



Gwaii Trust Society

Continuing Education Grants bring students one step closer to dreams

By David Archer

Each year we're proud to highlight several local students who've received financial support towards their educational goals in the trades, through university, or through other accredited courses. Interested in learning how to apply? See the fast facts at the end of this article for more information.



Damon Fladmark gives a thumbs up from a job site

“Knowledge is power,” says electrician-in-training Damon Fladmark, and he would know. Damon’s coursework and on-the-job experience are helping him convert the power of knowledge into the power of, well, literal electricity. He has just completed level one electrical training at Camosun College with the help of a Continuing Education Grant of \$750 from Gwaii Trust Society.

Each year, Gwaii Trust offers Continuing Education Grants to Haida Gwaii residents like Damon, who is from Hl_gaagilda Skidegate.

Damon knows that skilled tradespeople are in high demand on Haida Gwaii. When he finishes his training, he wants to return home and work on the islands. To make that happen, he has been gradually putting in enough hours at job sites to qualify him to complete the remaining courses and earn Red Seal certification, a standard that is recognized across Canada and internationally.

Though Damon has a few more courses to finish, he’s already enjoying his work as an electrician on both commercial and residential projects. “It’s incredibly satisfying when you [...] start flicking on lights and you see them all come on for the first time.” And before long, more homes and businesses on Haida Gwaii will share in that experience too.

Luke Borserio is another local student continuing his education. He received a \$750 grant in support of his training in the Rural Nursing Certificate Program through the University of Northern British Columbia. The program provides valuable instruction for nurses in remote areas like Haida Gwaii. When certified, Luke’s scope of practice will include health promotion, illness prevention, and treatment of acute injury or illness in specific remote settings.



Luke Borserio (left) stands with his brother Kye, who is also a nurse in Masset

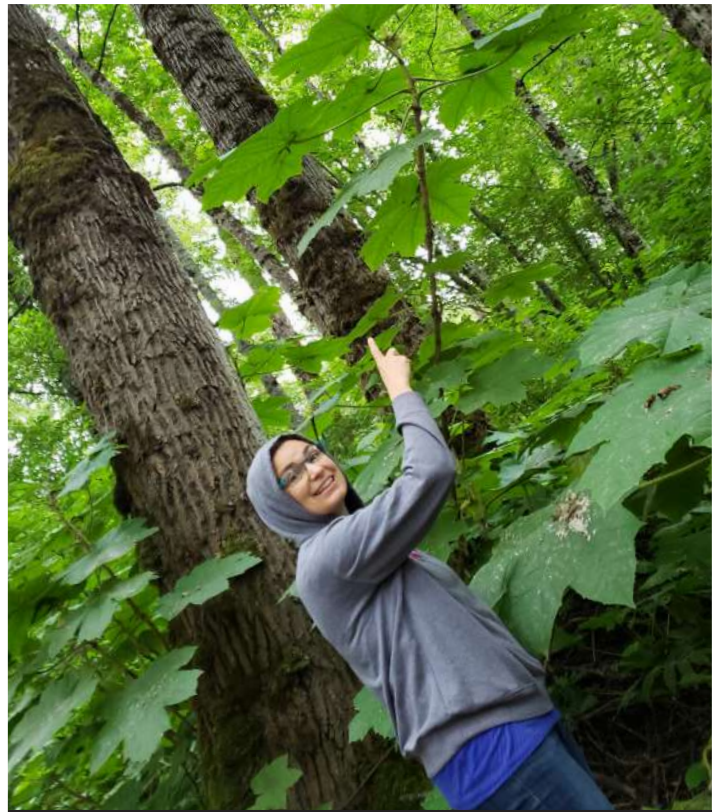
Luke wrote in to say he wants to make his community better through excellent health care. “While the program is tailored for nurses working as the sole healthcare provider in remote communities, the courses involved build on a pre-existing foundation of nursing skills that further allows me to give the best possible care back to the community I love so much,” he says. “It enhances everything from frontline physical assessments to chronic disease management, and the whole time reminds me how thankful I am to be a part of such an exceptional healthcare team here on Haida Gwaii.”

Until Luke gets certified, he says, “I’ll just keep trying to be that friendly face for people seeking care!”

Jody Bissett from Daajing Giids *Queen Charlotte* is another one of this year's grant recipients. She received \$670 towards the "Re-Storying History: Indigenous Perspectives" course with the Haida Gwaii Institute. There, students learned about the history of Haida Gwaii through the lens of Haida people, culture, origin stories, and oral histories. Students also had the chance to reflect on their own origins in the context of difficult, ongoing realities of systemic racism and the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples.

"I really felt like everyone should take this course," says Jody, who says it has benefitted her both personally and professionally. Jody has served as an Interpretation Coordinator with the Gwaii Haanas Visitor Experience Team for several years. Her public-facing role involves leading visitor and education programs such as Gwaii Haanas orientations and giving presentations to school groups, as well as supervising summer staff. Jody hopes that when visitors come to Haida Gwaii, they have the chance to see how important it is to honour Indigenous peoples, cultures, and rightful claims to the land.

Doing a course requires a commitment of both time and money, of course. Jody is grateful her workplace allowed her some time to take classes during work hours. She says Gwaii Trust was very helpful in removing barriers too. "[The grant] really opens up the door for people to be able to do something like this and not feel like they couldn't because of financial stress."



Jody Bissett learned about the land, sea, and Haida Culture through a course at the Haida Gwaii Institute

Frequently Asked Questions about the Continuing Education Grant

Who can apply?

Residents who have lived on Haida Gwaii for the past 24 consecutive months. A student who has left Haida Gwaii to attend school but otherwise maintains their residency is considered a resident. This grant is open to mature students, recent high school graduates, and both full-time and part-time students.

How much money is available?

Up to \$3,750 a calendar year, or a maximum of five courses to a maximum of \$750 per course. Funding will be based on the actual cost of your course and materials.

What can I apply for?

This grant can help cover the cost of tuition and course materials for courses at recognized universities, colleges, and trades programs (including online courses) that result in credits towards a certificate, diploma or degree. This includes both short-term courses (those that take less

than three months to complete) and long-term courses (those that are three months or longer)

Is it hard to apply?

"It's simple," says Damon. It took him about an hour to fill out the application, which was time well spent. Our staff are available to assist along the way, especially if this is your first time applying for a grant.

When is the application deadline?

Applications are accepted throughout the year. Your application must be submitted no later than either two weeks into the semester or course (long-term courses) or the day before the course starts (short-term courses).

Who can I contact at Gwaii Trust?

Reach out to Pam Hill, ceg@gwaiitrust.com or 559 8104, or visit us at gwaiitrust.com/grants for more information.

Upcoming Deadlines

Travel, Education, and Staycation

Visit website for details www.gwaiitrust.com/grants

Covid-19 Response

Apply throughout the year until Dec 1st at 4pm

Community Innovation

Jun 1st, Sep 1st, Oct 1st, by 4pm

Major Contributions

Sep 1st, 4pm

Youth Grant, Arts Grant, Arts Workshops and Arts Mentorships

Oct 1st, 4pm

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