

Maria Christina Lidstone

Maria Christina Lidstone of Nelson went to the Kootenay Career Development Society (KCDS) during a transitional time in her life when she felt the need to explore what future direction she should take. As a result, Maria Christina learned she loves to work with her hands, and has found two very fulfilling job pursuits to follow.

“I wanted to start a new career, and I knew I was interested in working with people on an energetic level,” she said.

She worked with Employment Counsellor Rose Stapenhurst, who suggested she take a career development workshop. By taking the workshop, she pinpointed massage work as her area of interest. She needed to upgrade her English and biology in order to be accepted into that field of study, so that step came first.

“It was very interesting,” Maria Christina said. “I like to learn.”

In January, she begins her studies at Okanagan Valley College of Massage Therapy. After the yearlong program, she will be able to work in a spa setting.

“It was so helpful to go to KCDS,” she said. “It opened so many doors for me.”

In the meantime, Maria Christina is following another passion: operating a homemade salsa business. Her fresh salsas, made from vegetables she grows herself, are quickly becoming a hit in the Nelson area. Maria Christina worked in her parents’ catering business in her home country of Mexico, so the food business comes naturally to her. She sells her salsas at the local farmers’ market, and is moving on to supply the popular product in local stores.

“People love my salsa – as soon as they try it, they are hooked!” she says. She has found a certified kitchen in which to make the salsa, and has taken a Food Safe course to ensure all health standards are met.

Maria Christina’s transitional phase has turned into a solid and healthy path to the future.



Kootenay Career Development Society (KCDS) is a member of the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT), a province-wide organization dedicated to community-based training. ASPECT's mandate is to promote and strengthen their members' capacity to provide services to people with barriers to employment.