

BICK'S EMPLOYEES USING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



Barb Feere never had to interview for a job. She landed her job with Bick's Pickles approximately 35 years ago because of connections her mother had from working there in the past. Barb is 52 years old and had been working for the company ever since. Feere says, "I was expecting to retire from Bick's." However, the food production plant shut down which left 250 employees without a job by the end of November. As more than a month has passed, Feere is still looking for an employment and a source of income. Feere has said, "I live by myself so I relied on that money. I was hoping for a job in Dunnville by this time, but there are no jobs." Feere says she continued to work with Bick's until the very end. This is a situation the Feere has never had to experience before. Now that she is in search of employment, she is depending on St. Leonard's Community Services to help her find the help she needs for employment purposes. Feere says that she has learned a lot already. Some of the things she has learned include how to write a quality resume and what to do and say during an interview. These are tips that are important for finding employment, especially in an economy that is still struggling. Feere is not the only person who is leaning on St. Leonard's Community Services for assistance. The program manager, Sharon Arnold, says that there has definitely been a spike in the number of visitors ever since the closing of Bick's. She also says the spike seemed to have taken place only a week or so after the company shut its doors. Arnold says, "We used to hover around the high 600s. In November, our total number of clients coming through the door hit 925." Arnold also says that September was their highest month because they had about 1,073 visitors. "I would say to date we've seen about 15 to 20 per cent of the employees from Bick's come here looking for help. They want to know what their options are," says Arnold. Arnold says that many former workers have the skills that a lot of employers are looking for but simply lack some of the essential components. Such components include a resume and interview tips, which the community center is providing. Another issue is that the job market in Dunnville is definitely limited which often makes it more of a challenge to find employment. The employees of St. Leonard's are optimistic and are not giving up on helping other people. Arnold says, "We're getting them job ready and connected to potential employers. For those looking for other forms of assistance, we're connected with Employment Ontario and they have all sorts of programs for unemployed people." She also says, "The workers just have to get to us if they want help and we can put them on a path to success for free."

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