

# Stu Conger Award in Career Counselling and Career Development, 2007

---

**Recipient: Kristine McGhee**

## Biography

Kristine McGhee has passionately devoted herself to Aboriginal economic development, workforce capacity building, career counselling and career development for 22 years. Located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, she has succeeded in assisting many at risk individuals in changing their life directions. She has done so through innovative, creative and entrepreneurial approaches in very challenging environments.

She is the founder of the Opportunities for Employment Food Bank, an initiative which located a food bank on site at a training centre, this making it possible for social service recipients, many of whom were single mothers, to sustain their families and to acquire employment skills. She directed the Aboriginal Employment Initiative (AEI) for the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Business Council of Manitoba. One AEI innovation was the introduction of a Cultural Awareness Workshop for Employers which preceded an Employer/Work Seeker Job Fair.

The workshop was credited with breaking barriers, increasing understanding and 70 on site hires and many more following the Job Fair. Concerned by the low employment rates among marginalized communities, the 70% drop out rate before grade 10 and the limited career horizons of youth, she developed the Career Exposure Project which has been in operation since 2004, and has received city, provincial, national and international attention and is recognized as a Best Practice Program. The program is a partnership between the Business Council of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Inner City School Division and the Aboriginal Employment Initiative. Starting as early as grade 5, the program combines work skill preparation including an interview with an HR professional, four divergent work shadowing experiences and training in financial management. A fundamental part of the program is exposure to the social climate in workplaces and workers share lunch each day with the students. Follow-up data indicates increased school retention, engaged learners and youth with optimistic hopes and dreams for their futures.

Kristine is currently the owner of No Doubt Consulting and is modifying and adapting the Career Exposure Program for use in other jurisdictions, provinces and countries. In addition to her active role in Manitoba, she is a member of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council and the CBC Diversity Equity Committee.

She is a woman of vision, commitment, determination and action who, when asked why she works in such challenging environments, replied "If we can affect change here, we can affect it anywhere".