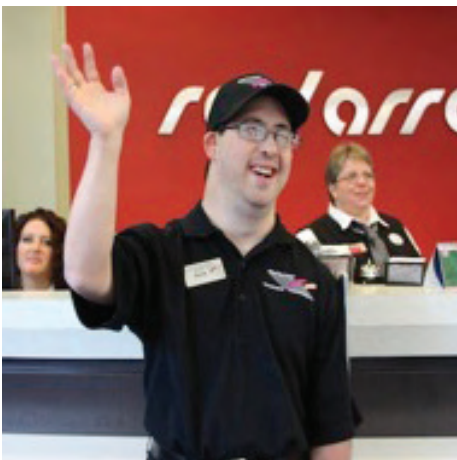


# ready, willing and able

Volume 3, November 2013



people with intellectual disabilities  
creating an inclusive labour force



Canadian Association  
for Community Living

Association canadienne pour  
l'intégration communautaire

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.

PEOPLE  
FIRST  
OF CANADA



PERSONNES  
D'ABORD  
DU CANADA

# Introduction

**T**hroughout Canada today, there are thousands of adults with intellectual disabilities who are gainfully employed within the competitive labour force. Individuals, who bring to the workplace, pride in their work, a strong work ethic and a genuine desire to be a productive and contributing employee. As is true for most us, these individuals see work as an important part of their adult lives. Employment enables greater financial independence, facilitates the creation of new relationships, and increases our feelings of self worth.

Unfortunately, the dignity and pride that comes with having a job is available to far too few. For every person with an intellectual disability who is working, there are three who are not. In Canada today, the employment rate of people with intellectual disabilities is only 25%! This means that of the approximately 500,000 working age Canadians with intellectual disabilities, the vast majority remain excluded from the workforce, even though we know they are 'ready, willing and able' to work.

In today's business world – in businesses of all sizes – employers across Canada are facing increasing challenges in recruiting and retaining employees. All too often many of these same employers fail to recognize the potential value in hiring people with intellectual disabilities. For a variety of reasons we have not yet been successful in helping employers understand that people with intellectual disabilities represent a hugely untapped labour pool; a labour pool of motivated and competent individuals who could greatly assist in successfully meeting their labour force needs.

The Canadian Association for Community Living's Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) Initiative is designed to increase labour force participation of people with intellectual disabilities, and thereby advance economic productivity and social inclusion in Canada. It recognizes that working age adults with intellectual disabilities, with targeted support, community investment and employer leadership, could join the labour force at rates similar to other Canadians. It is an initiative that is designed to facilitate and provide better bridges between employer demand and the labour supply as represented by people with intellectual disabilities.

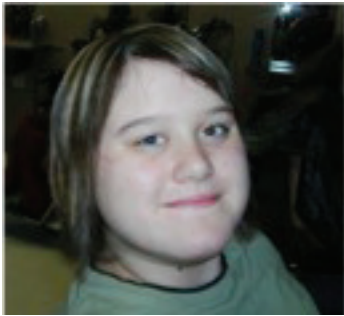
RWA works by scaling up proven methods that are active in communities throughout the country and that are demonstrating positive impact on employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

This booklet presents stories of successful employment collected from provinces and territories across this country, from the perspective of both employee and employer. These are stories selected not because they are extraordinary but in fact because they are 'ordinary'. These are stories that illustrate the positive impact of hiring people with intellectual disabilities. These stories further underscore the fact that regardless of label or perceived level of disability, adults with intellectual disabilities are 'ready, willing and able' to participate in and contribute to the labour market within this country.

This booklet is a part of the national Ready, Willing and Able (RWA) Initiative. It is prepared and published by CACL on a quarterly basis.

# Confident and Skilled

Jill Upward



Jessica was involved with the Students Exploring Through (SET) Mentoring project for three years. SET is an in-school initiative for students with an intellectual

disability, or who face various barriers and challenges to post school training and employment options. It is an opportunity to enhance grade 9-12 student's capacity to make informed decisions about their careers prior to leaving school.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living (NLACL) initiated the SET Mentoring program in the fall of 2008. Since its start date, SET has had many successes in helping students explore their post schools options.

During her mentoring duration, Jessica had the opportunity to explore many of her interests, some of which included: exploring the hairstyling program at a post secondary institution; being involved in her community; helping with after school programs for school aged children; and learning more about programs and services in her community. SET helped Jessica to move her focus from disability to ability and she has found success with employment through natural supports.

In the summer of 2011, Jessica was employed by Transcontinental in Grand Falls-Windsor. SET was instrumental in giving Jessica the confidence and skills needed to find meaningful summer employment.

SET worked in collaboration with Jessica, her mom, school personnel, and the Exploits Valley Employment Corporation in Jessica's transition to the School to Work Transition program. Since completing high school in June 2012, Jessica has been employed in her home town at the Rossy Department Store with the support of the Exploits Valley Employment Corporation. Jessica has many job duties during her daily routine at work; being responsible for the organization of the mat department, restocking and pricing items, assisting costumers and providing customer service.

The NLACL SET Coordinator visited Jessica at her work place and spoke with her and her supervisor. It was wonderful to see Jessica with a smile on her face in her work setting. Her supervisor said that Jessica is a very pleasant young lady and a very hard worker. She can work independently or as a team member. Jessica's mom feels that SET has contributed to Jessica being successful in her new job.



*Jill Upward, Coordinator, Jessica Snook, and Eileen Sullivan, Mentor.*

Since becoming successful in the workforce, Jessica has moved into her own apartment where she shares the accommodation expenses with a friend. Jessica has made new friends and loves her job; she can't wait to get up in the morning to go to work. Jessica now knows the feeling of being a valued employee and earning her own money.

# Alberta Association for Community Living Rotary Partnership

Wendy MacDonald

Alberta Association for Community Living together with dozens of Rotary Clubs across Alberta is helping to create positive and meaningful employment for hundreds of individuals with developmental disabilities.

The AACL/Rotary Employment Partnership is operational in Edmonton, Lloydminster, Red Deer, Grande Prairie and Calgary with plans to expand to even more communities in the near future. Through these partnerships Rotarians find and create employment with mentorship provided by AACL.

Wendy McDonald, AACL Development Director and a Rotarian herself says, “As a Rotarian it makes me proud that we are making a difference, not only in the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, but also through the positive impact on businesses and workplaces.”

An example of just one of the hundreds of successful jobs created to-date is at Red Arrow Motorcoach, Alberta’s premier motorcoach travel company. At Red Arrow’s downtown ticket office you’ll often see David Sobieski greeting passengers, tidying the waiting area, and generally casting his positive energy over the entire operation. The first employee hired in Calgary as part of the AACL/Rotary Employment Partnership, David has demonstrated how people with developmental disabilities can become valued employees within a dynamic organization.

Behind the success of David’s employment and Red Arrow itself is Mike Colborne, President and



CEO, Pacific Western Transportation, which operates Red Arrow.

“I truly believe in inclusion for people with disabilities in the workforce, into society,” says Colborne, a Rotary Club of Calgary member. “As soon as this AACL employment initiative became part of Rotary, I said I wanted to be the first employer onboard.”

Adds Colborne, “This is so good for society and business. It demonstrates that people with disabilities are valuable and can contribute not just their skills, but it’s a great equalizer. It gives not just employees with disabilities self-confidence and self-worth, but that goes for their co-workers, too. In today’s society when business moves fast, this is a great reminder that a company has a heart.”

To date the AACL/Rotary Partnership has created more than 250 meaningful jobs for adults with developmental disabilities with an average wage of more than \$14 per hour. Worksites include a wide array of companies from one-person businesses to large international firms ranging from office jobs to manufacturing and technology. With the success of the Rotary Employment Partnership in Alberta the idea has expanded to other Canadian provinces and a number of countries.

Recently AACL's Rotary Employment Partnership was recognized internationally as a world leading innovation at the Zero Conference in Vienna, Austria by the ESSL Foundation in collaboration with the World

Future Council and the International Labour Organization. The ESSL Foundation advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities internationally and a world with zero barriers.

## In Pursuit of Higher Learning

### YKACL

Child care workers assist young people to grow and learn in a safe and healthy environment. Annie Strus wanted to pursue her passion in this field but realized she, too, needed to increase her knowledge and skills to do this. This past spring she enrolled in an online child day care course through Stonebridge Associated Colleges, based out of the UK.

The course was composed of seven modules each with an assignment or project to be submitted electronically. Annie spent four months working on the course and learning about the early developmental stages of a person's life, ailments that may affect children, and activities to stimulate learning and growth. Annie's success in the online course was due to her hard work, dedication, and intuitive knowledge of kids. With assistance through the YKACL's supported employment program, OPEN DOORS, Annie was comfortable with the e-learning approach to education.

The final essay Annie wrote for the child day care course also secured her a volunteer placement working three hours a day twice a week at a day care centre in Yellowknife (in addition to her part-time job at Tim Horton's). So far, it seems to be a great fit; the manager was impressed with her paper and resume and was glad to start working with the new graduate, and Annie is enthused to be working



*Dawn Collins (Job Coach) presents Annie with her Child Care Certificate*

in the child care field, allowing her to put her learning into practice.

“It was a challenge on the first day of work to get used to the noise and chaos, but after a few hours I fell into a routine,” Annie stated when talking about her new job. It is that routine that will be the key to success. Annie recognizes that structure is extremely important for both the child care worker and the development of a child. The day care that she works at is always busy but the staff stay calm and the activities keep the kids active all morning.

What sparked Annie's interest was her own experience taking care of children growing up. She was always around kids, and even today says “it's easier to get along with them than adults. Their energy and the way they see the

world is inspiring.” It is not hard to see that Annie has found her career path. It is a never ending throng of children at the centre, from infancy to pre-kindergarten, but Annie is relaxed and natural.

There seems to be more learning in the future, as Annie continues along her career path. She

is now exploring a few online college programs in Canada. Completing her child care diploma would give her the knowledge and tools to be able to delve further into her work. Annie’s goal is to better understand the structures and regulations required to run a day care in order to continue “making sure kids are growing in a happy, healthy, and safe environment.”

## Believe in the Potential for Achieving Success!

Chantal Aubry and Anik Larose

Faced with a familiar reality that finding work is not always easy for people with disabilities, Chantal Aubry, proprietor of *Boom Hop!* set up a social enterprise for people with intellectual disabilities who are all too often sidelined in the mainstream labour market. *Jeux gonflables Laval Boom-Hop!* is a business that offers for rent a large selection of inflatable party toys. The founder of this company is Mrs. Aubrey’s son, Raphaël Lefebvre, a young man of 19 years who also carries trisomy 21. Their shared dream is that he would be the President of the company. For him, being the president of the company is synonymous with autonomy.

Since the time that he expressed this dream, Mrs. Aubrey and his family have invested time and money so that his business would be a success. This has involved strategic thinking about the services offered, creation of communication tools, manufacture of the party games, establishment of procedures for pickup and return of games and thinking about how to customize the social enterprise—no detail has been spared to meet expectations of all, community included.

Photo: Ninon Pedneault, La Presse



The project has taken over the garage of the family home, which has been adapted to meet the functional needs of the business and young people working there. Everything has been designed to assist the understanding of the task at hand—for Raphael, as well as for the other young employees who join the team. For example, index images were placed on the shelves of games in order to easily identify them when selecting a game for a customer.

The marketing of *Boom-Hop!* highlights the value of young people with disabilities. Each customer is informed that the work will be completed by the youth working for the enterprise. When customers are choosing the game for their party, the young employees have first contact with the customer. This exposes the customers to the skills, potential and abilities of these young people—acting against prejudice and discrimination and dispelling the myths.

The approach to clients of the enterprise is simple: put it all in place. When hiring young people with intellectual disabilities, a meeting is scheduled with all stakeholders involved with the individual to determine overall goals for success in the workplace. Working with all stakeholders toward labour market integration ensures that the job description will be adapted to the reality of the young person, and partnerships across a number of agencies in order to ensure continuity of service. To take one concrete example, one young employee with a language disorder had the objective of presenting well to customers. Better articulation of his words would allow him to be better understood. He worked on his approach to find different ways to communicate his

welcome. The result was that at the end of the season he had developed language skills, and broadened his vocabulary. Next season, he will work on budgeting and finance.

The enterprise is not limited to employment integration, but also works at developing social skills (communication, good manners, initiative, problem solving, etc.)

The Boom-Hop! project is undoubtedly a dynamic example of innovation in the employability of people with intellectual disabilities living in Quebec. One can only hope that this initiative expands to other regions of the country. Raphael and his mother are wonderful ambassadors!

## Katie: The Clean Machine

Talha Wasti and Taylor Robinson

Born in Midland, Ontario, Katie Courriere moved to Parry Sound when she was only 19 years old to live in her own apartment. As someone who has always appreciated the importance of a clean and organized home, she was thrilled to have been hired as part of the team at ECOMAIDS.

As the website for ECOMAIDS reads; “When you hire ECOMAIDS, you are hiring and working with an amazing group of entrepreneurs, cleaning experts and, most important, dedicated individuals who care about their customers, cleaning technicians and their local community.” For Katie it was an obvious and perfect fit. A strong work ethic, lots of energy and the enthusiasm to do a great job made her an ideal candidate.

It’s been a year now and every day for Katie is as exciting as her first day. Katie wanted to work



for ECOMAIDS because she knew people there shared her passion for organizing and cleaning and she wanted to be part of that team. She takes pride in her work and ensures everything she does is of the utmost quality; cleaning would prove to be no exception.

As part of the ECOMAIDS team, Katie continues

to be inspired to work hard and to share with others her knowledge that a spotless and sanitized clean home is possible without exposing yourself and your family members to the harmful chemicals and toxins typically used in cleaning. The fact that Katie enjoys cleaning motivates her to ensure others find their workspaces clean, allowing them to remain safe and live in a healthy environment. Katie takes her job seriously because she knows that her work can have a good impact on her customers, providing them with an environment to do good work.

## PATH to my Dream Job

Leta Jarvis (with Kim Aker)

A few years ago I knew I wanted to make a plan so I could get my dream job – working with seniors.

I had been doing that at one time but a change in ownership of the senior's home led to me losing my position. I also really wanted a paying job. I would love to be independent and not have to depend on disability assistance to live.

A group of friends and supporters came together three years ago to help me develop that plan by creating a PATH and we meet every year to review and update the plan. Kim, my PATH facilitator, is helping me to share my story.

I was working part-time in a second hand shop attached to a sheltered workshop where I was learning customer service skills and cash register skills but I knew I really didn't want to work in a store. I had worked at the Yes Café and doing a survey for the hospital too.

I shared my dreams and goals with my friends during my PATH; to work with seniors, to improve

For Katie, her successful employment with ECOMAIDS has provided a good living that allows her to live comfortably in her own apartment, meet all kinds of new people and settle into her new community of Parry Sound. Work for Katie is part of a balanced life which allows her to also enjoy hobbies, as well as making plans to attend college in order to pursue her future career goal of nursing. She knows she has a lot to offer and is a part of the working force that drives our economy.



my reading skills, to learn to drive, as well as a few other more personal goals. Everyone agreed to help me to try to reach those goals. I am a proud member of Windsor People First and also get support and encouragement there and my employer is flexible so that I can be a part of People First meetings and events.

I attended a literacy program for a while and now I read regularly in my leisure time to keep improving. My reading came up from a Level 2 to a 7&8 Level. One of the things I read is the Driver Training Book so that I can hopefully get my Learner's permit. I have always been slower in learning so I am grateful for the help people give me. I now write reports at my job and my co-workers encourage me with that. I was so pleased when I found a part-time paying job working with seniors within the



first year of my plan. The owner, Dee, and my supervisor, Charlene, of the Rose-Marie Care Home are now members of my PATH Circle of Support and helped me with new goals when we met in June. I am working on a regular basis, almost full-time hours, and I love it. I don't even mind the shift work, I am learning to bake during my night shifts. I completed First Aid and CPR Training in June and hope to start my CCA certificate soon with the support of Dee and Charlene.

My favourite part of my job is the people: the seniors I work with, my co-workers and my boss

and supervisors. One lady and I play crib, on nice days another lady and I go out for walks and I help with their meals and activities.

I have just moved from Windsor to Hantsport so I can walk to work. There is no public transportation on Sunday, reduced hours on Saturday and Nova Scotia winters can be a challenge. But now I can get to work every shift.

“And if I didn't have my job, I would be lost and having nothing to do!”

## You Go Girl!

Colette Acheson

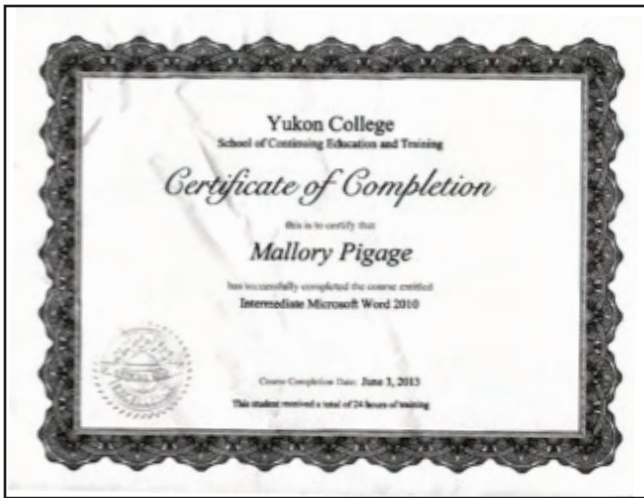
Watching Mallory Pigage walk down any street in her home town of Whitehorse, YT is an exercise in social networking. Choruses of “Hi Mallory” and “Hey Mal” greetings call out from passersby and dozens of professionals and shopkeepers working in the eclectic downtown core, and Mallory knows everybody.

After completing high school and with a few diverse work experience placements under her belt, Mallory decided that she wanted to pursue employment in office administration. She wanted to be, in her own words, a secretary. At that time she had been working 5 hours a week in the administration office of the Challenge Disability Resource Group. Her duties included some

filing, emptying the garbage, watering the office plants, taking the bank deposit to the night deposit slot and sometimes answering the phones. While working at Challenge, Mallory met a young woman who had recently been hired there after completing the Office Administration Course at the Yukon College. Watching her, Mallory observed many of the job duties that this woman performed and believed that there were several of those job functions that she could do too.



*Mallory Pigage with Constituent Assistant Darren Parsons*



Mallory's next step was to approach the Yukon Council on disABILITY for help in planning and meeting her employment goals. YCOD Executive Director, Lisa Rawlings Bird, had known Mallory for years and was very excited about Mallory's potential. "After thorough consultation and Mallory's own research we helped Mallory to figure out specifically what she wanted to do; what essential skills she has developed already and which additional ones she would require." With this information Mallory decided that the most appropriate and efficient program would be the online learning continuing education program, Ed2go, offered through the Yukon College and supplemented with additional supports offered by a YCOD tutor.

Ms. Rawlings Bird continues "I felt it was completely realistic to expect that Mallory could build the skills required for an entry-level office support position in the competitive job market and then obtain sustainable and full-capacity employment. She has a strong support network and is incredibly motivated to find her own personal success." With the help of her support team and her own determination Mallory went on to successfully complete her college training.

In July of 2013, that vision and hard work paid off as Mallory was offered paid employment as an office assistant working in the office of Yukon Member of Parliament Ryan Leef who was inspired to create this position after hearing from CACL. "After a meeting in Ottawa with the National Association and with the Yukon Association for Community Living locally in Whitehorse, it was highlighted for me how people with disabilities could compliment any workplace and particularly meeting the needs for a diverse community with a range of needs to enhance client service delivery. Mallory has an incredibly strong work ethic, performs all tasks asked of her and inspires our team and our clients with the positive energy and enthusiasm she bring to the job."

"Having Mallory here has been a fantastic experience!" adds Constituent Assistant Darren Parsons who works alongside Mallory in the Yukon office. "She brings efficient and practical skills to the administrative work she does, but she's also great at communicating professionally with constituents who stop in and she contributes significantly to keeping the office a happy place."

Outside of her professional life, Mallory is involved with numerous organizations as a volunteer and participant. Over the last several years she has written and performed in several music video and theatre projects, and has collected many medals as a competitive athlete in Special Olympics. In addition, Mallory currently serves as the elected President of the People First Society of Yukon, and is often asked to speak on disability issues to community groups and at public events.

It's a lot to have accomplished for a young woman, but everyone who knows Mallory will tell you that she's just getting started!

# The Road to Success

Christy McLean

If you shop at Value Village in Fredericton, you will see a smiling and hard-working young man, named Zackary (Zack) Mott, restocking shelves and helping customers who need a hand. But if you were to go back four years and visit Zack in school, you might not recognize the shy young man who looked as if he wanted to disappear into the background.

“You know when you see people doing things that you can’t and you feel like, ‘well, what can I do that’s so special about me?’ and you know it was hard, that’s for sure.”

Zack who has an intellectual disability struggled to stay motivated, particularly when he had to work much harder than his peers. “I didn’t have any self-confidence at all and that was affecting

my school work,” says the strapping teen.

Things were not looking very promising, for Zack, that is, until he came home with a brochure for NBACL’s Transition program. With some trepidation, Zack’s parents signed the permission slip that allowed him to enter the program. “It didn’t take us long to realize this was the best decision we’d ever made,” says, Heidi Boucher, Zack’s mother.

“Before I didn’t think there was anyone willing to help me, anyone willing to give me a chance, because that’s all I needed was for someone to let me prove to myself and to other people that I can do anything and everything that everyone else can, I just need the right steps to get there,” says Zack.



Enter Lynn Akmens, Transition Facilitator for the New Brunswick Association for Community Living. “We started off with a PATH for Zack, which is a planning tool to help map out his goals and dreams for his future,” she says.

Zack’s goal was to become independent. He literally set out on the road to independence by taking the city bus. “I was always relying on my parents to take me wherever I needed to go,” he says.

Zack’s first experiences with success ignited a spark in him to try new things and he continued to work on developing skills to help him reach his ultimate goal, to find a job.

Through the transition program, Lynn Akmens worked with him to further strengthen his independence. Together they worked on writing a resume, preparing for a job interview, how to conduct himself in the workplace and more. Finally, Zack was able to put his skills into practice at a job co-op at the Giant Tiger in Fredericton.

“The co-op went really well. Zack loved the job and they loved Zack,” Lynn says. However, despite how much Zack was appreciated, there were no job openings at the retail store and it was time for Zack to truly put his newly found independence to the test. He had graduated from High School, but he still didn’t have a job.

“We worked with Jobs Unlimited, an agency that helps to find employment for persons with a disability and they connected him with Value Village in Fredericton.”

They needed someone to restock their shelves and to organize goods in the store. Zack got an interview and after a little persuading, he landed the job!

It was a bumpy start for Zack at his new job. He was responsible for organizing and restocking

the miscellaneous items, keeping store shelves and display walls neat and organized. This can be overwhelming for any employee working in a busy thrift store.

“I could see that Zack was stressed about keeping up with the pace and the expectations,” says Lynn. “I was worried that he was going to quit. He was so concerned about falling behind that he worked through his breaks.”

He opened up to me about his concerns and I said, “You know I’ve got your back,” and I meant it. I did everything I promised him I would do to help him succeed and he trusted me. Without that trusting relationship, I don’t know if he would have stuck it out,” says Lynn.

“We worked with Value Village and came up with a couple of creative accommodations, such as developing reference cards that explained how items were organized in the store and the staff that Zack worked with gave him more lead time so that he could complete his tasks on time.”

Today, Zack can be seen smiling and happily doing his job. He also continues to work to become more independent. Getting his driver’s license was another big goal for Zack, because he does not want to rely on his parents to drive him everywhere. This summer Zack received his beginner’s license and hopes to earn his driver’s license next year. Recently Zack bought himself a four-wheel all-terrain vehicle (ATV).

“People’s lives are being changed because of these programs,” he says.

NBACL is working to expand the Transition program to more regions throughout New Brunswick so that more young people with an intellectual disability can have the same opportunities to prove themselves as Zack.



## Taylor's Recycling Pick-Up

Bonnie Cherewyk

Taylor Layton has now made recycling easy in Outlook, Saskatchewan. All that Taylor's 40 customers have to do is put their recycled items in the black Taylor's Recycling bin, and leave the bin outside. Taylor then picks up the bin every Monday. Customers do not even have to sort their recycling. They just place everything in the bin. I must say I wish I had this option in Saskatoon!

Taylor's mom, Eloise wanted her daughter to have choice; a job and a career she chooses and a job she enjoys doing. "She is young and the world is at her feet. I don't want to limit her," said Eloise.

Eloise first met Jeannine Harlton, the Saskatchewan Association for Community

Living's (SACL) Employment, Education and Transition Facilitator at the school for a Transition meeting. At the transition meeting they began to talk about options and job carving. Jeannine explained, "When I first met Taylor I was invited by her mom to come to a transition meeting. It was a real honour to sit at the table with a young woman, who knew what she did and did not want in life. Through the Student Experience Program, the SACL can administer funding for students who want to work out in the community. We helped with Taylor's supports such as providing funding for a job coach/business manager."

When they didn't find something in Outlook that was a good fit for Taylor, Eloise decided to take a different approach. Eloise knew that she

would pay someone to do her recycling, so she thought why not give that a try? “I talked to a few of my friends and received their support. Jeannine was very supportive, and the SACL offered to help with start-up costs,” Eloise said.

Taylor’s Recycling Pick-up began in October 2011. Tammy Felix was Taylor’s first customer. It all started with Eloise phoning Tammy to ask what she thought of the idea. Tammy thought it was a great idea! Tammy said, “I love recycling, but I just hate doing recycling. This granted me an opportunity to recycle and feel good about that without having to do the work. That is what I liked about this. It was a job with a meaning for Taylor. It wasn’t just a job created to give her a job; it was a job with value. It has been fun watching it grow, and seeing how many people are on board and supporting the business. It is a needed business in this town.”

Jeannine said, “One unique thing about Taylor’s business is that you don’t have to sort everything out.” Huge selling point! “The laziest option is throwing it all away. The second laziest option is throwing it in the bin.”

Before Taylor’s Recycling Pick-Up, the only option was to sort and deliver your recycling to the recycling centre yourself. Tammy said, “I now find that I am recycling a lot more!”

Taylor’s business is providing a huge service to the community of Outlook and the environment. And the best part is you can receive this service for only \$20/month in Outlook!

Community support has been amazing. Rick Pederson, the town foreman has lent Taylor labeling tools to label all the bins, and Taylor has been offered the opportunity to display a business sign at the recycling depot.

Taylor is a vibrant young lady who loves life. Taylor very powerfully states, “I am the daughter of Eloise. I am the granddaughter of

Elsie. I love exercising every day, I love music, I love singing, I love dancing, I love making everybody happy and I love everybody! I just want to be a normal girl. I’m 19.” Taylor especially loves her mom and appreciates Eloise’s support. Taylor said, “I love my mom very much. She is just an amazing mom. My mom is my role model, she is my hero and she is a very special person.”

Taylor also loves her business. She said “I love recycling. I’m so happy to have my own business. I love my job so much. I like being my own boss.”

As soon as I met Taylor I knew she had excellent customer service skills. She knows the names of all her customers. Eloise said, “When we take new customers a bin, Taylor introduces herself and shakes their hand. She has such a good memory. She never forgets a name.” Tammy said, “Taylor’s customer service is fantastic, and she always takes time to say hello, if you are outside or around.” “She genuinely cares about every client” said Eloise.

I asked Taylor who helped her start her business. Her immediate response is her mom. She also tells me about Carrie Jamison, her job coach/business manager/friend. I did not have the opportunity to meet Carrie, but from Taylor’s and Eloise’s comments I know that Carrie is a key support person for Taylor.

Taylor also told me, “I love my customers. Just please please please no garbage! I don’t pick up garbage!” And like any other business, Taylor also has overdue accounts.

When I asked Taylor what she could teach other people about owning their own business she said, “Just don’t give up. I always say, ‘look you can do it because I believe you can do this.’ No one can be yourself but you. You have to find your power.”

Laurine, Taylor's Education Assistant has seen Taylor grow and become more confident from her business. "There has been a huge change in the way you walk in the school, and the way you greet everybody in the halls" Laurine tells Taylor.

Jeannine also tells Taylor during our interview, "It's all you girl! You have a lot of drive!"

Taylor is so busy right now she may even be ready to hire her first employee!

"Taylor works hard and she has such a good attitude" said Eloise.

While Taylor has been busy growing her business, she was anonymously nominated for Outlook's 2012 Youth of the Year. And not only nominated... Taylor was chosen as the 2012 Youth of the Year!

Congratulations Taylor

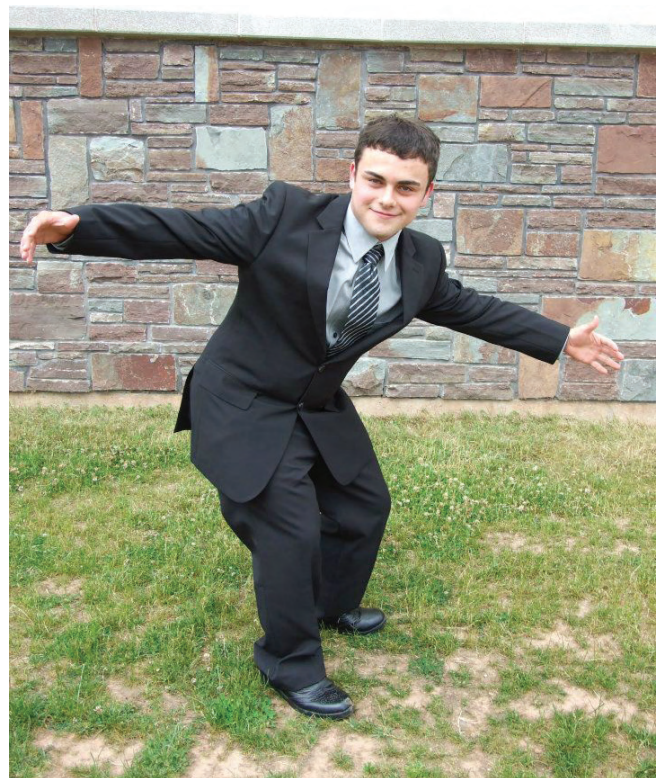
## Pay the Bills Until You Make it Big

Joseph Cairns

My name is Joseph Cairns, I'm 19 years old and I live in Charlottetown PEI. When I was two years old, I was diagnosed with Pervasive Development Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified. This falls under the Autism Spectrum Disorder umbrella.

I worked real hard at school and it paid off. I graduated with honours from Montague Regional High School in June 2012. Yes, honours...a person with Autism graduated with honours. Even after I got my diploma, some people thought out loud... how could he graduate with honours? My answer to them was hard work and determination. Lots of both!

After graduating from high school, I attended Holland College for a little bit, but found out early that it wasn't what I wanted to do. To tell you the truth, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do other than finish my novel that I've been working on for the last two years. I'm hoping one day it becomes the next best seller. But that's a story for another day.



As with any creative writer, you need to pay the bills until you make it big. So I'm lucky enough to work with a great bunch of people at Creative Child Care Center. I decided to work here because I felt comfortable knowing that the boss understood who I was and was willing to make it work for both of us. I'm gaining experience working in a place where there are loud noises and where I have to learn to adapt to changes in my schedule. I think I'm getting

used to little kids talking, crying and being loud every day!

So I'm making progress and gaining experience....but I'm wondering what will happen when I want to move on to the next job?

## College and Learning

David Johnston

I took a five month cooking course at Northern Lights College, Dawson Creek, BC. At the end of this I earned a certificate. It was a great experience.

When I first started the cooking course I thought I would not be accepted because of my learning disability. Imagine my surprise when I was accepted into the course by everyone with open arms. I look up to my mentor Chef French because he did not judge me. He took his time with me and he went through things until I got it. I also had help from students and the teacher when I needed it.

I struggled with taking notes in class but I needed them to study for each module. I got note takers to take notes for me and that was all because of Chef French. Chef French was very patient with me when I was slow to learn. He was very caring and understanding. He gave me extra time when I needed it and he worked through things with me step by step and one on one when he had time. If I struggled with recipes at school I practiced cooking them at home.

I learned other things like:

- How to cook many dishes for restaurants and camp settings,

I don't see myself working here for the rest of my life as much as I love the people. Is there a job out there for me? Will the boss want to hire me, Joseph Cairns, the outgoing, charismatic, not to mention great looking young man – and not the label I was given at age two?



- How to make a weekly meal schedule that included a shopping list and a budget,
- How to write out a recipe step by step,
- Knife skills,
- How to write a recipe book to feed a 50-man camp,
- How to make a whole bunch of recipes like my favorite dish,
- What kind of ingredients to add how long to cook the food etc.

I have confidence in the kitchen so I try new foods that I didn't know about before, like beef stroganoff, chicken chow mein, chicken cordon blue, pea soup and clam chowder. I know how to eat healthy and have proper diet. I cook meals at home for my girlfriend Dara and she likes my home cooked meals. I cook them along with her so she can learn them too. I am willing to make meals for my parents and friends but have not done that yet. I hope to do it soon.

After I completed the course I got a job working Fridays at the Salvation Army where I cook for



people with disabilities. I hope to look for camp job as soon as possible. In Dawson Creek we have camps of 50 or so men working at catering camps, oil camps, and rigs, etc.

I am proud of being the first person with a disability to get a trade at Northern Lights College. I helped pave the way for other people with disabilities to go to Northern Lights College.

## Celebrating Progressive Employers and Capable Employees

Sylvia Jansen

A good employee is worth keeping. A great employee is worth fighting for.

Boston Pizza on McPhillips Street in north Winnipeg has an employee worth fighting for in Debbie Baziniak, a kitchen prep cook, who also happens to have an intellectual disability.

“We deserved her more!” says general manager Gerri McCaughan.

Two years ago the restaurant management heard that they might lose Baziniak to another employer offering more hours and money for her work. “So we made a counter offer to keep her here, with us.” The offer was enough for the loyal employee to stay, and the entire staff team appreciates her decision.

“We have the lowest turnover for staff in Winnipeg,” notes McCaughan, “and Debbie is an awesome part of that team. She does everything she is assigned. She is helpful, friendly, upbeat and she loves her job. It is reassuring to know that Debbie is here. She helps the business succeed.”

Part of this success stems from a common sense re-alignment of roles that made the kitchen, and the restaurant, more efficient. Duties that were previously done by a number of other staff, including portioning food for



Photo: Lisa Waldner

*Debbie Baziniak and Gerri McCaughan*

cooks to use during rush periods, are now Baziniak's main responsibility. Crystal Lachance, Baziniak's supervisor, notes that “Debbie always weighs portions, so they are exactly the same. Being careful and consistent are important.” Lachance adds that Baziniak has also successfully taken on other new responsibilities as well.

The fact that Baziniak contributes to the success at Boston Pizza comes from management's focus on abilities, rather than disabilities.

McCaughan emphasizes that other employers should consider the contribution of someone with an intellectual disability. “Debbie has conquered all the hurdles in her life and is one of the most inspiring people I have ever met.”

Clearly, an employee worth keeping, and worth fighting for.

# Partnership between Ready, Willing and Able and Costco Wholesale

## Working together to create inclusive employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities

The Canadian Association for Community Living and Community Living Ontario are pleased to inform of a partnership with Costco Wholesale. This partnership is being formalized through an innovative demonstration project, within the context of the national Ready Willing and Able initiative, and will see partnerships being developed between local Associations for Community Living and Costco stores in the Greater Toronto Area.

“We are so very pleased and excited that a major national employer of the magnitude and stature of Costco Wholesale has become a partner in the Ready Willing and Able initiative”, says Michael Bach, Executive Vice President, Canadian Association for Community Living. “Fostering and growing a relationship with Costco Wholesale within this pilot will certainly lead to increased employment opportunities in the Greater Toronto Area.”

Community Living Ontario is taking the lead on this pilot project and has reached out to corresponding local Associations for Community Living. The commitment, interest and investment of each of the Costco Warehouse managers, the local Associations for Community Living and the candidates being considered for employment through this venture is really exciting.

“Being able to connect our local Associations for Community Living to Costco stores in a planned, proactive manner is a tremendous boost to our capacity to assist people who have an intellectual disability find suitable, competitive and meaningful employment,” says Kimberley Gavan, Director of Community Development, Community Living Ontario. “Costco is such a great employer, and to be able to anticipate vacancies, in the context of a real commitment to hire, and as part of an employer’s regular recruitment strategy and process is a real step forward.”



*David Skinner, Vice President of Operations, Eastern Canada, Costco Wholesale*

From initial contact, to candidates being interviewed, offered employment and joining the Costco team, just in time for the busiest retail season of the year, it has been apparent that Costco is truly supportive and intent in pursuing this partnership.

David Skinner, Vice President of Operations, Eastern Canada, Costco Wholesale says “It is simply the right thing to do, something that we have always tried to do and so we are very excited about being able to formalize this commitment to diversity and through this do an even better job of reaching out to this potential labour pool.”

Feedback from everyone involved in this partnership has been overwhelmingly positive; Costco Managers and Employees, Associations for Community Living and the people being interviewed and hired to join the Costco team...

- “This is the right thing to do and just another part of being in the community.” – *Costco Manager, Vaughan store*
- “Having a job at Costco feels great! Something like this has never happened to me before. This is my first paid job ever and it feels so good.” – *New Employee Natalie*
- “We were very impressed, he is a great choice and we will ensure that this works for him.” – *Costco Manager, Downsview store*
- “I am so very happy to be given this chance to work at such a large store. I will be the best employee ever.” – *Costco Employee, Downsview store*
- “We are very positive about this effort and are looking forward to hiring a person to work at our store.” – *Costco Manager, Scarborough store*
- “I’m very happy about getting this job, and that I’m getting paid an equal wage — and a good one at that. I look forward to being part of a team and not being treated any differently— now I can tell my brother, my friends, and my mom, that I work at Costco!” – *New Costco Employee, Peterborough store*

This partnership has many benefits; together the employer and employment service providers will develop a relationship, will assist in developing finely tuned protocols and practice of service providers to be responsive to employers of this magnitude, and support people to be well prepared for interviews, able to respond to offers of employment and the orientation processes associated with large employers. Most importantly the pilot will provide an opportunity to determine how best to ensure that the hiring of people who have an intellectual disability becomes a typical part of a company’s regular hiring practice.

Ready, Willing and Able works to increase capacity and confidence within the employer sector at a local, regional and national level. Such enhanced capacity increases the value of and demand for people with intellectual disabilities as employees. Through Ready, Willing & Able, employers are given knowledge, resources and tools through targeted public awareness, peer-to-peer workshops, mentoring, HR strategies, guides on workplace accommodations, and other tools. These outcomes will be achieved through targeted dissemination, online resources and social marketing, and ultimately will increase employer capacity to find, hire, support and maintain employees with intellectual disabilities. For further information on RWA see: [www.readywillingandable.ca](http://www.readywillingandable.ca)

# Canadian Association for Community Living / People First of Canada

## Position Statement on Employment

Working-age adults with intellectual disabilities, regardless of perceived level of disability, must have choice and opportunity to earn a living through paid employment in the open labour market. For employment opportunities to be meaningful working-age adults with intellectual disabilities require appropriate employment-related supports and job accommodation as needed. Employment rates and compensation must be commensurate with that of people without disabilities.

### Our Vision: Achieve employment equality

Working-age adults with intellectual disabilities are employed at the same rate as the general population.

### Benchmarks to measure progress:

1. Employment rates for people with intellectual disabilities are equal to that of the national average.
2. People with intellectual disabilities do not face financial or other disincentives to seek and maintain employment.
3. Employers are taking leadership in advancing the employment of people with intellectual disabilities.
4. People with intellectual disabilities and employers have the supports needed to establish and maintain inclusive workplaces.
5. People with intellectual disabilities are equally represented in both unionized workplaces and non-unionized workplaces.

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The stories in this booklet have been collected from community organizations across the country. Some have been previously published. Several have been shortened and/or otherwise edited due to space requirements.