath-making, creating hanging baskets, growing plants to sell, recycling used plant pots, and urban farming are some of the vehicles Emerging Hope uses to add a little dignity to peoples' lives.

Emerging Hope

www.emerginghope.ca

John Soleanico

John has been an investment analyst for the Health and Education Group of the International Finance Corporation, the private sector investment arm of the World Bank since December 2005, for which he has travelled extensively throughout the developing world. Having volunteered as a mentor and officer with StreetWise Partners in New York City, John helped launch a StreetWise DC initiative after moving to Washington, which is now beginning its third successful cycle. He was previously employed as an analyst in Lehman Brothers Healthcare Investment Banking group in New York. Born in Brasov, Romania, John immigrated to the United States in 1988. Having lived in Chicago and New York, he attended Columbia University, where he received his B.A. in Political Science and Economics.

StreetWise Partners

StreetWise Partners builds mentoring relationships between motivated low-income individuals and volunteer business professionals to develop workplace skills and employment networks as the bridge to a successful career.

www.streetwisepartners.org

Deborah Twocock

Deborah Twocock graduated from Ottawa University and headed West to Vancouver in 1980. For the next almost 20 years, she worked in Vancouver's tumultuous fashion industry, honing her skills in customer service, as well as hiring and developing staff and management. In 1999, she began working with the then-new organization, Dress for Success Vancouver. Since those initial years, and thanks to the efforts of hundreds of dedicated volunteers, the organization now serves women referred from over 60 agencies in the Lower Mainland. Today, Deborah is Executive Director of Dress for Success, and along with volunteers and two fabulous staff, manages three programs offering support to women trying to find their place in the working world. Most rewarding is the ever increasing number of past clients who are now volunteers and mentors at DFS Vancouver.

Dress for Success

DFS' mission is to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life.

www.dressforsuccess.org