



Inside Art Co-op

In 2002, a staff person from Community Futures South Fraser (CFSF) presented a one-hour small business seminar to inmates at a federal penitentiary. The response from the men was enthusiastic. They wanted more. They wanted to learn all of the skills required to become small business owners. CFSF saw an opportunity and the InsideArt Cooperative was born.

Most members of the InsideArt Cooperative are federal inmates incarcerated in BC. With the assistance of outside members, volunteers, community organizations and one CFSF staff manager, InsideArt members produce and sell both fine art pieces and production items: stained glass, fused and slumped glass, blown glass, carved wood items and handcrafted furniture.

Starting a business is hard work and few low-income earners are ever afforded the opportunity to develop their own business. InsideArt gives inmates the opportunity to use the time that they have in prison productively, working on business plans, building business contacts, and refining their art. The money they earn helps them support their families. And once released from prison, these artists have a transition plan in place, as well as a means of financial self-sufficiency and a restored sense of personal pride. All of this may mean a better start in community as a returnee.

[Click here](#) to read *A Social Economy Showcase – BC Stories* in its entirety.