



EMPLOYMENT  
ACCESSIBILITY  
RESOURCE NETWORK

## EARN Monthly E-Newsletter

August 2016

### Introduction:

#### Welcome to the August edition of the EARN Monthly E-Newsletter!

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you informed about what EARN and its 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. Please send comments, suggestions and your success stories to: [sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca).

### Initiative & Events:

On Wednesday, August 17th Susan attended a national webinar, “Inspirational Career Journey”, a special virtual event presented via a partnership between RBC Careers and Pursue Your Potential, RBC’s recruitment program for persons with disabilities. Numerous job ready people with disabilities joined the call and it was ably facilitated by Hali Farah, Diversity and Inclusion Talent Sourcing Specialist and Manager of the PyP program. The guest speaker was Ahmed Abukar, who shared his career journey and offered advice. Ahmed’s background: he came to Canada with his parents at the age of 9 and consequently needed to learn a new language, a new culture and, as a person who is visually impaired, he had to become knowledgeable about adaptive technology. He graduated from Western University with an Honours B.A. in Business Administration.

His advice to job seekers: understand the value of networking; research each organization thoroughly when you apply; and practice responding to common interview questions. His advice on disability disclosure: Ahmed prepared a package on his accommodation needs prior to being interviewed. He put his disability front and centre at the beginning of his interview, presented his package, and then moved on to talk about his abilities and attributes. His advice to hiring managers: “the biggest risk you take in hiring someone with a disability can also reap you the biggest reward.”



**RBC**  
**Royal Bank**



“Despite any challenges I encountered I never let it get to me. I knew that with hard work, determination and patience, I would be able to overcome any challenges that come my way.”

Ahmed was hired for the job at RBC and got the accommodations he needed. Ahmed’s first position was as an Intern through Career Edge. When he switched teams after this first assignment, his team members were sorry to see him go. His determination to work hard and to perform set an example that led to high productivity.

Throughout the rest of the call there were Q&As, a summary of the PyP program, an explanation of RBC’s accommodation policy and practices, a discussion on how and when to disclose a disability, and a report on current job opportunities at RBC.

We promoted this webinar to all service provider members of EARN so interested clients could take part. Many thanks to Amanda Barresi from Neil Squire Society for alerting us to this opportunity! Congratulations to RBC’s Diversity and Inclusion Talent Sourcing Team for holding this webinar, a wonderful opportunity for open dialogue and information exchange! For more information about the Pursue Your Potential program and to learn about Career Edge, visit <http://www.rbc.com/careers/pwd.html>.

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## Upcoming EARN and Community Activities:

- We are planning an EARN Expo: “*Discover a New Talent Pool*” (working title) to take place at Ottawa City Hall on **Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>** from 8:30 to 11:30am. This event will be an opportunity to attract new businesses/employers to EARN and to bolster the business case for employing persons with disabilities. We shall highlight EARN as a one stop solution for meeting employer talent needs, speak to service provider expertise, have an EARN employer testimonial, interactive activities on accommodation and recruitment, a pop quiz on the business case and dispelling myths and misconceptions, and discuss how EARN can help employers with the AODA and the Employment Standard. Employers will have the opportunity to visit service provider booths during and after the event. So mark your calendars for December 6<sup>th</sup>! We will update you with more information in future newsletters.

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## Success Stories: A Successful Customized Recruitment: “Excellent Quality of Candidates”



In June, EARN was approached by Sander Geophysics Limited (SGL) to conduct a customized recruitment for 2 full-time permanent positions (receptionist and administrative assistant). These 2 entry level positions were advertised only to the designated groups through SGL’s network of contacts, and, for job seekers with disabilities, outreach was conducted solely through EARN. Most jobs at SGL require a specialized skill set, and preference is given to bilingual or multilingual applicants, so securing a position with this organization can be challenging. Nevertheless, we are very pleased to report that one of the two positions was filled by a trilingual job seeker with a disability registered with a service provider member of EARN. Congratulations!

Here is further data on the competitions:

- 7 Service provider members of EARN submitted client resumes and the HR Manager congratulated our members on the excellent quality of their candidates;
- Amongst all the designated groups EARN responded with the highest volume of resumes, 14 per position, and 50% of the job seekers interviewed came through EARN;
- 6 EARN clients were shortlisted for an interview and 3 went on to be interviewed;
- 1 EARN client was hired, the other position was filled by another designated group member; and
- SGL has just submitted an application to join EARN as an employer partner.

**Your Success Stories:** Please share your success stories with us! Your stories can be about job seekers/employees with disabilities, or strategies/initiatives that make workplaces in our community more accessible and inclusive. Send your stories to: [sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca).

**Successful Website Consultation:** EARN launched its new accessible and bilingual website in April 2016: [www.earn-paire.ca](http://www.earn-paire.ca). Over the summer we solicited feedback about it from our members. Our intrepid Neil McKinney compiled all the feedback from our members and most of these changes have been made or are in the process of being implemented. Thank you to everyone who gave input and to Neil for making these changes. The site is also undergoing a third-party audit to ensure that it meets the most current internationally recognized accessibility standards.

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## Susan's Corner



What does an accessible Canada mean to you?

That's how the National Youth Forum is being promoted to kick start a Canada-wide consultation on proposed federal accessibility legislation. Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Carla Qualtrough, is leading this consultation, the first of its kind to seek feedback at the national level. The consultation process began in July and will be open until February 2017.

Here is a brief summary of its purpose:

“Many Canadians continue to face barriers that affect their ability to participate in daily activities that most people take for granted. These could include:

- physical and architectural barriers that impede the ability to move freely in the built environment, use public transportation, access information or use technology;
- attitudes, beliefs and misconceptions that some people may have about people with disabilities and what they can and cannot do; and
- outdated policies and practices that do not take into account the varying abilities and disabilities that people may have.”

You can participate in a number of ways:

- Complete an online questionnaire – EARN is planning to do this;
- Submit your written feedback in the language of your choice to the federal Office for Disability Issues;
- Promote the National Youth forum (for persons with disabilities ages 15 to 30), which is taking place in Ottawa on Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>; and
- Attend an in-person meeting: there will be a consultation in Ottawa on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>.

We have so much expertise within our network; I am sure we can contribute valuable feedback and insight to this consultation.

For more information visit: <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/consultations/disability/legislation/index.page>

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## Welcome New Members!

- EARN Leadership Group – Employer: CIBC, <http://www.cibc.com/>
- EARN Leadership Group – Stakeholder: Carleton University, <http://www.carleton.ca>

## Upcoming EARN Events:

We are working on more events for our 2016 - 2017 calendar – stay tuned! If you have any ideas, please let us know!!

## In the News: Inspiring Success Stories

- Canadian Business SenseAbility is a national not-for-profit that is ‘run for business by business’; the organization works with private sector employers. Here are some of their success stories: <http://www.senseability.ca/successstories>

- Here are two YouTube videos, the first introduces a young American who is deaf and who works in the White House as a receptionist. In the second video she gives a tour of the West Wing & the Oval Office: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9RbG6Ca1uI> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ubUhTRzREM>
- This story from the CBC profiles a successful artist, Susie Matthias, from London, Ontario. Born with physical disabilities caused by thalidomide, she paints with her mouth. Her paintings hang in galleries; she's also made calendars and created the art for a Canadian stamp: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/mouth-painter-susie-matthias-1.3380567>

## Upcoming Meetings:

### Steering Committee

Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 9 to 11am.

### EARN Leadership Group

- Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 9 to 11am.

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From the Team at



There is still some summer left...

## United Way / EARN contacts:

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