



Workplace learning program provides housekeeper with reading skills

Ranjit Malhi has worked as a housekeeper at the Inn at Laurel Point for four years, and she does her job with care and pride, but when a guest would leave her a note, Ranjit was unable to read it.

As an immigrant from India, she never had the opportunity to learn to read English properly. Recently, though, that has changed: Malhi was able to read and understand a guest's written request for the first time.

Telling the story, she is beaming. "I like learning to read. At home, my youngest son is helping me," says the mother to two teenage boys. For several weeks, Malhi has been studying with adult educator Helen Thomas at the READ Society.



Julie Wright and Ranjit Malhi are colleagues at the Inn at Laurel Point.

"Ranjit is really eager to learn. She's always willing to write sentences using her spelling words and loves to read new stories," Thomas says.

The opportunity has been made possible because the Inn at Laurel Point is participating in the SkillsPlus program, offered by READ through a partnership with the Community Social Planning Council and Bridges for Women Society. Funding is provided through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement.

The hotel was one of the first companies in Greater Victoria to partner with the READ Society to explore workplace learning opportunities, notes Thomas. "We have been working together for a couple of years now and it is fantastic to see this come to fruition."

The Inn at Laurel Point prides itself on providing education opportunities, and regularly offers internal training and workshops for staff, says Julie Wright, director of human resources. READ helped the hotel survey its staff to find out what training opportunities they want, and then used that information to create specific programs.

"This was an excellent opportunity to partner with the READ Society to cover those areas that we aren't able to provide ourselves," Wright says.

Four employees from the Inn at Laurel Point are participating in the SkillsPlus program, which helps employees improve their Essential Skills. Some are working on reading skills while others will get computer training. "We know that offering training helps our colleagues be more confident and comfortable. We're really excited to offer resources and tools," Wright says.

The Inn at Laurel Point is one of 16 Greater Victoria companies benefiting from SkillsPlus. More than 200 people will receive workplace training before current training sessions end in April 2011.

Employers can find more workplace learning tips, tools and resources on READ's website at www.readsociety.bc.ca/workplace.htm, through the Community Social Planning Council, <http://www.qolchallenge.ca/resources/skillsplus.php> and from Bridges for Women.