



EMPLOYMENT  
ACCESSIBILITY  
RESOURCE NETWORK

## Monthly E-Newsletter

November 2015

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### Introduction:

Welcome to the November edition of the EARN monthly E-Newsletter!

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you informed about what EARN and it's members are working on plus what is happening in the province regarding disability and employment.

Your feedback on how we are doing is appreciated and valued. Send comments, suggestions and your success stories to: [sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca).

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### Initiatives & Events:



On Tuesday Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Susan attended a Labour Market Ottawa training session that featured newly released tools; how to use a job seeker worksheet as a path to employment readiness and a planning tool to connect job seekers with specialized needs (including people with disabilities and other diversity groups) to community supports and services. These are great tools that service provider partners and members may want to test out. To find out more go to <http://www.ottawajobpath.ca> or contact Brenda Bedford, Project Coordinator at [bedforb@algonquincollege.com](mailto:bedforb@algonquincollege.com)



On Wednesday Nov. 18th, Susan attended the Suits His Style Agency Appreciation Event with about 25 other agency reps present, including several EARN members.

Suits His Style provides business suits, dress shirts and more to men on a limited income. We saw the steps involved in a 'suiting'. Having a suit that fits and makes a statement about who you are is a great confidence booster to men who are entering or re-entering the workforce. Of interest to our members, Suits His Style suits men with disabilities. We are currently exploring membership with Suits His Style. As SHS is volunteer driven they are always looking for donations of clothing and for alterations, a tailor or seamstress would be great resources for them too. For more information, visit: <http://www.suitshisstyle.ca>.



## EARN first Practice Interview Session:

On Nov 24<sup>th</sup>, 12 amazing employers participated in EARNs first Practice Interview session, held at the City of Ottawa. A huge thank you to Sydnie (Delta Hotels), Cathy (Hydro Ottawa), Brian (The HR Exec), Kevin (Ridgehouse Consulting), Daria (uOttawa), Yasmine (Public Service Commission), Francine, Kina and Peggy (City of Ottawa), Devon (Borden Ladner Gervais), Lindsay (CIBC) and Shelly (Ministry of Community and Social Services). Thank you for sharing your time and expertise! Feedback from the participants was very positive, such as: “It was good to get live feedback – for example, I need to pull out my personal information more during the interview” and “It was a good time to receive information on how one is to interact with employers – do this, don’t do that – it was all very helpful”. We had a number of volunteers helping to make the session run smoothly – and they did just that! Thanks to Andria (PPRC), Christine (TD), Joelle (Neil Squire), Carol Ann (March of Dimes), Phil (PPRC), and Catherine (Dept of Justice). We think we should do it again in 2016!!

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## Upcoming Activities in December:

- In December, we will be officially forming the Annual Conference Planning Committee. The event will take place on Friday April 8<sup>th</sup> 2016. If you are interested in helping us plan the event, please contact Kelly Mertl at [kmertl@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:kmertl@unitedwayottawa.ca).
  - **December 3<sup>rd</sup> marks the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme for 2015 is: Inclusion Matters: Access and Empowerment for People of all Abilities.** We know many of you are celebrating this day in many ways and we would love to hear about it for our next newsletter! Let Susan Forster know at [sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca) Any pictures you could provide would be awesome! <http://www.un.org/en/events/disabilitiesday/>
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## Success Stories:



### **Nurturing Relationships Works!**

BMO has been and is a strong partner of EARN. Two representatives (Marlene Conseicao and Philippe D’Orsonnens) currently sit on our Joint Working Group.

One hurdle that we often face in Ottawa is that many large companies, including financial institutions,

centralize recruitment, most often in Toronto. This poses challenges in showcasing the talents of EARN job seekers. To overcome this barrier, we had developed a special relationship with BMO whereby candidates who applied for BMO positions could also send their applications to EARN, and we forwarded them to our contact at BMO in Toronto. Last month our contact moved on to another position. This is frequently the time when a relationship languishes - however, our contact gave us a heads-up and provided us with the name of her successor. Susan reached out to Jennifer Targonsky, Senior Recruitment Partner, and Jennifer has agreed to renew this relationship!

Not only will she accept applications from EARN clients but she does a pre-screening interview with promising applicants and provides feedback to them before deciding on whether or not to put applications forward to recruiters. She is willing to give us feedback too on how our clients can best prepare to apply for BMO positions, and she will be sharing job postings targeted to persons with disabilities with us again. Susan will be providing more information on how this process will work to our service providers in the near future.

Many thanks to BMO for enabling us to renew and revitalize this relationship!

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## Susan's corner:



The Ottawa Community Ramp Project known as StopGap Ottawa is a new initiative that helps businesses to make their premises more accessible through the installation of affordable ramps. While this project increases accessibility in our city, it also increases the capacity of small businesses to employ more people with disabilities. With the help of the Ottawa Tool Library, volunteers, and the public, StopGap paints and builds custom made wooden ramps that can be easily installed and removed, in order to meet current City bi-laws.

Jessica Lahrkamp from StopGap Ottawa related how a local artist - who uses a wheelchair - was able to see her artwork being sold at a local business for the first time when StopGap installed a ramp. Jessica told me that her job is to “create awareness so that people can recognize how easily we can become a barrier-free society”. To find more: <http://facebook.com/StopGapOttawa> or Twitter:

[@RampOttawa](#)



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## Welcome New Members:

### Community Partners Network:

- Community Partners Network: Community Employment Resource Centre, a service of the John Howard Society of Ottawa <http://www.cercottawa.ca>

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## Upcoming EARN Events:

We are working on our calendar for 2016 – stay tuned! If you have any ideas, please let us know!!

- Save the date: EARN's Annual Conference – 7:30am-1pm on Friday April 8th, 2016

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## In the News:

Here is a story from a United Way Minute that profiles a job seeker with a disability: Living with depression anxiety, it was difficult for Monise to find employment. John Howard Society's ARCHES program helped her find a job and new confidence. [Hear Monise's Story](#)



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The Rogers Cable program *Ottawa Experts* featured Anna-Karina Tabunar on her video “Talent Untapped”. The video profiles people with disabilities in the workplace. Joining her was Shelley Morris, one of the talented individuals profiled in the video. To see a 20 minute clip: [The Employment Potential of People with Disabilities](#)



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The official screening of “Talent Untapped” takes place on December 4<sup>th</sup> at the Canadian Museum of History. For more information: [Talent Untapped Film Premiere](#)

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From the website Mondaq, here’s an article on the [AODA: Is it in writing?](#)

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## Upcoming Meetings:

We are giving you your Christmas break early! There are no meetings in December, so we will see you in January 2016!

### Steering Committee

- Thursday January 7th from 9:00am – 10:30am

### Joint Working Group

- Tuesday January 12th from 9:00am – 11:00am



Our December edition will come to you before December 24<sup>th</sup>, in the meantime, happy shopping and enjoy the weather!!



**United Way**  
**Centraide**  
Ottawa

### United Way / EARN contacts:

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