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Did you know that 90 per cent of apprenticeship training in Ontario goes on right in our public colleges, or that Job Connect places approximately 13,000 young unemployed people in jobs annually, or that Ontario Colleges provide more than 350 diploma, degree and certificate programs related to the operations functions of the automotive manufacturing industry? The wealth of opportunities offered in Ontario's colleges is exciting - especially knowing that they work to prepare students for real-world business and industry jobs. To highlight this breadth of education and training and the extensive business connections that enhance its effectiveness, in January, Metroland will introduce a brand new publication called Ontario's Colleges: Partners in Business.

The mandate of Ontario's Colleges of

Applied Arts and Technology is to provide accessible, quality career education and training to enhance social and economic development throughout Ontario and meet local, regional and global marketplace demands. This challenge is met at 24 Community Colleges in 200 locations across the province that serve thousands of full-time and part-time students. In Ontario's Colleges: Partners in Business, you will find information on current college-related topics such as apprenticeship, Job Connect and TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills). Discover what is happening across the province in applied research, custom curriculum development, continuing education, multi-site training, E-learning and the dynamic automotive sector.

This special section sponsored by The Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training (CON*NECT) will be distributed in the January 2005 issue of Metroland Business Times Newspapers: Brampton, Cambridge/Guelph/Kitchener/Waterloo, Durham, Halton, London, Mississauga, Niagara, Northumberland, Toronto, Simcoe and York.

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Successful immigrant opens doors for others

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer



DAVIDSON OMOLE: York Region man starting Canadian New Immigrant Employment Organization.

Davidson Omole had some help finding work in his own area of expertise and he wants to make sure other immigrants have the same opportunities.

That's why Mr. Omole, who came to Newmarket from Nigeria less than two years ago, is planning to open a non-profit group called the Canadian New Immigrant Employment Organization.

"The purpose is to provide a bridge for immigrants, linking them with employers, even on a volunteer basis, to give them experience in Canadian business situations," Mr. Omole said.

It will also provide an opportunity for immigrants to meet with others in the same situation to share their experiences, he said.

Even though Mr. Omole has a PhD in economics and an extensive background in finance and economic analysis, he was having trouble finding employment in that field when he arrived here.

Fortunately, he learned about Career Bridge, a pilot program offered through the Toronto Region Immigration Employment council, a program endorsed by York Region, according to Susan Taylor of the region's human services planning coalition.

"It gives immigrants their first work experience in their field of excellence," Ms. Taylor said. "The worst thing is if they come in highly trained and wind up driving a cab or flipping hamburgers. If that's their first Canadian experience, they just go downhill from there. It's better to hold off until they get a job in their own specialty."

In fact, Mr. Omole wound up interning in the region's planning department and is now branching out into his own company, B.A.O. Research & Consultancy, to do research, estate planning and life insurance training, curriculum development and computer training for businesses.

"I have a number of business specialists on board," he said.

One of the first things he had to learn about seeking employment in Canada was a basic difference in preparing a resume.

"In Africa, we delight in big resumes. The bigger the resume, the harder working you are. My resume included all my education, my publications, academic

conferences I attended, courses I've taught. It was 18 pages when I came to Canada.

"Here, they want everything summarized in two pages."

He also learned it's normal here to follow up those resumes with a telephone call or personal visit. "In Africa, it's not acceptable to follow up. It's as if you are trying to pre-empt their decision."

That's the type of thing he hopes to pass on to others when he gets the Canadian New Immigrant Employment Organization up and running. Another is establishing more appropriate business hours.

"I think the centre should be open until 9 p.m.," he said. "A new immigrant does not have normal business hours when he's looking for a job. That will be one of the advantages to give them proper support."

The region's own action plan to promote ethno-cultural diversity, a program called the Road to Inclusivity, enters the next stage this month with a day-long inclusivity summit in Richmond Hill.

"We're expecting 200 people from multiple organizations; senior managers and decision makers," Ms. Taylor said. "We'll be hoping to get endorsement on six key areas including the establishment of a York Region welcome/resource centre, increasing English as Second Language programs, a region-wide education program and promoting diversity in schools."

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