



A message from Deputy Minister Janet Menard

I wanted to take this opportunity to say how thrilled I am to join the Ministry of Community and Social Services as the new Deputy Minister. This feels like a natural next step for me given that I have worked in human and social services for more than 30 years, most recently at the Region of Peel as Commissioner of Human Services.

My experience in the areas of housing, Ontario Works, early learning and child care has strengthened my belief that everyone has the right to be respected and fully included in all aspects of society. My proudest achievement at Peel Region has been the integration of all of these programs to better serve the community.

During my first few weeks, ministry staff has shared with me the many successes and milestones you've reached together to improve developmental services.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to improving the lives of Ontarians with developmental disabilities – providing day programs and respite, creating new residential support options and helping the ministry



transform services and supports with innovative initiatives like the projects brought forward to the Housing Task Force and the Employment and Modernization Fund.

I look forward to meeting individuals, families, and community partners as I continue this journey with you to build inclusive communities.

- Janet Menard

Making homes safer for adults with developmental disabilities

New requirements for Host Family Program

The ministry released new requirements last month that aim to increase the safety and security of adults with developmental disabilities who choose to live with a Host Family.

The Host Family Program enables adults with developmental disabilities to live with people who can provide care, support and supervision in a family setting. The program is one of a range of housing options available to adults with developmental disabilities to help promote independence and inclusion in their communities.



“The ministry is establishing a **new working group** to address the jury recommendations from the Mitchell inquest”

The ministry has been working with its partners in the developmental services sector, including agencies and others, for more than a year to develop the new requirements. The requirements are also consistent with several of the jury recommendations from the recent coroner's inquest into the death of Guy Mitchell, a Hamilton-area man with a developmental disability.

Once they come into **full** effect on April 1, 2016, the new requirements will:

- provide more consistency in how the Host Family Program is delivered across the province
- strengthen the way agencies screen, select and evaluate host families
- require agencies to conduct regular and unannounced visits to host families.

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The requirements were released early to provide time for additional feedback and to support agencies as they plan for implementation. The ministry is accepting feedback until **November 30, 2015**. You are invited to please submit any comments you may have to Christine Hughes at Christine.Hughes@ontario.ca.

In addition to the new requirements, the ministry is also establishing **a new working group** to address the jury recommendations from the Mitchell inquest.

The new working group and other stakeholders will start next month with a goal of completing their roles by spring 2016. They'll use their expertise to provide advice and recommendations to the ministry.



“The Host Family Program plays an important role in the fabric of residential supports for adults with developmental disabilities. The program gives individuals

the opportunity to live in supportive family environments and feel more included in their communities. Implementing new requirements will help make the program a safer option for individuals.”

– Dr. Helena Jaczek
Minister of Community and Social Services

New centre boosting employment services

The new Centre for Excellence in Employment Services for people with developmental disabilities, supported by an investment of \$800,000 through the ministry's Employment and Modernization Fund, hit the ground running this spring on its mission to help more individuals find and keep jobs in the community.

The centre, run by the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN), is providing resources to help local community agencies and employers across the province.

The Centre for Excellence has been working with many businesses to provide training and tools so that people with developmental disabilities are hired for competitive jobs in their communities.

Joe Dale, executive director of ODEN, says more employers are starting to understand that hiring adults with developmental disabilities is “good for business.”

Recently, the centre held an orientation and training session with 80 job recruiters from a top Canadian financial institution. The session focused on how to recruit and on-board workers with developmental disabilities, demonstrating through case studies how they can be excellent employees.

“People with disabilities just want opportunity. Opportunity to participate and to contribute like everyone else,” said Joe. “We must level the playing field for people with disabilities when it comes to workforce participation.”

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Minister of Community and Social Services Dr. Helena Jaczek added: “We hear over and over that a job is not just a great path to financial security – it is one of the best routes to social inclusion there is.

“By investing in better employment outcomes for people with disabilities, we are investing in their independence, health and overall participation in our society,” she said.

The Centre for Excellence is also actively working with agencies in the developmental services sector and generic employment agencies. For example, the centre has:

- presented employer awareness sessions in Tillsonburg, Windsor, Warton, Lindsay, Fort Frances, Barry’s Bay and Pembroke
- provided family awareness and information sessions in Toronto, Sault Ste Marie and Owen Sound
- assisted with transition planning for agencies, enabling them to build better and stronger employment services, and

- provided training to refresh staff skills in Windsor, Barrie, Toronto, Fort Frances, Pembroke and North Bay.

These efforts are yielding concrete results. For example, since working with the centre to improve their employee supports, Community Living Essex recently secured employment for 14 additional people. The Centre for Excellence is also working with Kerry’s Place for Autism to build an employment service from the ground up.

Email Joe Dale at jdale@odenetwork.com and visit the [ODEN website](#) for more information about the Centre for Excellence.



Joe Dale of the Ontario Disability Employment Network

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