



Saskatchewan Abilities Council Bulletin

Employment in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan continues to enjoy one of Canada's best job growth rates and lowest unemployment rates. Good news? Absolutely. But if you're an individual with barriers to employment, finding and keeping a good job can be challenging. Barriers can include physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health issues, addictions, language barriers and low education or work skills.

The Council's five Partners in Employment offices provide a vital link between people looking for work and companies looking for employees. For many, being out of the workforce or having a sporadic work history is a major barrier. The highly individualized approach of Partners in Employment is key to successfully transitioning people into community-based employment.

"We work with clients until they say the magic words—close my file."

Broad Client Base

The Partners in Employment Swift Current office meets the needs of a diverse range of clients. "Our client base is broad in terms of the barriers they face, the kind of work they are interested in and how many hours they want to work. Right now, clients range in age from 16 all the way up to 63," says Supervisor Jackie Powell. Meeting the needs of such a broad client base is a challenge. The Transitioning Youth to Employment program is currently helping students in Herbert, Cabri, Gull Lake and Eastend move into community-based employment. New funding meant the office was able to offer certificate courses in First Aid and Food Safe. "We had clients come to the office and show

us their certificates—they were so proud. It feels great to know we're providing training they can put on their resume."

Strong Employer Relationships

Over the past 11 years, a strong network of employer relationships has laid the foundation for success for Partners in Employment clients in Moose Jaw. As the only employment agency for people with disabilities in Moose Jaw, the small office is a hub of activity. Clients can access individual and group workshops on assertiveness and self-confidence, resume writing and interview skills, how to make a good first impression and positive communication skills. Job developers nurture relationships with employers, while job coaches help clients succeed in the workplace. It's an ongoing process that only ends when the client and employer feel confident.



Derek Pohl, Owner of A&W in Moose Jaw, believes that there should be more programs like those offered by Partners In Employment because "everyone deserves a chance."

Individualized Support

Of the 400 to 500 people who come to the Partners in Employment office in Regina every year, each has distinct needs. Staff members respond with a range of services tailored to each individual's abilities, barriers and goals. "We don't offer blanket solutions, because the path to successful employment is unique to each individual," says Murray Giesbrecht,

Senior Supervisor of Employment Services. "Success does not happen overnight. Consider how long it takes to get a university degree—approximately four years. It takes time and support for our clients to become confident and successful in the workforce. We provide support at every step."

New Pilot Programs

Partners in Employment Saskatoon is working with funding partners to launch two new pilot programs in 2016. *EmploymentWorks* Canada is focused on individuals ages 15 to 29 on the autism spectrum. Partners in Employment will use its established expertise to deliver pre-employment and employment skills to help young people with living with autism develop the essential skills they need to find and keep a job. The other pilot program is being run through the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council. Beginning in March through to October, Partners in Employment will work with individuals to connect them to a wide variety of jobs in agriculture, from production to manufacturing to support services.

Community Partnerships

Partners in Employment Yorkton uses a network of community-based partners to meet client needs. "We partner with a lot of other organizations to meet individuals' needs—our partnerships sustain us," says Claire Poole, Employment Services Senior Supervisor. Staff members work with Partners in Immigration and Settlement to provide job readiness and job placement services for newcomers. The Transitioning Youth to Employment program partners with the Good Spirit School Division to help young people move into the workforce. This year, a Workplace Essentials Skills program is being delivered in partnership with Parkland College in Standing Buffalo Dakota First Nation Reserve and Fort Qu'Appelle. The Yorkton office is currently working on a partnership to provide more services and connect more Aboriginal clients to the job market.

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NOW – More Than Just An Employment Program

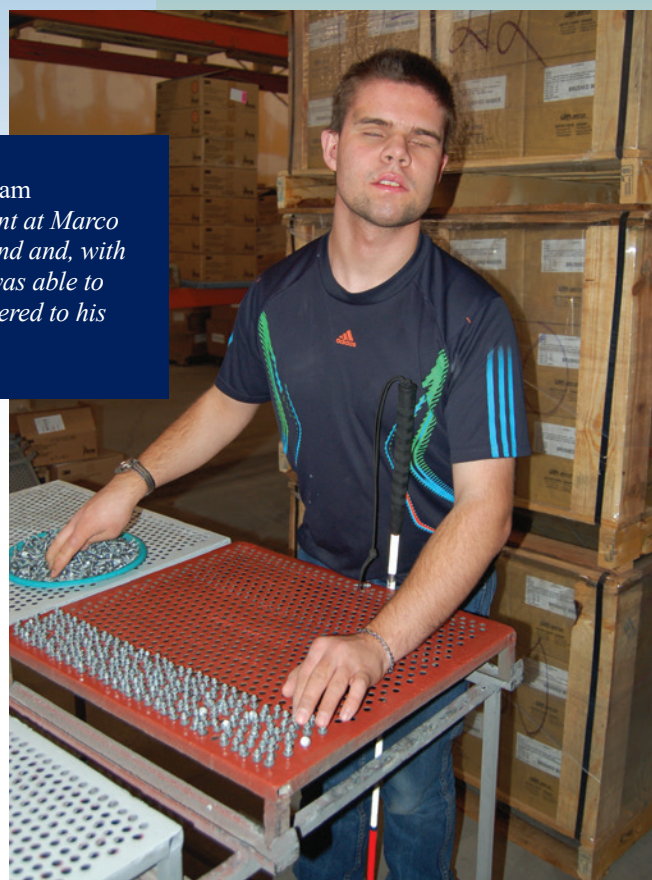
For almost a decade, the New Opportunities for Work (NOW) Program in Regina has been opening doors to community-based employment. “The objective of NOW is work-readiness through group learning and work experience placements,” says NOW Facilitator Stephanie Greenway-West. “In the group learning portion, participants learn about their strengths, how to search for a job, how to market themselves to employers and how to maintain a job.”

NOW helps clients develop a variety of soft skills—communication, problem solving, stress management, conflict management and more. NOW also gives individuals an opportunity to build “hard skills” through short work experience placements. Through a network of local employers, clients can gain experience in retail, food services, housekeeping, automotive, child care, administration, non-profit and other businesses.

Often, a NOW work experience leads to an offer of employment—or in the case of a recent client, two offers. The client is a skilled graphic designer who came to NOW because she was coping with attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder, anxiety and a lack of confidence and communication skills. “She really benefitted from practicing her job interview and social skills and from having facilitator feedback. She did two work experience placements and received job offers from both,” Stephanie says.

NOW works hard to match clients with work experiences that suit their interests and skills. “We rely on relationships with awesome employers, and we’re always looking to build and encourage our network of businesses to host work experiences.”

Michael Rudolph, a NOW Program participant, at his work placement at Marco Industries. Michael is legally blind and, with the help of the NOW Program, was able to find a work placement which catered to his interests and abilities.



CHOICES – A Second Chance at Success

When it comes to making a difference in people’s lives, the Choices program offered through Partners in Employment Saskatoon is an unsung hero. Since it was launched in 2008, Choices has helped an average of 225 people a year transition from the provincial correction system into community employment. That’s close to 1,500 people seeking a second chance in life.

“We’re based in Saskatoon, but we work with men and women from across the province,” says Sherry Faris, Choices Project Coordinator. “Individuals coming from the corrections system have a lot of different

barriers. Obviously, having a criminal record is number one, but there can also be mental health or addictions issues, lack of employment history, unstable housing, no child care or transportation, low education or work skills.”

Choices staff members work one-on-one with each client to identify individual barriers. From there, Sherry and her team develop a plan to connect the client to community-based agencies or services, such as child care services and housing subsidies, as well as employment readiness and skills training offered through the Council.

“By addressing barriers up front, before the client jumps into employment, we can give them the tools they need to get and keep a job. We want them to be a success, so our services are tailored to individual needs,” Sherry says.

Like many Council programs, flexibility and adaptability to meet individual client needs are keys to success. Some clients need more support, some need less; some clients need basic skills and some need specific job skills. The strength of Choices is that the small team works together to create a path to success, and that path can look different for each individual.

OUR MISSION

The Saskatchewan Abilities Council works with people of varying abilities to enhance their independence and participation in the community through vocational, rehabilitation and recreational services.

OUR VALUES

At the Council we treat people with:

• Respect • Honesty • Compassion

Our programs and services are:

• Client-centred • Goal-oriented • Accountable

We value:

• Teamwork • Excellence • Innovation



**Thank you for
helping children
and youth living
with varying
abilities succeed!**

AROUND THE COUNCIL

YORKTON SNOWARAMA

The 39th Annual Yorkton Snowarama event took place on February 6, 2016. One hundred and sixty three riders came from across the province and raised a total of \$133,500 for children and youth living with disabilities in Saskatchewan. Next year the event celebrates its 40th year and preparations are already underway!

Meet Kailee and Alyssa Popowich, two sisters who are making a name for themselves in the Snowarama community. Over the last four years, the sisters have raised thousands of dollars to send kids living with disabilities to Camp Easter Seal. Together they raised a total of \$7,190—Kailee raising \$4,110 and Alyssa raising \$3,080.



When asked what the best part of Snowarama is Alyssa responds, "Last year we actually went to Camp Easter Seal. It made me feel awesome because all the kids were smiling and having fun. That's the best part."

EASTER SEALS™ DROP ZONE

The Easter Seals™ Drop Zone is back, and this year we welcome Prince Albert to our Provincial portfolio. The Easter Seals™ Drop Zone is your chance to rappel some of Saskatchewan's tallest buildings, all in support of children and youth living with disabilities. Challenge yourself and change lives!



This year's events are as follows: Regina (Saturday, August 20), Saskatoon (Tuesday, August 23) and Prince Albert (Wednesday, September 7). To register or for more information please visit www.thedropzone.ca or call 306-374-4448.

ABILITY BOWL

The 28th Annual Ability Bowl is set for April 23, 2016! Over 150 people will dress up in costume and 5-pin bowl for the purpose of raising funds to support the programs and services offered at the Swift Current Branch of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. For more information please call 306-773-2076.



Join the Saskatchewan Abilities Council today!

Yes!

I know my membership will help improve the quality of life for thousands of people living with disabilities in Saskatchewan.

Enclosed is my membership contribution of:

☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$75.00 ☐ \$150.00 ☐ surprise us! \$ _____

☐ I am already a member, but I am purchasing a membership for _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Postal Code _____

Email _____

SASKATCHEWAN
Abilities
COUNCIL

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUE
PAYABLE AND MAIL TO:
Saskatchewan Abilities Council
2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2C7

OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca

Notice of 66th Annual General Meeting

Friday

April 8, 2016

11:30 a.m.

**Saskatchewan Abilities
Council, 2310 Louise
Avenue, Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan**

**Business to be conducted
will include:**

- election of directors
- receipt of the President's Report
- receipt of the Executive Director's Report
- presentation of audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2015
- appointment of auditors
- such other business as may come before the meeting.

Copies of the audited financial statements may be obtained from the address below, or from our website, after April 8, 2016.

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Telephone: (306) 374-4448

Charitable Business #: 10795 5221
RR0001

General Information

Board of Directors

Brenda Bancescu (Regina),
Paul Blackstock (Saskatoon)
Elaine Caswell (Regina)
Lynsey Gaudin (Regina)
Larry Goodfellow (Saskatoon)
Michelle Hunter (Regina)
Bruno Konecsni (Saskatoon)
Tamara Larre (Saskatoon)
Stan Lautsch (Swift Current)
Andy Livingston (Saskatoon)
Dr. Ulla Nielsen (Saskatoon)
Carolyn Rebeyka (Regina)
Tom Spence (Saskatoon)
Doug Surtees (Saskatoon)
Shona Switzer (Yorkton)

President: Tamara Larre
Executive Director: Ian Wilkinson
Design and Layout: OneOliveDesign

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We welcome your comments.

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Charitable Business #: 10795 5221 RR0001

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SASKATCHEWAN

Abilities

COUNCIL

Directors Corner - Joyce Phillips

The Regional Director of the Saskatoon Branch, Joyce Phillips likely needs no introduction as many know and respect her many years with the Saskatchewan Abilities Council in Saskatoon—her reach and influence has surely been felt across the province. Four decades with the Council has made Joyce a vital part of the rich history and most importantly has helped evolve and shape the organization into what it is today.



Joyce Phillips – Regional Director of the Saskatoon Branch

Joyce also has a wealth of knowledge that includes the many years prior to when she started with the Council, as she can recite the initial beginnings of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council. “When it first started in 1950 it was called the Saskatchewan Council for Crippled Children and it was started by a group of parents who had children with cerebral palsy. There were no services then so, understandably parents wanted more for their children. The organization was created to advocate for children and to also offer some sort of rehabilitation, maybe some physiotherapy and occupational therapy... basic stuff back then,” explains Joyce. In 1984 the Council rebranded as the Saskatchewan Abilities Council to focus on what those living with physical and mental limitations could achieve and to also be more inclusive to those living with disabilities.

Besides evolving in branding and identity Joyce

notes the significant growth and changes in services, “We have progressed in that we offer so many services, we have always offered some sort of services, prosthetics... our vocational side of things has seen huge changes, and what we do with technology today for our clients is amazing,” states Saskatoon’s Regional Director. Seeing and being a part of the internal evolution of services and programs offered by the Council, Joyce realizes

many people in the community still probably do not fully understand the extent of everything the Council does, especially in employment services and production. Joyce also notes dedicated customers, like Cameco, who have purchased coveralls from the sewing department at Saskatoon Branch for 20 years, not out of obligation, but rather because of the high level of quality they have come to expect and appreciate.

Noting that clients drive change, Joyce is proud of the Council and the path that has led to the organization today. “We always strive to be more inclusive and to not segregate, we want to evolve, be progressive and we will... change is good.” If there is any wonder as to why Joyce has been a dedicated Council employee for so many years, her response is perhaps as expected; it is because of the clients. “It is the successes that our clients achieve that has kept me here. When people come here they are accepted unconditionally That is why I am here; because of our work with and for the clients.”

Saskatchewan Abilities Council Programs & Services

VOCATIONAL SERVICES

- Employment Opportunities
- Supported Employment
- Support Services
- Training

REHABILITATION SERVICES

- Adaptive Technology
- Orthopaedics
- Parking Program for People with Disabilities
- Special Needs Equipment

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Quality of Life Centres
- Camp Easter Seal
- Life Enrichment
- *SLYP-Out*
- *Summer Fun*
- Access Transit

