



Province Aims to Boost Employment for People with Disabilities

This week, Minister Jaczek, joined her cabinet colleagues, The Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility, and The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, to launch a new employment strategy aimed at assisting more people with disabilities achieve their employment aspirations and goals, while helping more employers find new talent to grow their businesses.

Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, aims to increase employment among Ontarians with disabilities by:

- Supporting the employment aspirations of youth and students with disabilities by promoting early work experience and skills development;
- Shifting to a person-centred employment and training system, guided by the individual



Minister Jaczek delivers remarks at the Strategy launch.

■ *Continued on Page 2*

job seeker's interests, skills and strengths, while acknowledging the need for a shift in broader societal attitudes towards people with disabilities;

- Establishing the government as a leading employer and change agent; and
- Engaging employers as champions and partners.

Through *Access Talent* and within the **Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)**, the Ministry will also be piloting a new approach to supporting the employment aspirations of youth, aged 18-29, with disabilities. The focus of this pilot will be on providing early upfront assessment at the point of application, collaborative action planning and individualized and coordinated wrap-around services and supports to assist youth on their path to employment. The pilot is currently under development, with additional details to be provided in the near future.

- “It’s our belief that all people with disabilities, including those with developmental disabilities, should have access to employment supports that meet their needs, aspirations and abilities. Our government will work continuously until this is a reality across the entire Province of Ontario.”

— Dr. Helena Jaczek,
Minister of Community and Social Services



Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities

Investing in Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Employment Supports Program:

Also starting this fiscal year, the government is increasing the annual investment in the ODSP Employment Supports program by \$2 million which aims to expand access to those who require employment support.

As part of the *Access Talent* Strategy, the government is taking a measured and phased approach to implementing a new Supported Employment program and integrating employment services for people with disabilities.

Supported Employment is an evidence-based model that provides employment services to people with disabilities who need more intensive support services.

The new Supported Employment program will offer flexibility and choice to meet a broad

■ *Continued on Page 3*

range of needs, including job readiness; job matching; long-term job retention services; and financial support for assistive devices, adaptive technologies and other workplace accommodations.



Pictured: Deb Matthews, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development; Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility; and Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services

The government is committed to ongoing consultations with key partners, including service providers, the broader community, external stakeholder working groups, and individuals accessing the program, throughout the phased implementation of the Supported Employment program. This phased implementation approach will allow the province to identify and share best practices from existing high-performing employment service agencies in Ontario. It will also allow improvements or adjustments to be made before expanding the Supported Employment program into other communities.

This made-in-Ontario employment strategy, will build on work already done, including:

- Continued access to health benefits when an individual on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), achieve higher earnings;
- Smoother transitions for young adults with special needs moving from children to adult services;
- Working with agencies, families and individuals to shift away from sheltered workshops towards inclusive employment and other meaningful community participation; and
- Projects being funded across the developmental services sector that support youth employment, job skills development and competitive employment opportunities.

To read more about the strategy, see **Access Talent**: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities web page. ■

■ *Did You Know?*

If every Ontario employer with 20 or more employees hires at least one person with a disability, about 56,000 more people with disabilities would have jobs — and more than 30 per cent of the people with disabilities looking for work could apply their talents to our businesses and economy.

Proposed Changes to Ontario's Employment and Labour Laws

Last week, the province **announced** sweeping changes to the province's labour laws that included a \$15 minimum wage and equal pay for part-time and full-time workers as part of a plan to help people get ahead in a changing economy.

Among many details included as part of the changes, the new legislation, Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017, if passed, would ensure that all exemptions to the **Employment Standards Act**, that previously allowed for sheltered workshops to operate and denied either minimum wage, or overtime or hours of work protection or all of the above, would be removed. If the proposed legislation passes, it would come into force on **January 1st, 2019**.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) supports that this exemption be removed.

In 2015, Minister Jaczek announced that MCSS would be shifting away from their provincially funded sheltered workshops.

Since that time, MCSS has been working with the developmental services sector, including agencies, individuals and families, to support the transition away from sheltered workshops, and similar programs, towards more inclusive

supports, including community participation supports and competitive employment.

Change is always difficult and agencies have already been working closely with individuals and their families to offer person-centred, inclusive supports and programs.

Each individual is being supported to set out a path that reflects their own needs and goals. For some, this will mean activities to help them prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. For others, they may choose recreational or volunteer activities so they can be involved in their communities.

When it comes to employment, the government of Ontario, wants to ensure that people have real work for real pay — this means jobs in integrated employment settings in the community paid at minimum wage or higher — alongside other citizens in the community, subject to the same employment standards and protections as all other Ontarians.

In the coming days and months, MCSS and our agencies will continue to engage and support adults with developmental disabilities as well as their families to ensure full transition by the proposed enforcement date. ■



Community Living Parry Sound Develops Worthwhile Initiatives Promoting Greater Independence

Community Living Parry Sound is a shining example of the ongoing work in the province that aims to better the lives of children and adults with developmental disabilities. The agency has a strong mission that ensures every individual they serve is treated with dignity and respect through its person-centred approach.

- “To promote and facilitate the full participation, inclusion and citizenship of people who have a developmental disability.”
— Community Living Parry Sound
Mission Statement

Through the Ministry’s **Employment Modernization Fund** (EMF) the organization has been awarded \$95,000 over two years to carry out its *Home of their Own* initiative. The project, which was one of 38 to receive support through the second phase of EMF funding, works to support individuals with developmental disabilities move out of segregated housing into a house and community of their choosing.

The initiative aims to demonstrate that with proper planning and person-centred support, people with complex needs can thrive in a non-segregated home in their community while making use of available technology and fostering natural support networks.

- “Community Living Parry Sound is absolutely thrilled and very grateful that the EMF proposal *A Home of their Own* has been selected for full funding. This personalized facilitation work will enable us to support people to move from segregated housing to creating a home of their own design.”
— Jo-Anne Demick, Executive Director,
Community Living Parry Sound

Minister Jaczek Visits CL Parry Sound

In late May, Minister Jaczek visited Community Living Parry Sound to learn about how the funding is being used. She also had a chance to tour the Parry Sound Community Gardens,

■ *Continued on Page 6*



and see how the organization has developed yet another unique and worthwhile way to give back to the community.

In 2009, Community Living Parry Sound and several partners created five gardens and 66 plots, each approximately 100 square feet in size. Each plot is complimentary to gardeners if they agree to donate 20 per cent of the vegetables they grow.

This project has continued to blossom and by the end of 2017 there will be seven gardens comprised of 80 plots total. ■



Minister Jaczek visiting Parry Sound Community Garden with Jo-Anne Demick, Executive Director, Community Living Parry Sound, Rick Harrington, Community Garden Coordinator, Canadore College & Community Living Parry Sound, Norm Miller, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka and Dr. Peter Istvan, Campus Manager Canadore College.

Champions of Accessibility Receive David C. Onley Award

The David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility was created in 2014 to recognize Ontario residents and organizations who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to improving accessibility for people with disabilities.

The Ministry would like to acknowledge and commend the following recipients for their

efforts as they demonstrate leadership in their communities. These individuals and organizations were recognized on May 25, 2017 by the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (2007-2014), and now Special Advisor on Accessibility.

■ *Continued on Page 7*

Role Model Award: John Draper, Oshawa

John Draper is committed to creating inclusive communities. John himself was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at birth and is physically disabled and non-verbal. John is the founder of 'Together We Rock!' an organization dedicated to inspiring, learning and promoting inclusion for people with disabilities.

He truly believes that accessibility is a community responsibility and thus developed a School Leadership Tool Kit to promote inclusive school communities. Today, the kit is used by schools across Ontario to inspire students to take on projects that improve inclusion.

Employee Engagement Award: Kenneth J. Fredeen, Oakville

Kenneth J. Fredeen has been a role model of courageous leadership during his tenure at Deloitte LLP (Canada). He was a founding member of Legal Leaders for Diversity and Inclusion, a group of more than 100 General Counsel working together to create a more inclusive legal profession, and he now serves as President. In 2012, he was appointed by the Government of Canada to chair a panel that reported on **Labour Market Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**. The panel's findings have become a valuable resource on workplace inclusion.

Kenneth firmly believes in a society where everyone belongs and continues to champion activities promoting this.



Youth Leadership Award: Alexander German, Whitby

Alexander German is an accessibility leader in the world of competitive sports. After being introduced at the 2015 Parapan Am Games, he volunteered to be a coach and sport assistant to Deanna McInroy, a Boccia athlete with Cerebral

■ *Continued on Page 8*

Palsy. Alexander applies his creative expertise to make the sport accessible to individuals with disabilities. He is an active participant in practices and tournaments and says it is an honour to work with Deanna and other athletes just like her.

Champion Award: Autism Teenage Partnership

The **Autism Teenage Partnership** (ATP) is a youth- and volunteer-led organization that is helping to change lives by giving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) an opportunity to be themselves, create friendships, and find their place in the world.

To help support individuals as they get older, the partnership offers a free drop-in program, where teenagers can meet weekly to talk and engage in activities. They are trained through Autism Ontario and understand the special needs and circumstances each individual participant may have.

They bring kindness and an interest in helping young people with ASD to thrive.

Champion Award: Citizen Advocacy Ottawa

Citizen Advocacy Ottawa is one of the few organizations that support people of all ages and their families across the disability spectrum.

Since 1974, it has stood as a pillar in the community. The charity aims to raise awareness, build bridges, and inspire others to create more opportunities for people with disabilities. Its unique programs allow individuals with disabilities to access employment opportunities, while its special events, like the annual Celebration of People Award Ceremony, showcase the diverse talents of people with disabilities.

Champion Award: Community Living York South

Community Living York South provides support services to children, youth, adults and seniors who have an intellectual disability and live in Southern York Region. They are committed to empowering people with disabilities to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities. Their dedicated coordinators work to understand each individual's specific needs. Their work connects people to important services and workshops that enhance skills and expand opportunities.

Champion Award: Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

The **Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants' Accessibility Initiative** helps to improve services, raise awareness, and share information and tools that support people with invisible and visible disabilities, including

■ *Continued on Page 9*

immigrants and refugees. The Council's training is fundamental to enhancing the capacity of member agencies. It provides them with new skills and knowledge in areas related to service provision for immigrants and refugees with invisible and visible disabilities. This makes them more aware of how they can realistically increase accessibility in the long- and short-terms, and helps them create inclusive environments through policies, practices and procedures.

Congratulations these individuals and organizations once again!

For a more information on the recipients of the David C. Onley Awards please visit [Ontario Newsroom](#). ■



Recipients and Representatives from the Organizations with the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (2007-2014), Special Advisor on Accessibility and the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, Minister Responsible for Accessibility.

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