



Saskatchewan Abilities Council Bulletin

New employment training designed specifically for those with autism



With the support of a new pre-employment program offered at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council Saskatoon Branch, Liam Gordon has found meaningful community-based employment at the Frances Morrison Central Library. The EmploymentWorks Canada program he participated in is part of a unique federally funded initiative called Worktopia designed to improve the employment futures of youth with autism.

The Saskatchewan Abilities Council Saskatoon Branch has launched a new pre-employment training program designed specifically for those who identify on the autism spectrum. In an effort to help alleviate unemployment rates and engage a largely untapped labour force, the Council has partnered with Autism Speaks Canada and The Sinneave Family Foundation to offer a program that provides skills training and community experience to youth with autism. The EmploymentWorks Canada program is designed to support the transition of young

adults with autism into the workforce, while creating awareness of the value and competencies these individuals bring to the workplace and their community. This is the first-ever autism specific program in the Council's history and is partially funded by the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities Program.

Before he enrolled in the EmploymentWorks Canada program, Liam Gordon struggled to find a job he loved that also suited his interests and skill set. During the program, Liam honed his communication skills and gained on-the-job experience in a variety of fields. Just months after completing the 12-week program, Liam was hired at Frances Morrison Central Library. Although he is only a few weeks into the new role, he says he is really enjoying it so far!

"Liam has an incredible memory and a passion

for books," says Cynthia Hatcher, Liam's Employment Mentor at Partners in Employment. "He's efficient, and when it comes to organization and following routine, he does really well. The library is the perfect fit for Liam."

Among many tasks, one of Liam's jobs is finding the books requested by readers across the province and ensuring they get to the appropriate branch on time. Scanning the books into the computer system and learning where each one is going is one of Liam's favourite tasks. "I find it very interesting," he says.

Autism is a spectrum—which means everyone is different, with varying strengths, sensitivities and areas for growth. The vocational services offered at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council are tailored to meet individual abilities and interests, and help participants like Liam build job skills, social skills and confidence as they prepare for meaningful employment.

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Fostering independence with the help of community partners

What started as community volunteerism transformed into paid employment for Cody Geis, a Saskatchewan Abilities Council participant. Cody is part of the Community Inclusion Program offered at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council in Yorkton, a program that provides experiences for community connection and integration. The Community Inclusion Program has partnered with Yorkton Crossing, the newest seniors' residence in the area, to encourage friendships and increase social engagement for both Council participants and residents of the care home.

The connections Cody made at Yorkton Crossing led to the development of a work placement. Together the residence home and the Council collaborated to develop a position for Cody that fit his interests and skill set while implementing a number of strategies to help him succeed in the new role.

With the help of our friends at Yorkton Crossing, Cody Geis went from community volunteer to employee at the seniors' residence in Yorkton. Cody's skills have grown immensely! With training and support, he can now complete most of his tasks in the kitchen department independently.

Little things like timers and task analyses were simple adjustments that made a positive impact on Cody and his job performance. While working in this inclusive environment, Cody learned new skills, showed enthusiasm, and reached his goal of employment.

Not only has Cody gained valuable work experience in the community and improved his skills, but also a number of collaborative relationships have been formed between Yorkton Crossing and the employment and recreational programs offered by the Council.



NOW— Giving clients the tools to succeed

Regardless of ability, employment gives many of us a sense of belonging and accomplishment—not to mention getting paid for our hard work is rewarding in more ways than one. All of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council employment programs are designed to support individuals in finding and maintaining meaningful employment. Through the support and assistance of these programs, hundreds of participants across the province successfully transition to community-based employment each year. Christina Putz is just one of those many success stories.

Christina joined the New Opportunities for Work (NOW) Program in Regina in 2015 and was one of the first clients to complete the newly introduced Custodial Training Program. Over the course of the program,

With the support of the New Opportunities for Work (NOW) Program in Regina, Christina Putz advanced her work skills and gained on-the-job experience, both of which helped her earn employment in the community.

Christina continued to develop her work skills, obtained her WHMIS certificate, and completed a work placement at Super 8 Motel. In September 2016, she accepted part-time employment in housekeeping at Super 8 Motel, a position she has successfully maintained since.

"We are very proud of Christina's efforts in our programs and her desire to make positive strides in her life," said Murray Giesbrecht, Employer Services Supervisor. "We wish her continued success in her job."



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

SNOWARAMA

Snowmobile enthusiasts from the prairies gathered at the 40th Annual Easter Seals™ Snowarama on February 11, 2017 to show support for Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Abilities Council Yorkton Branch. Even after 40 years of snowmobiling for Easter Seals™ kids, the support of riders, corporate sponsors, volunteers, and donors was unprecedented. Over \$2 million has been raised in support of Camp Easter Seal, Summer Fun, and Adaptive Technology Services since 1977.

Many of the Snowarama participants have been involved right from the start, either as a rider, volunteer, or as an original member of the planning committee. It is an honour to have this level of support year after year. "It's quite a privilege to be part of an event that has been happening for 40 years!" says Deana Jesmer, Community Relations Coordinator at the Yorkton Branch. "There is such a commitment from countless people to ensure the success of Snowarama."

With the support of participants, sponsors, community members, families, donors, volunteers and organizers, Easter Seals™ Snowarama raised over \$170,000! Thank you everyone for your commitment to strengthening our communities.



DROP ZONE

After a successful pilot year, we are excited to announce the second annual Drop Zone Prince Albert! Last year with the support of generous sponsors, participants, volunteers and donors across the province, Drop Zone events in Saskatchewan raised over \$170,000 for Easter Seals™ Saskatchewan. This year, let's give even more kids the opportunity to succeed. Join us in Prince Albert on August 16, 2017 as rappellers conquer great heights to support individuals with disabilities in Saskatchewan. Stay tuned for registration details as well as confirmed event dates for Saskatoon and Regina.



ABILITY BOWL

On April 22, 2017, join a team, dress as your favourite rockstar and get ready to Rock 'n' Bowl at the 30th Annual Ability Bowl! Last year the event raised almost \$58,000 in support of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council Swift Current Branch, and this year our goal is \$75,000! For more information or to register a team, please contact Community Relations Coordinator Jessica Sauder at 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 67th Annual General Meeting

Friday

April 7, 2017

11:00 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, 2016
- appointment of auditors
- such other business as may come before the meeting.

If you plan to attend, please register by calling Joan Nelson at (306) 374-4448.

Copies of the audited financial statements may be obtained from the address below after April 7, 2017.

Saskatchewan Abilities Council
2310 Louise Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2C7
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)
Michelle Hunter (Regina)
Bruno Konecni (Saskatoon)
Tamara Larre (Saskatoon)
Stan Lautsch (Swift Current)
Andy Livingston (Saskatoon)
Dr. Ulla Nielsen (Saskatoon)
Tom Spence (Saskatoon)
Doug Surtees (Saskatoon)
Shona Switzer (Yorkton)

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

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Regina(306) 569-9048
Saskatoon(306) 653-1694
Swift Current(306) 773-2076
Yorkton(306) 782-2463
Prince Albert(306) 922-0225
Moose Jaw(306) 693-3020

We welcome your comments.

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Charitable Business #: 10795 5221 RR0001

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Feature Staff – Emily Hurd, Senior Supervisor at Partners in Employment

“Her enthusiasm, dedication, intelligence, and leadership inspire those around her.”—Janine Baumann, Program Manager



Emily Hurd, Senior Supervisor at Partners in Employment

For many, employment is more than just a job—it’s an expression of ourselves, a way to make a difference, or an opportunity to increase our quality of life. Helping others reach their employment goals is one of the most rewarding parts of her job, says Emily Hurd, Senior Supervisor at Partners in Employment in Saskatoon.

In her five years at Partners in Employment, Emily has played a pivotal role in supporting countless clients reach their unique goals and potential. Emily loves working alongside her passionate co-workers to help develop an inclusive and diverse workforce in our community.

“I really enjoy building rapport with the individuals we serve, and to observe the professional relationships that staff and clients have,” Emily says. “I want clients to feel supported, and to know that regardless of their barrier to employment, they are valuable and have important contributions to make to our community.”

In her spare time, Emily stays busy with her two children aged three and five. As you can imagine, their activities keep her and her husband on their toes! Emily also enjoys staying active, running, reading and volunteering in the community.

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