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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Government of Canada helps young newcomers in Saskatoon prepare for jobs

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN — Local youth that face barriers to employment will get job-preparation training and work experience through the Government of Canada's support for a local employment project. Mr. Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon-Wanuskewin, made the announcement today on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development.

"In today's environment, it is more important than ever that all Canadians develop the skills needed to participate and succeed in the job market," said Mr. Vellacott. "By supporting this project, we are helping Saskatoon youth develop the skills, knowledge and work experience they need to reach their full potential."

The Saskatoon Open Door Society Inc. will receive \$69,444 in federal Skills Link funding to support its Immigrant Youth Job Seekers project, which will help 15 youth facing employment barriers develop life and job skills to ease their transition to work.

"Entering and integrating into the workforce is a major challenge for immigrant youth," said Ms. Beulah Gana, Executive Director of the Saskatoon Open Door Society. "With this funding, we will be able to provide them with the opportunity to develop positive attitudes and behaviours, and employment skills that support successful integration into the workforce and enable them to contribute to the betterment of their families and the community."

Skills Link focuses on helping youth facing barriers to employment, such as single parents, Aboriginal youth, young persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, youth living in rural and remote areas, and youth who have dropped out of high school.

The federal government is working with the provinces and territories, community organizations and other stakeholders to provide Canadians with the training, skills and opportunities they need to participate in the workforce and contribute to their communities.

Skills Link is part of the Government of Canada's strategy to create the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world. The Government underscored its commitment to this strategy in Canada's Economic Action Plan. A key component of the Plan is to create more and better opportunities for Canadian workers through skills development. To learn more about Canada's Economic Action Plan, visit www.actionplan.gc.ca.

The Skills Link program is delivered by Service Canada, which provides one-stop personalized services for Government of Canada programs, services and benefits. For more information about this program, call 1 800 O-Canada, visit servicecanada.gc.ca or drop by your local Service Canada Centre.

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This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

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backgrounder

The **Saskatoon Open Door Society Inc.** helps newcomers and refugees in Saskatoon and area become informed and effective participants in Canadian society by providing them with settlement and integration services, English as a second language instruction and employment programming. Between September 8, 2009, and April 30, 2010, the organization, through its Immigrant Youth Job Seekers project, will help 15 young newcomers facing employment barriers develop the life and job skills they need to integrate successfully into the labour market.

As part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, the **Skills Link program** is one of three programs that help young Canadians, particularly those facing barriers to employment, obtain career information, develop skills, gain work experience, find good jobs and stay employed. The other two programs are Summer Work Experience and Career Focus.

Skills Link focuses on helping youth facing barriers to employment, such as single parents, Aboriginal youth, young persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, youth living in rural and remote areas, and youth who have dropped out of high school. It offers a client-centred approach based on assessing an individual's specific needs. The program supports youth in developing basic and advanced employment skills. Eligible participants between 15 and 30 years of age – who are not receiving Employment Insurance benefits – are assisted through a coordinated approach, offering longer-term supports and services that can help them find and keep a job.