

Quote:

“I do not have a disability, I have a gift!

Others may see it as a disability, but I see it as a challenge. This challenge is a gift because I have to become stronger to get around it, and smarter to figure out how to use it; others should be so lucky.”

— Shane E. Bryan

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The Canadian Association for Supported Employment
L'Association Canadienne pour l'Emploi Supporté

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Message from the CASE President—Tracy Williams

What a difference a year can make! Last year when I prepared the article for the spring newsletter it was -25 here in Brandon, this year it is +20 and beautiful. Although I know those on the east coast probably don't want to hear about it while they still have piles of snow in their yards. Spring will come to you as well, I promise!

When you are preparing a newsletter for distribution, you almost forget the amount of work that is done by our members over the distance of this huge country. It is sometimes hard to translate how these activities make our services better, but be assured we are always trying to find ways to share information that is relevant to you and applicable to your services.

Each year the CASE board has focused on a few key points, this year being the National MentorAbility program which was piloted in British Columbia and Saskatchewan this past October. The program is designed to help Canadian businesses effectively recruit and hire talented, motivated new employees with disabilities. We at CASE are in the process of trademarking the name, National Disability Mentoring Day, which is held the first Wednesday in October in conjunction with Community Living month. Any CASE member is welcome to use MentorAbility all year round. More information on this program can be found on page 2.

The CASE board has also spent a lot time discussing the mission, value and vision statements of the organization. As part of this, a sub-committee has been established to do the ground work on a full strategic plan, which includes branding and social media. More information will be distributed to the membership in the coming months.

Another goal of CASE this year is to engage more employers, both locally and nationally. We have increased our use of social media this past year with Facebook and Twitter being the main platforms we have been utilizing and we have seen a remarkable increase in traffic on both. We will be looking at opening a LinkedIn account as well in the coming months.

Our board of directors in conjunction with the local conference committee have worked hard this year to once again produce a dynamic and engaging program with 2 keynotes and over a dozen workshops in beautiful Victoria British Columbia. As of today the conference is officially sold out. We will be taking names for a waiting list in the event that there are any cancellations. This shows us that we are doing something right and we plan to continue to make the annual conference better each and every year.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to encourage agencies and employers across Canada to join CASE, we continue to develop and build and we cannot do it without your support. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at twilliams@westmanemployment.ca



Tracy Williams
Executive Director
Westman Employment Services Inc.
Brandon Manitoba

CASE Board of Directors Spotlight: Colette Acheson



Colette Acheson brings almost 20 years as a management generalist connected to a diverse network of corporate, institutional, and non-profit organizations. From the Calgary area, she moved to Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory in 2013 to take on the role as Executive Director for the Yukon Association for Community Living where she manages a team of 9 full and part-time staff and contract employees and is responsible for program development, grant writing and fund development, media and community relations, along with general management of finance and operations.

Ms. Acheson is passionate about creating opportunities for people with disabilities to experience full and inclusive lives, including in the area of employment. In Alberta, she previously developed the More Than The Label self-employment program for the PDD South Region in 2008-2010, and now in the Yukon is responsible for overseeing development of new employment opportunities created through the CACL Ready, Willing and Able program.

MentorAbility:

“**MentorAbility**” is a national program of the Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE) designed to help Canadian businesses to effectively recruit and hire talented, motivated new employees with disabilities.

In October 2014, BC and Saskatchewan piloted the first MentorAbility program. National Disability Mentoring Day is held on the first Wednesday of October in conjunction with Community Living month in October. Any CASE member is welcome to use MentorAbility all year round.

There are three essential partnerships in every MentorAbility program – the mentor (employer) and the protégé (job seeker) and a service provider organizer in each participating community. Local organizers recruit job seekers with disabilities and employers to participate in the local mentoring program. Each participant gains value by providing information and experience that enables their counterpart to better succeed as an employer or job seeker. Ultimately, the volunteer business leader mentor helps their protégé receive career guidance; training and exploration opportunities that enable them to better prepare for and access employment with Canada’s top employers. And in return, the protégé helps their mentor (and host business sponsor) to be better prepared and comfortable in hiring new employees with disabilities. Win-win.

The main goals of the MentorAbility program are to:

1. Assist unemployed Canadians with disabilities to become employed utilizing employer mentors
2. Assist employers to become more successful in employing people with disabilities utilizing mentoring relationships and creative human resources recruitment outreach strategies
3. Assist employment services organizations to learn how to incorporate mentoring as an effective method for improving employment placement results for people with disabilities
4. Recognize and celebrate mentoring success stories as part of the national effort to promote the employment and full citizenship of Canadians with disabilities

For more information please go to www.supportedemployment.ca or contact us at info@supportedemployment.ca

CASE Conference 2015: June 2-4, 2015

This year CASE has packed its bags and moved out west for the 20th Annual National Supported Employment Conference. Vancouver Island is the destination of choice this year, more specifically the City of Victoria which is the capital city of British Columbia and is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island off Canada's Pacific coast.



An amazing conference awaits you with the keynote presentations by Mark Brand (pictured on left) A celebrated restaurateur and retailer, Mark Brand is best known for resurrecting the Save on Meats enterprise in Vancouver's downtown eastside, and Ryan Knighton (pictured on right) Knighton is the author of *Cockeyed*, his internationally acclaimed memoir about going blind, growing up, and getting both wrong



Over the course of 3 full days the conference brings together service providers, advocates, employers and educators to share tools, resources and innovative practices in supported employment.

Victoria also known as the "Garden City" is home to some of the country's most exhilarating scenery: there's an ocean or mountain (or both!) vista around every corner, and the city's flower gardens are famous the world over.

We hope you enjoy your time on the west coast and bring home tools to use create your own inclusive work place culture .

Rotary at Work BC:

ROTARY AT WORK is an initiative where Rotarians create employment opportunities for individuals who have a disability, while realizing the added advantages that people with disabilities bring to their workforce, notably:

- a more diverse, inclusive and accommodating workplace
- employees who have a disability rate average or above average in terms of safety on the job
- increased productivity and morale within your workplace
- agencies can provide free on-the-job training and job coaching for new employees
- fill labour shortages (with prescreened applicants)

ROTARY AT WORK started in Ontario about 7 years ago through the efforts of Joe Dale and Mark Wafer. Work has been going on 'behind the scenes' for 2 year to bring this initiative to BC, and has now launched in Rotary District 5050.

The collective goal across Canada is to address the staggering unemployment rate for people who have a disability. At the same time, educate business owners about the benefits of becoming an inclusive employer and tapping into this demographic. The *Rotary at Work* Project Coordinator is available to assist Rotary Clubs and potential employers to partner in meeting this goal.

As participating Rotary Clubs educate their members and local businesses about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities; communities will then reflect a more inclusive a workforce. Including people with disabilities on your staff, creates a more sustainable economy for your business and your community.

To learn more about Rotary at Work BC, please contact Dave Stark, Project Coordinator at:

dstark@rotaryatworkbc.com or 604-619-3233

The Value of Inclusion:

" The value of inclusion is obvious , better lives , a life lived more fully, greater opportunities and this is true for inclusion in all aspects of life for people who have a disability. Being included in sports events, charity and volunteer opportunities and much more however when inclusion is reached in terms of employment , inclusion by itself is not enough. Simply having a job does not allow an employee to live a full life, having a pay check does . Confidence , growth , the development of soft skills and much more comes from the ability to contribute as all other workers do , by earning a full wage and paying their share of taxes, contributing to society , their families , the economy and themselves.

Of course this should be a given, should be rather obvious to most of us but there is a reality that some people with disabilities are not being paid to work in the private sector , this is widespread and national , it is a very big problem and most of the blame for this rests with social service agencies.

Typically these instances begin innocently . A job developer has a wage subsidy and offers this to an employer if they hire an individual from the agencies pool of ready workers . Most often this job is not one that is being advertised , it is job creation. Once the wage subsidy ends , the employer realizes they will be paying an employee who is working in a position that isn't needed , it was created and declines to continue. Now we have a problem.

Typically the employee has come to love the job , the people , the camaraderie. Is proud to wear a uniform, has a sense of belonging and does not want to give up the job. Parents don't want the individual back home doing nothing and the agency does not have the resources to find another job. Therefore an accommodation is made where the worker stays on board and the situation is called " job training" with no parameters, no end date and no expected outcomes. This is wrong and it is illegal.

In Ontario last year there were a number of high profile cases where workers had earned \$1 per hour or a movie pass every week for full time work over periods up to 20 years. In one case the individual won enough back pay through the human rights tribunal to bankrupt the restaurant she worked at.

It is essential that social service agencies don't fall into this trap, it can be tricky to fix. Wage subsidies are the main culprit here and need to be eradicated but so too is the attitude of employers towards employees with disabilities which will not change when they are not investing in their new hires. Employers will continue to look at workers with disabilities as broken or not whole , damaged goods perhaps unless they are paying them and have the same expectations of them as they would with non disabled workers, work to the best of your ability.

It is incumbent on all agencies to ensure this practice of uncontrolled work experience and job training as an excuse for non payment of a wage is ended"

Mark Wafer
Franchise Owner

RWA: Adam's Story



Upon graduating high school, Adam found himself a bit lost. He missed the daily routine of class and was determined to find meaningful ways to spend his days. Like most high schools graduates, Adam expected to go to work following graduation and wanted a paycheck of his own. He began applying for jobs, but struggled with the interview process.

He participated in several employment preparation programs, which helped him explore his employment goals and interests and strengthened his interview skills. Adam soon began actively volunteering at the Nova Scotia Discovery Centre. Working with the public at the Centre helped Adam overcome his shyness and gave him new confidence in his abilities. Adam was ready, willing and able to work, but hadn't yet found a welcoming place in the workforce.

Ready, Willing & Able is a national program working in twenty communities across Canada to assist employers in hiring persons with an intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) when filling vacant positions. Ready, Willing & Able staff help employers to see persons with intellectual disabilities or ASD as motivated and capable employees, and understand the business value of hiring this untapped workforce. As employers commit to hiring through Ready, Willing & Able, staff work with community employment agency partners to link their clients to the available employment opportunities.

Adam was connected to Building Futures Employment Services, a community employment agency, for support in finding and maintaining a suitable job. As a local Ready, Willing & Able agency partner, Building Futures Employment Services received notice when their local Costco committed to hiring a person with an intellectual disability or ASD. Building Futures Employment Service reviewed their client's resumes and interests, and submitted Adam's resume for consideration. "We immediately thought of Adam and felt he would be a strong candidate," says a staff of Building Futures. "We knew Adam wanted to work for Costco, as he had applied previously on his own but didn't get an interview. This time, we knew he'd have support."

Adam was successful in his Costco interview and has been working as a Front End Associate since 2014. "Working at Costco has been great - it's the longest job I've ever had," says Adam. "It's a good job for me because it has clear steps. It's a good salary and I get benefits, I know most jobs don't offer that. What I enjoy most are my coworkers and the happy atmosphere. The people I work with have a positive attitude and this helps me stay motivated. I also understand the consequences of not being reliable more now. I don't plan on leaving this job anytime soon!"

Through the national Ready, Willing & Able program, more and more employers are realizing the potential of outstanding employees like Adam.