



Respect Works Here

Community Champion

With a Master's Degree in Chemistry, single mother **Anna Shultz** didn't see any opportunities for herself in her home country of Ukraine.

"I couldn't see any future. Despite all my love and deep feelings for my country, I couldn't survive there."

Determined to create a better life, Anna began the journey that would ultimately bring her to Vernon, where she has happily settled, content with her work, her family and her community.

Her diverse skills and cultural background give her insight that complements her work as an Employment Specialist at Nexus BC. Working with immigrants to the region and supporting their path to jobs and careers. She also works part-time on web design but her passion is clearly in helping people find work.

"I realized that although I am a good web designer, I am much better as a people person, as someone who can help people," says Anna.

I like to see the outcome of my work. I may appreciate a nice picture I have done, but it is not as good as seeing someone that just got a job and is so happy. It is life changing for them." Anna coaches her participants on developing their survivability skills.

"Survivability is being able to utilize all the opportunities that come, to identify what's right and to jump quickly," she says. "When you trust, and believe in yourself, you can make quick decisions."

Trusting herself and making quick decisions worked well for Anna on the family front as well. Having settled in Israel, Anna was enjoying her career as a technical recruiter and graphic designer, when she met her future husband Dmitry, who was on holiday from Canada.

"It was only one day together," says Anna. "He offered his heart and his hand and I felt he was the right guy for me." Their whirlwind romance brought Anna and her now seven-year daughter to the Lower Mainland where she started over once more with professional development and language training.

Although her mother and brother both followed her to Burnaby, it didn't feel like home to Anna. "It seemed like there was a cold, glass wall that prevented us from settling."

"We heard from friends how beautiful the Okanagan was and came up here in 2012 to have a look. We knew we could call it home. First, it's beautiful, second it is affordable and third, the people are so nice and sincere in their smiles," continues Anna.

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~ Anna Shultz

Since moving to Vernon, Anna's family has grown to include a second daughter, now 2 years old, and her mother has moved here to help. For Anna, not having a big commute means she has more time to give back to the community. She is involved with the Rotary Club and enjoys volunteer teaching Russian to young kids but mostly she is focused on facilitating employment.

"Whenever I meet someone, I am always wondering, what is your profession, are you looking for employment, can I connect you? It is just my mindset," she laughs.

