



EMPLOYMENT
ACCESSIBILITY
RESOURCE NETWORK

EARN Monthly E-Newsletter

March 2017

Introduction:

Welcome to the March 2017 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.

Initiative & Events:



From L to R:
Susan Forster (AODA Project),
Karen Perez (Willis College),
Kitty Bentley (AODA Project),
Ranjith Mathew (Willis College)

On Wednesday, March 1st Ottawa Employment Hub, your Local Employment Planning Council (LEPC), held its 3rd annual event at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre. In fact two events took place on the same day: one was for employers and was called “*Running Your Ottawa Business: Finding and Retaining Local Talent*” and the other was entitled “*Building Connections: Engaging Employers for Clients Success*”, the latter event was targeted to service providers. Employers attended Business Spotlight Sessions with a sector focus on local trends, talent requirements and how industry leaders build their workforce. For service providers there were Talent Spotlight Sessions on broadening the search for talent and collaborating to find and retain the right candidates.

EARN (Kelly) and the AODA project (Kitty and Susan) attended. Kelly facilitated one of the talent spotlight sessions which focused on persons with disabilities. EARN and the AODA project had a booth which gave us a wonderful opportunity to introduce EARN and inform employers about the AODA and the Employment Standard; these conversations led to opportunities for follow-up and engagement post event.

Ingrid Argyle of LEPC reports that 400 people attended the various workshops and visited the booths. This event was a great success! We thank Ingrid and the team at LEPC for inviting EARN and the AODA project to take part.



We are very pleased to report that the **“Open to Talent: Networking Night”** held on Tuesday March 28th from 5:30-7:30pm at the LIFT Restaurant, Delta Hotel was a great opportunity for job seekers to network and connect with employers in their respective career sectors (e.g. engineering, IT, healthcare, admin, customer service, etc.). This event was a follow-up to the earlier session “Your Professional Presence: CRAFT IT! OWN IT!”, designed to help participants build their 30-second elevator pitch, craft a professional response to the “Tell me about yourself” interview question and develop more confidence when networking. Participants clearly demonstrated the skills they learned from “Your Professional Presence” at the Networking Night; all the job seekers impressed employers with their ability to communicate and network successfully throughout the evening.

Congratulations to all those who took part. We thank the employers who came out (Conference Board of Canada, CIBC, Delta Hotels & Resorts, Accenture, Sheraton Hotels, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, BMO, Rockwell Collins, and the Westin Hotels & Resorts). We would especially like to thank Accenture for sponsoring this mentoring series and the Delta Hotel for hosting the event.

Upcoming EARN and Community Activities:



We are excited about an upcoming opportunity for a **Practice Interview Session** with **Accenture**, one of EARN’s employer partners! This will be a great session for your clients to advance their interview skills and practice answering interview questions in a safe, supportive and professional environment.

The focus of this practice interview session is to have the opportunity to receive feedback directly from an employer in order to help candidates be further prepared for employment opportunities. Limited space is available with only **12** spots for this round; therefore we will accept participants on a first come, first serve basis.

Details: Date: Wednesday April 26, 2017 Time: 6:15pm – 8:30pm. Please contact Neil McKinney for further information and to register at nmckinney@unitedwayottawa.ca by April 18th.



EARN is hosting an “**AODA 101: Making Accessibility Easy**” Lunch & Learn on Tuesday, April 25th, 2017. Lunch is provided.

You are cordially invited to join us to:

- Learn about the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* & the Five Standards with a specific highlight on the Employment Standard
- Gain a better understanding of the compliance requirements
- Discuss how the *Act* promotes the hiring of persons with disabilities
- Acquire a valuable knowledge tool to support your employer partners & clients

Date and Time:

Tuesday, April 25, 2017
12:00 – 2:00 PM

Location:

United Way Centraide Ottawa
363 Coventry Road (at Lola)
Ottawa, Ontario K1K 2C5

Agenda:

12:00 – 12:15 PM Registration
12:15 – 1:45 PM Learning Session with Q & A
1:45 – 2:00 PM Networking

Target Audience: Service Providers who provide employment supports to persons with disabilities

For more information and to register (press Ctrl and click on the Register button below):

[**REGISTER**](#)

Please share these invitations broadly with your networks.



**You're invited to the 5th Annual EARN Conference:
Strengthening Your Workforce Through Diversity and Inclusion**

The goal of this year's conference is to provide strategies, solutions and tools to employers to create a greater awareness of the talents and skills that people with disabilities bring to the workplace. Additionally we strive to help HR professionals and hiring managers recognize and reduce the systemic and attitudinal barriers that may exist.

Our aim is to make it real for you through sessions including a Diversity Café where we will discuss various disabilities and how to ensure true inclusion in the workplace, a success panel featuring prominent local businesses and employees and a thought provoking keynote speaker. Stay tuned for more details!

Tuesday June 6, 2017 | 8:00am to 3:00pm
Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa

For more information and to register (press Ctrl and click on the Register button below):

[**REGISTER**](#)

Following EARN's 5th Annual Conference we are hosting a free event entitled, "**AODA Information Session: Making Accessibility Easy**". Thyme & Again will cater this event.

Date and Time: Tuesday, June 6th, 2017 / 3:15 – 4:30 PM

Location: Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa

Target Audience: Employers and other interested stakeholders

For more information and to register (press Ctrl and click on the Register button below):

[**REGISTER**](#)

Please share these invitations broadly with your networks.

Success Stories: Finding Hidden Talent



From L to R: Mitra Vaezi, Dale Bennett, Melissa Pagliaro



performance plus
REHABILITATIVE CARE INC.



When Mitra Vaezi opened the doors at Make Sew Create she was planning a business that would be inclusive and hoped to employ persons with disabilities. On her second day of operation, Dale Bennett came to her store in his wheelchair and inquired about a career in sewing. The match was perfect. Dale found Performance Plus Rehabilitative Care Inc. (PPRC) through the webpage and met with Linda Simpson. “I have used employment services before, but Linda was the first one to really see me.” PPRC and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Employment Supports collaborated with both Dale and Mitra to provide assistance that allowed Dale to train and work at Make Sew Create.

PPRC consultant Melissa Pagliaro says; “I provide help to our clients like Dale in assessing their needs so they can be successful. We also work with the employer to provide support in hiring a person with a disability and I monitor the progress.” Mitra says her experience with PPRC and Dale has been wonderful, “I love it, love it, love it! I am hoping to train and hire more clients, it is my dream to help support those that need a chance. Dale has been here a year, I want him to help me expand.”

Dale’s thoughts? Originally with his mobility challenges, he was looking to work from home. But after meeting Mitra he says his plan changed; “Mitra has provided a very professional, and all around positive environment. Working here has changed my life for the better and continues to do so.”

PPRC offers placement services for persons with disabilities at no cost to the employer. This helps employers remain competitive, gain market share, and grow their business.

Original article and photo published in Ottawa Family Living, Spring 2017 edition.

We are seeking more success stories from our members for 2017. 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, then 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. We want to showcase your employment success stories with members of the network. Send success stories to: sforster@unitedwayottawa.ca

Susan's Corner:



The letter below was shared by ODEN – the Ontario Disability Employment Network – of which EARN is a member. Check out the YouTube video on the value of hiring people with disabilities: ‘it makes good business sense’. The link to the video is below in the MP’s letter.

Pam Damoff, MP, Speaks to Inclusive Employment in House of Commons

Good afternoon,

I wanted to make sure that you saw my statement in the House on Inclusive Employment and our recent round-table.

<https://www.facebook.com/PamDamoff/videos/1820084814910150/>

I was happy to see Budget 2017’s commitment to promoting equal opportunities for Canadians who have disabilities. In the coming year, the government will explore options to improve work opportunities and employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. This will include the development of new planned federal accessibility legislation, which will promote equality of opportunity and increase the inclusion and participation of Canadians who have disabilities or functional limitations by increasing accessibility and removing barriers. The government sought input from Canadians on this planned legislation through consultations held between July 2016 and February 2017.

The Minister was very happy to receive our recommendations from our roundtable discussion.

I also wanted to share with you a YouTube video that has been produced by ODEN which showcases the great reasons to hire persons living with disabilities. It would be wonderful if you could share this video on your social media network. <https://youtu.be/Sz29N9TmmYQ>

Thank you for working with me to make Halton the most inclusive region in Canada.

Sincerely,
Pam Damoff, MP
Oakville North-Burlington

Accessibility: Honouring the Past, Showcasing the Present and Inspiring the Future

The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario will be hosting nine community forums across the province to celebrate the steps Ontario has taken on its accessibility journey. The theme of the forums is, "Accessibility: Honouring the Past, Showcasing the Present and Inspiring the Future." In 2017, Ontario will commemorate its 150th anniversary. The forums will highlight and celebrate how communities across Ontario have come together to be more accessible and inclusive.

The forums in Ottawa and Toronto have already sold out! EARN will be represented at the Ottawa forum which will take place on May 17th. We'll report back to our readers on what we've learned in a future edition of the newsletter.

Did You Know?



If you run a business or non-profit in Ontario, the Accessible Employment Standard affects you. For small businesses with 1 to 49 employees to meet, there are 4 requirements to meet:

1. Hiring: Let people with disabilities know that they are welcome and that you will accommodate their needs in the hiring process.
2. Workplace Information: If an employee asks, provide information in an accessible format. How? It can be as simple as emailing a digital version of a printed document.
3. Developing Talent: Think about the needs of employees with disabilities during performance evaluations. For example, an employee with hearing loss may need to meet in a quiet place.
4. Communicate Accessibility Policies: Tell staff about your policies supporting employees with disabilities, including job accommodation.

To find out more, visit: www.ontario.ca/accessibleemployment



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 that can be replicated elsewhere in the province.

This month we would like to share strategic best practices that we have learned as the project increases its impact across our three United Ways in Eastern Ontario.



United Way
Lanark County

United Way Lanark County: Amy Elsner, the AODA Partnership Coordinator in Lanark and Smiths Falls, is learning that ‘one person wears many hats’ in small communities. What does this mean? By reaching out to a business owner or an employer you may also be creating a relationship with someone who is a leader in a Chamber of Commerce or active in a BIA. Accordingly, building a solid reputation as someone who is knowledgeable, helpful and passionate about the AODA creates great dividends and leads to opportunities to get the message of inclusion out to a broader audience.



United Way
Centraide
Ottawa

United Way Centraide Ottawa: AODA Partnership Coordinator, Kitty Bentley, works in our National Capital. She has realized that once you develop a trustful relationship with a business owner/manager who runs a franchise then you may receive referrals to other franchise owners affiliated with the same company elsewhere in Ottawa. She has also found that it’s important to respect the time of small business owners and so appointment times have to fit into their schedules to ensure an increased opportunity to inform them about the talent pool of people with disabilities and the value that EARN and its resources bring.



United Way
Renfrew County

Renfrew County United Way: The new AODA Partnership Coordinator, Bonnie Schryer, also promotes the AODA in the smaller communities within Renfrew’s large rural county. Bonnie has discovered the value of doing her homework before she attends networking or other meetings. She finds it helps to reach out to key people who will be attending to introduce herself prior to the event taking place. Then when the event occurs she has better and more meaningful conversations with employers. To her credit, Bonnie secured an invitation to the County’s Accessibility Committee. This is a very strategic way to introduce the AODA project to her region.

If you'd like to book a one-on-one meeting, have a presentation or take part in a learning session in Ottawa, Lanark or Renfrew, reach out to the AODA Partnership Coordinators.

Amy Elsner, United Way Lanark County
aelsner@lanarkunitedway.com

Bonnie Schryer, Renfrew County United Way
bonnies@renfrewcountyunitedway.ca

Katelian "Kitty" Bentley, United Way Centraide Ottawa
kbentley@unitedwayottawa.ca

Welcome New Members!

➔ EARN Partner – Stakeholder: Sphere www.sphere-qc.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:

- Ted Talks are a marvelous way to communicate through social media. This series of 10 Ted Talks is all about design innovation in the field of disability. Most gratifying about this series is that the majority of presenters are themselves professionals with disabilities. Enjoy!

http://www.ted.com/playlists/372/designing_for_disability

Upcoming Meetings:

Steering Committee

- Thursday, May 4th, 9:00 – 11:00 AM

EARN Leadership Group

- Tuesday, May 9th, 9:00 – 10:30 AM
-

Welcome Spring and Happy Easter!

From the Team at



To all of you....

United Way / EARN contacts:

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Kelly Mertl: kmertl@unitedwayottawa.ca