

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
Envision Counselling and Support Centre Inc.**

February 27, 2013

International Women's Day

Community Profile: Rev. Brenna Lea Nickel

In celebration of International Women's Day, Envision Counselling and Support Centre is profiling Rev. Brenna Lea Nickel. The theme for 2013 is *Building Leadership Together* and this is what Rev. Nickel embraces and demonstrates to her community.

Nickel is young, under 30, and a woman in a position traditionally reserved for men. Her successful balance of listener and instigator can be traced to her dynamic personality and progressive leadership style.

Nickel is the ordained minister at Estevan's St. Paul's United Church. She arrived in the summer of 2011, from Rockaway, New Jersey, fresh from her graduation from Princeton Theological Seminary, to take up the ministerial duties of not one or two, but *three* churches in the Estevan Area.

Nickel officiates in Estevan at St. Paul's, at Knox United North Portal, and at First Presbyterian Church in Portal, North Dakota. Leading an international charge is unique for both the United Church and Presbyterian organizations on both sides of the border.

"I feel that this community called me. I bring ideas but I also like to listen to everyone's ideas, as well," says Nickel.

In her first year in the community, she organized a cross-denominational group to travel to Minot to help in the rebuilding effort following a summer of devastating flooding.

"As a leader, one can never be really satisfied. If you experience a little discontentment, I believe that will be one of the tools that keeps you looking forward to new opportunities to give back to the community," she says.

Nickel has also been the catalyst of the Warm Welcome Program, where Estevan residents who have no place to live can come stay the night and have breakfast in the morning. The project is run in collaboration with the Salvation Army and other local churches throughout the winter months.

"The first meeting we had to talk about the Warm Welcome, 45 people showed up. I was so impressed by these men and women, ready to jump in and help out on this issue," says Nickel.

She attributes the success of the Warm Welcome, and other programs and projects to the church and its membership.

"The leadership at all three churches was so courageous to take on a first call minister" she says.

Nickel feels at ease when preaching to her congregation and says it's the time she has the clearest thoughts about her calling to this community.

"So much I have done is because other people have affirmed it. I'm so vocal, people come to me with good ideas and I am able listen and spread the message."

Nickel says she lives her life by being grateful for the work of others.

“Saying thank you, or excuse me, or please can change a person’s mood, it can open perspectives and make our community a better place. I am so grateful for others gifts and talents and try to make a point of letting them know,” she says.

“Letting people know you see them and you see what they contribute is powerful. Recognition is underestimated.”

She feels so strongly about this that she added a Board of Gratitude beside the board for prayers and the board for birthdays in the Church.

When asked about success, Nickel offered a non-traditional answer.

“For me, success is really difficult to define, because even in not reaching a goal later you might look back and think of that time as being successful in achieving something else.”

“Success is so closely linked money, titles, and status, which is not success to me,” she says.

“Being excited about who you are and granting yourself grace marks a successful person to me”.

On International Women’s Day, Nickel acknowledges that women are facing challenges in her profession.

“There is a need still to recognize women leaders, and we haven’t reached true equality yet,” says Nickel.

“I hope that the next generation of female leaders will not have to worry about smiling too much, or being too stern for fear of being taken too light or too seriously.

“I hope that women won’t question and blame themselves for wearing a dress and being called sweetie at a professional engagement, that they will feel confident in their role and right to be there, with a ‘power suit’ or dress on.

“I would like to see women in the next generation stop second-guessing themselves.” And with someone like Nickel to look up to, putting herself in a position to be observed and emulated, young women can move closer to that goal through simply through her subtle influence.

Envision Counselling and Support Centre is proud to recognize the contributions of Rev. Brenna Lea Nickel to Estevan and area and thank her for her efforts to make this world a better place for all.

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