



EMPLOYMENT  
ACCESSIBILITY  
RESOURCE NETWORK

## EARN Monthly E-Newsletter

July 2017

### Introduction:

#### Welcome to the July Summer 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, July 26<sup>th</sup> Renfrew County United Way AODA Partnership Coordinator Bonnie Schyrer held a Breakfast Info Session in the beautiful town of Renfrew. The event was held through a partnership with Employment Networks and proved to be an opportunity for knowledge sharing with 18 employers representing 16 different local organizations. The Info Session focused on learning about the AODA, the five standards, and compliance requirements with a special focus on employment. The event was a great success; the majority of those in attendance indicated they had increased their knowledge of the *Act* and its standards, and further, we are very pleased to report that 6 participants expressed an interest in learning more about EARN. Kelly attended to represent EARN and Susan assisted Bonnie as co-presenter.

Many thanks to Christine Parker of Employment Networks and her colleagues for their support in making this event happen! We look forward to connecting with more new organizations and businesses in Renfrew County as the network broadens its reach into the amalgamated United Ways of eastern Ontario. Congratulations, Bonnie!

**Employment NETWORKS**  
would like to invite local employers...  
to a Breakfast Info Session...  
Wednesday July 26, 2017 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is provincial legislation applying to all businesses with one or more employees.

Learn:

- about the Act
- how to comply with the legislation
- how to access free tools, education and resources

Presented by Bonnie Schyrer, AODA Partnership Coordinator  
This information session is free of charge.

Address: 53 Beaufort Avenue West, Renfrew  
Breakfast session in the "Abelard" parking lot  
Parking in public lot on Anglin Street

Please RSVP by Friday July 14, 2017 to  
[christine.parker@employmentnetworks.ca](mailto:christine.parker@employmentnetworks.ca) or call 613-432-3424

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## Upcoming EARN and Community Activities:

EARN is hosting 3 AODA Business Information Sessions for employers in August.

The purpose of these events is 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

Here are the dates:

- ➔ Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 to 11:30 am at the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce. Tickets are limited for this event, so register early to attend!
- ➔ Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 4:15 to 6:15 pm at the Shenkman Arts Centre
- ➔ Tuesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 to 8:00 pm at the Central Ottawa Biz Lounge

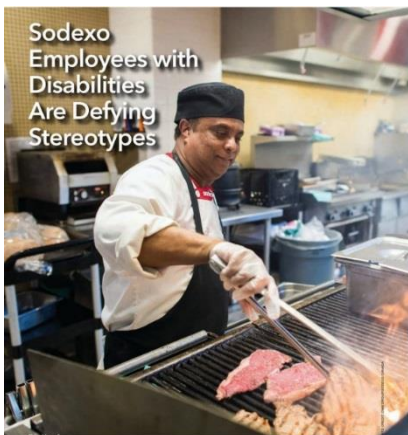
To find out more and to register, please visit the [EARN Eventbrite page](#).

**Save the Date:** We have two more Ottawa AODA Information Sessions planned for September. More details on these events will follow shortly.

- ➔ Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 to 9:00 am Breakfast at the Ottawa Conference Centre
- ➔ Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm for a Palki Cuisine of India Lunch & Learn

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## Success Stories: Sodexo Employees with a Disability are Defying Stereotypes



Sean Callaghan is an Area General Manager for Sodexo at Loblaw Canada and was inducted into the ODEN Business Champion's League at last year's ODEN Conference. Sean was recently interviewed by DIVERSEability Magazine. Sean's experiences with on-boarding team members who have a disability once again prove that there is an indisputable business case than can be made.

Raymond Yusaf, 55, takes great satisfaction in being able to handle the demands of working on a hectic grill line and serving meals. It's a fast-paced job that requires focus, attention to detail and-most of all-teamwork. On any given work day, Ray and his colleagues can serve up to 1,400 meals in just a few hours.

What fuels Ray's energy is his on-going interaction within the team and the knowledge that he's got his co-workers' backs and they have his. He says the sense of belonging that comes from being a valued team member is, by far, what he enjoys most about his job.

Ray, who has a variety of mental health issues, works full time for Sodexo Canada in the kitchen at Loblaw headquarters in Brampton, Ontario. "It's a great job that I've enjoyed doing now for more than two years," says Ray. "I'm lucky to be surrounded by a friendly, respectful group of co-workers and customers. I feel valued and appreciated."

The Sodexo team, led by general manager Sean Callaghan, includes a significant number of people with disabilities, including spectrum disorders and physical and mental disabilities.

Denika Taitt spends her working days tidying up and making sure employee kitchenettes are well stocked with coffee, tea and other beverages. She is known throughout the workplace for her infectious smile and friendliness.



Denika, 33, is deaf and has been working for Sodexo Canada at the Loblaw headquarters in Brampton, Ontario, for more than four years. "Ensuring all the stations I'm responsible for are clean and well-stocked is the most important aspect of my job," she says "However, my favourite part is meeting up with all the people I get to see throughout the day. It's a fun environment and everyone I work with is friendly and great to be around."

When Callaghan first decided to work with a local agency to hire employees with disabilities, he was concerned about increased risks to health and safety as well as increased costs to provide accommodations. What he found was the opposite. In the past year, his employees with disabilities had 100 percent attendance records compared to the rest of his staff, which had an 83 percent attendance record. As for workplace injuries, there was only one report from this group compared to 15 from staff without disabilities.

What started out as giving back to the community and simply doing the right thing has become a good business decision. "Everybody wins," Callaghan said. "While the job brings value to these employees' daily lives, they are of great value to the business. Their reliability and positive attitudes are contagious. The workplace is more upbeat because of their contributions and our customers experience that."

Source: Sodexo Canada

Reprinted from: *DIVERSEability Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2017

Thank you, ODEN, for sharing this success story! You can learn more about Sodexo by viewing the ODSP Access to Ability videos on the EARN website. Sodexo is profiled in this three part series: <http://earn-paire.ca/media-centre/odsp-videos/>

## Susan's Corner:



We'd like to remind you that nominations are 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/>

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## Did You Know?

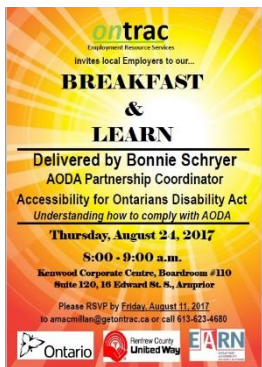


There is a strong business case that hiring people with disabilities benefit employers.

Inclusion is good for employers' bottom line.

- Boost your brand and your business; people with disabilities and their families and friends want to do business with businesses that value their needs.
  - Research demonstrates that inclusive employers have increased productivity and profit.
  - Inclusive employers have stronger ties to their communities and this often brings new business.
  - Inclusive employers have higher retention rates resulting in reduced costs for talent replacement.
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# 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 that can be replicated elsewhere in the province. Here is the July update.

**United Way Lanark County:** After a successful Chamber of Commerce golf tournament held in June, AODA Partnership Coordinator Amy Elsner is reaping the rewards of ongoing outreach efforts. In August she has been invited to give AODA presentations to the Smiths Falls and Mississippi Mills Accessibility Committees, and thereby reach more community leaders and businesses. Amy has discovered more employers in Lanark County who are embracing the message of the AODA and expressing interest in hiring people with disabilities. One tangible impact of education about accessibility is the sight of Stop Gap portable ramps positioned outside several small businesses located on Main Street in Carleton Place, enabling more customers with disabilities to visit their premises. Amy has also found interest in learning more about EARN amongst many businesses she has visited. Thumbs Up, Amy!

**United Way Centraide Ottawa & Ottawa East:** AODA Partnership Coordinators, Katelian Bentley and Saiema Zaman, have been busy over the past month getting set to host five confirmed AODA Information Session events coming up in August and September. Please see the EARN and Upcoming Activities section above for more information.

**Renfrew County United Way:** After a very successful Breakfast Info Session held in July, AODA Partnership Coordinator Bonnie Schryer is holding a Breakfast and Learn in Arnprior on Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup> from 8 to 9 am in partnership with Ontrac Employment Resource Services. To find out more contact [amacmillan@getontrac.ca](mailto:amacmillan@getontrac.ca).

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

Saiema Zaman, United Way Centraide Ottawa (East & South)  
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## Welcome New Members!

- ➡ There are no new members this month. We shall have new member announcements in the August edition of the newsletter.

## 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:

- The Ontario government recently announced that it is creating fairer workplaces for all employees and plans to increase the minimum wage, impacting all employees, including people with disabilities:  
[https://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2017/07/ontario-creating-fair-workplaces-and-better-jobs-1.html?utm\\_source=ondemand&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=p](https://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2017/07/ontario-creating-fair-workplaces-and-better-jobs-1.html?utm_source=ondemand&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=p)
- Coming in September, the ABC network is set to debut “The Good Doctor”, a program featuring a young surgeon who is on the autism spectrum. Netflix is also premiering “Atypical” in August, another series about those on the autism spectrum. To read more:  
<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2017/07/25/autism-drama-set-debut-abc/23956/>

## 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
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From the Team at



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To all of you....

### United Way / EARN contacts:

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



Enjoy the summer! We'll be back  
in August