



## EARN Monthly E-Newsletter

May 2017

### Introduction:

#### Welcome to the May 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:



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

On Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup> EARN was invited by the Adaptive Learning Program of the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), a network member, to take part in a practice interview session. We are proud to have conducted this learning event with the Adaptive Learning Program for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row.

The purpose of the session was to help prepare students with intellectual disabilities for 'real-world' interviewing experiences. Each of the employer interviewers asked one question to each of the students who participated. At the end of the session, each student received feedback from the interviewers on the 10 different questions that were asked. This process helps to desensitize them to the interview process.

From Shirley Graham of the Adaptive Learning Program: *"EARN has been an amazing partner of the OCDSB Adaptive Learning Program since the early days. We can't thank you enough for all that you do for the students in our program as well as for the instructors who work hard to train them for the workplace. Thank you to all the employers who answered Kelly's call for volunteers and who came out on this cold May morning.*



*Our students and all of us here in Continuing Education are grateful for the time and the feedback that you gave. For these students, they want more than anything to belong to a workplace and to be a contributing member of society. They are willing and able to work and, thanks to you, they will do much better in future interview situations.*

*From all our staff, we are deeply grateful for your assistance.”*

Thank you very much Shirley for your feedback. We also thank representatives from the employers who braved the cold to take part: TD, CMHC, Hydro Ottawa, CIBC, City of Ottawa and the United Way Ottawa. And thank you also to the students who ably demonstrated their talent potential.

---

## Upcoming EARN and Community Activities:

➡ We are planning more events and activities for the remainder of 2017.

---

## Success Stories: Seeking Your Input!



In June we will highlight two empowering success stories: EARN's partnership with the City of Ottawa on AccessAbility Day, held on June 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by an article on EARN's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference which took place on June 6<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, we are seeking success stories from our members. Do you have a success story about an individual, a best practice or a policy in your organization that demonstrates inclusion and accessibility?

If you do, please share it with us; we'll profile your story in an upcoming edition of the newsletter. If you haven't contributed before, we'd love to hear from you. And if you have already contributed a success story in the past and you have a new story to tell, we'd love to share it too. We want to showcase your employment success stories with members of the network and with our online readers. Send success stories to: [sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca)

---

## Susan's Corner:



Nominations are now open for the annual **Celebration of People Awards**. This event is a wonderful way to acknowledge inclusion in our community. The awards are numerous, and include ones for employers and employees with disabilities. Consider nominating someone or an organization!

Here is what the awards are about:

*Celebration of People is an annual awards program and dinner event held each year to recognize the achievements and contributions of individuals, businesses and organizations promoting accessibility, inclusion and full community participation by citizens with disabilities. This year the awards dinner will be held on **November 29, 2017 at the Hampton Inn**. The first event in Ottawa was held in 2001.*

To find out more: <https://celebrationofpeople.com/>

## Did You Know?



Did you know that if you encounter any accessibility problems that you are unable to resolve at a large retail establishment, you can contact the Accessibility Directorate via the toll-free number **1-866-515- 2025**? AODA Partnership Coordinators provide information and resources; however, this toll-free number is another avenue to report your concerns.

## AODA Update



The goal of the AODA Project is to educate small and medium sized businesses about the AODA, its compliance requirements, the employment standard, the benefits of joining EARN, and promoting the business case on hiring persons with disabilities. A key deliverable will be the creation of a regional model of communications - a guide that demonstrates what works best in each community/region, which can be replicated elsewhere in the province. Here is the May update.

**United Way Lanark County:** AODA Partnership Coordinator Amy Elsner is benefiting from the relationship building she began early on in her role. She developed a relationship with the Carleton Place Chamber of Commerce, and now she has a thriving relationship with the Smiths Falls Chamber of Commerce. This has resulted in the Smiths Falls Chamber publishing an article on the AODA, the standards, and making the business case about the value of accessibility. Nurturing positive relationships with key communicators in the community works to promote the message of inclusion! To read the article: <http://smithsfallschamber.com/what-is-accessibility-making-our-community-more-accessible>



**United Way  
Centraide  
Ottawa**



**United Way Centraide Ottawa:** One strategy that Kitty Bentley, AODA Partnership Coordinator for United Way Centraide Ottawa, has used effectively to build connections and to secure a relationship with an organization is persistence and patience. In Ottawa the local Chambers of Commerce have very large numbers of members and therefore there are more formalities involved in engaging with staff in order to inform them about the AODA. What Kitty has found that works is to persist in contacting senior staff. She also found it effective to find out the most beneficial times during the day to have a conversation. This patience has paid off because it demonstrates her diligence and respect for business schedules. This has resulted in many new contacts which she hopes to develop further in the near future.

**United Way Centraide Ottawa East & South:** AODA Partnership Coordinator Saiema attended an all-women's multicultural networking event at Topkapi Turkish Restaurant. She met women from various ethnic backgrounds who run different businesses. Saiema noticed the Nation's Capital Region is becoming highly diverse. She observed that many business owners spoke more than two languages, which is very beneficial to them as they can mingle and make connections with other business owners when English may not be the easiest language of communication.

Possessing the ability to communicate cross-culturally in the business world today is very important especially because many newcomer Canadians are starting up or running their own businesses serving people of Ottawa and surrounding areas.

Our AODA Partnership Coordinators have experienced cultural interactions with several businesses throughout Ottawa and surrounding areas. We believe it is important to represent diversity and inclusion with regards to the customer service standard which is one of five of the AODA standards.



**United Way  
Renfrew County**

**Renfrew County United Way:** AODA Partnership Coordinator Bonnie Schryer has leveraged contacts that Executive Director Pat Lafreniere brings through her other role as a municipal counsellor for the City of Pembroke. For instance, Bonnie was able to reach out to the County and gained commitment from a key leader to share information about the AODA and its compliance requirements with communities throughout this large region. Bonnie has learned that by securing support from those in decision-making roles her message of inclusion has a stronger impact when she meets with local businesses and speaks at events.

Remember, your local Partnership Coordinator can organize private learning sessions for your group, help you to understand AODA legislation, assist you with navigating the compliance process, and provide you with the best resources for information, grants, employees, and professionals.

Amy Elsner, United Way Lanark County  
[aelsner@lanarkunitedway.com](mailto:aelsner@lanarkunitedway.com)

Bonnie Schryer, Renfrew County United Way  
[bonnies@renfrewcountyunitedway.ca](mailto:bonnies@renfrewcountyunitedway.ca)

Katelian “Kitty” Bentley, United Way Centraide Ottawa  
[kbentley@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:kbentley@unitedwayottawa.ca)

Saiema Zaman, United Way Centraide Ottawa (East & South)  
[szaman@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:szaman@unitedwayottawa.ca)

---

## Welcome New Members!

- Employer Partner: Canadian Food Inspection Agency [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)
- Employer Partner: Netchill Media Groups (including Jas Auto Spa) [www.netchill.com](http://www.netchill.com)
- Employer Partner: Lockheed Martin Canada [www.lockheedmartin.com](http://www.lockheedmartin.com)
- Stakeholder Partner: National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) [www.neads.ca](http://www.neads.ca)

## Upcoming EARN Events:

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

---

## In the News:

- Congratulations to John Draper, founder of Together We Rock! He is the 2017 recipient of the David Onley Accessibility Award, named after Ontario’s former Lieutenant Governor. This award “recognizes individuals and organizations that have gone above and beyond to raise awareness about accessibility and to nurture a culture of inclusion across the province”. To read more: <http://mailchi.mp/cogeco/david-c-onley-accessibility-award-winners-announced?e=c21c5cf9d0>
  - Following is an update on consultations with Canadians about new national legislation on accessibility and what has been learned so far. Amongst key messages heard from the consultations: employment should be a focus area for the proposed legislation and the Government of Canada should demonstrate leadership by hiring and supporting employees with disabilities. To read more: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/planned-accessibility-legislation/reports/consultations-what-we-learned.html>
-



## Upcoming Meetings:

### Steering Committee

- We are taking a break for the summer and will meet again in September.
- Next meeting date to be confirmed

### EARN Leadership Group

- We are taking a break for the summer.
- Next meeting: Tuesday, September 12, 2017, 9:00 to 10:30am

---

From the Team at



To all of you....

### United Way / EARN contacts:

Susan Forster: [sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca)  
Neil McKinney: [nmckinney@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:nmckinney@unitedwayottawa.ca)  
Kelly Mertl: [kmertl@unitedwayottawa.ca](mailto:kmertl@unitedwayottawa.ca)