



SaskAbilities

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# ConnectAbilities

## Volunteer SPOTLIGHT

### VISION

Working together to build inclusive communities for people of all abilities.

### MISSION

SaskAbilities supports people experiencing disability with programs and services to enhance their lives.

### VALUES

We treat people with respect, honesty and compassion.

Our programs and services are client-centred, goal-oriented and accountable.

We value teamwork, excellence and innovation.

*Working together to build inclusive communities for people of all abilities.*



## A Long-Time Client Finds the Perfect Fit

Shantelle Kucherhan has a long-standing relationship with the SaskAbilities Saskatoon Work Experience Program that started when she was in high school. While in school, she became well acquainted with the organization's work experience programs, something that blossomed into even bigger opportunities as an adult.


When she completed school, Shantelle moved from her small-town home to an independent group home in Saskatoon. She attended the Saskatoon Branch Training Centre full-time with a goal of joining Partners in Employment. Shantelle excelled in her work experience, especially working in the Centre's cafeteria. She was viewed as a reliable team player and role model. With the support of her employment specialist, she moved into a position at A&W where she remained employed for many years.

When Shantelle felt ready for a change, she approached her employment specialist, Terri Thompson. Terri thought a perfect place for her to volunteer while waiting for a work experience placement was at Extendicare Preston, a Saskatoon seniors' residence. Terri said, "I knew this type of environment was the right place for her. After meeting with Shantelle and her parents, we all agreed this was a great opportunity." As luck would have it, a seat with

the Work Experience Program became available, so she was able to start a placement right away in the Recreation Department followed by a placement in laundry.

Shantelle loved her work experience placement and loved spending time at Extendicare. She loved it so much that she came to work even when she wasn't working to volunteer wherever she was needed. When a position became available, Shantelle was hired as a casual employee in the Laundry Department where she still works today.

Her manager Cindy Wilkinson said, "Shantelle's sunny disposition and ease that she has working with clients makes her a wonderful addition to our family. She has come a long way in learning the skills she needs for her new job and, with the support of a mentor, is completing all of the training and safety certifications required to work more independently in her department." Shantelle said, "I like it here. I help with the recreation program, planning parties, and working in laundry." Cindy added, "Shantelle is very go-with-the-flow and willing to do whatever needs to be done. When anyone needs a helping hand, she is there."

Shantelle was only at Extendicare for four months before she was awarded "Volunteer of the Month". That's quite an accomplishment! 

# New Found Independence Springs from the Perfect Opportunity

The Partners in Employment Transitioning Youth to Employment Program in Yorkton is designed to help youth gain real-world experience in their local business community. Through partnerships that are built with local businesses, clients participate in internship programs with a goal of seeking permanent employment through the experience they gain.

Lanna is quite shy in nature, so when she accessed Partners in Employment's services, part of her support plan was to build skills that helped her tackle new projects, learn new procedures and work in a team environment. Through the program she was employed part-time with a local car dealership in a custodial position where she built valuable skills that she could apply to future positions.

Bernice is the Youth Employment Specialist who works with Lanna. She and Lanna had a goal-setting meeting where it became apparent that Lanna had a long-standing interest in construction work. After completing a construction course through the Saskatchewan Institute of Technologies, Lanna began an internship at McMunn and Yates, one of the largest building supply companies in the Yorkton area. Bernice said, "As her experience began to build, her self-confidence began to grow. It was great to watch her coming out of her shell and gaining confidence. We all discovered her wonderful sense of humour when she felt comfortable enough to joke around with her co-workers."

At the end of the internship, Lanna was offered a paid part-time position.

Lanna became so confident in her job that she approached her manager to apply for full-time employment. Like all full-time employees at McMunn and Yates, Lanna was trained to do a variety of tasks including handling building materials, mixing paint, cash handling and invoicing. Lanna's manager Lorelei is proud of what Lanna has accomplished. She said, "Lanna's

independence is valued at work. She took the initiative on her own to ask for full-time employment. We pride ourselves in diversifying staff, and Lanna had to be trained in a variety of areas to stay on with us. She has done very well."

Lanna is now the store's invoicing expert. As a matter of fact, when she took some holiday time, she took on the responsibility of educating her fellow workers in the areas she was managing so well, which included: invoice preparation, purchase orders, credit notes, stock receipts and transfers, all items which she is responsible for.

Bernice said, "Lanna transitioned to maintenance support, and then progressed to self-sufficiency within her employment and her file was closed; another success with a goal achieved. Lanna knows that she can always call me should a future need arise, or a new goal emerge. We still keep in contact and it's always great to hear how well things are going."

Lanna is still employed with McMunn and Yates and has recently celebrated her first anniversary with them. The manager and supervisors appreciate her work ethic, dedication, and skills. Lorelei

added, "Lanna's skills and self-confidence have consistently grown. Her colleagues really enjoy her sense of humour! Even though it took a while for her to feel comfortable dealing with the general public, she now easily works with our regular clients as well as new customers."

For Lanna, Partners in Employment provided the support she needed to develop relationships and skills that were outside of her comfort zone. She said, "I really like working here and hanging out with the staff and the customers." Her new-found independence also gave her something else pretty great, her own apartment, which she is very excited about.

Well done Lanna! 🎉



## A Good Partnership Leads To Employee Success

Partners in Employment in Moose Jaw has had a good partnership with Walmart Canada dating back to 2006 with many successful long-term job matches. Currently, three clients of Partners in Employment are working at Walmart under the supervision of the Assistant Manager, Rhonda Mayson. Rhonda is a proactive manager who truly enjoys working with individuals who experience disability. She expects the very best from her employees and is quick to address any issues that arise. She is also kind and supportive and encourages employees to grow and develop their skills in the workplace, while recognizing and valuing the contributions they are already making. She believes the key to leading her staff is to not overwhelm them with multiple tasks and instead to allow them to feel confident where they are before introducing new tasks and expectations. This style has been instrumental in ensuring successful employment outcomes for Partners in Employment's clients.

Stephanie Kutcher describes herself as



someone who has always struggled to meet milestones in her life. When she left public school, she began to explore employment opportunities, which led to her involvement with Partners in Employment. Stephanie started her involvement by participating in the New Opportunities for Work program obtaining a placement and then a casual position at Dollarama in Moose Jaw where she worked for three years.

With job development support Stephanie applied for a position at Walmart and was the successful candidate. After spending two years working in ladies wear, Stephanie started working under a new manager who encouraged her to expand her skills. With the support of her manager, Stephanie started working at the returns desk and in the

cosmetics department for break coverage until she became confident enough to work full shifts in these areas. The great thing is, Stephanie did not stop there; her manager continued to encourage her and now she is trained on cash registers, in the Photo Lab, and as a customer service associate!


Stephanie is extremely happy at Walmart. She said, "It is a happy and friendly place to work with no discrimination. And everyone is so kind to me." Her career planner, Doreen Gane said, "Her manager's training style is to break new skills down into small steps, something Stephanie really appreciates. There are such good natural supports in place."

Rhonda said, "I think I see success as a manager because I practice a hands-on approach, and I am sure to recognize both strengths and weaknesses. I think that's what helps my staff grow. I really enjoy taking the time to teach my staff, so they can learn to be confident and successful in life."

Doreen Gane, Stephanie's career planner with Partners in Employment is providing job maintenance and support to both Stephanie and her employer and checks in with Stephanie's manager every month to see how she is doing. Doreen is always able to meet with either of them to address any concerns they might have.

Partners in Employment provides Stephanie the right level of support at the right time for the right duration to ensure success, then fades out to foster independence and allow for the relationship to be a true employer/employee relationship.

Doreen said, "As Stephanie builds more independence and skill, the natural supports from the employer will be at the level where she no longer needs the support of Partners in Employment. We treasure the positive relationships we have with our job sites. In this case, I think Stephanie's story shows how one manager can recognize skill in someone and help them see success."

Stephanie has continued to flourish as an employee – a success that she attributes to the strong support system surrounding her. Stephanie says through the support of Partners in Employment and her manager she has gone from being timid to being self-assured not only in her workplace but also in her social life. Stephanie just celebrated her 4th anniversary with Walmart. Look how far she has come! 

## UPCOMING EVENTS!



Calling all superheroes! Looking for a new challenge this year? Wanting to make a positive impact in your community? Join us for Easter Seals™ Drop Zone 2019 on August 24th.

The event challenges citizens of Regina and area to become superheroes by raising \$1,500 in pledges, earning the opportunity to rappel down Hill Centre Tower II, and in turn, helping deserving children access Easter Seals™ programming.

Registration for Drop Zone 2019 is now open! Please visit [dropzoneyqr.ca](http://dropzoneyqr.ca) to sign up today.

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Celebrating 65 years of lasting memories for thousands of campers who experience disability!





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## The Swift Current Ability Bowl Sees Another Successful Year

In the Swift Current region, Ability Bowl is more than a day – it is a season! This year, Ability Bowl announced a rodeo theme and kicked off with the Burns & McDonnell Pool Tournament. Following that, Hockey Day in Canada was roped into coming to SaskAbilities! The fun and games continued with a 50/50 draw, where \$5,715 was awarded to one lucky winner and an equal amount was raised for Ability Bowl. Now that is a win! The annual Wing Night followed and was a real “wingding” with many in attendance and great funds raised.

On Saturday, April 27, the 32nd Annual Ability Bowl took its theme to a new level. It was a sight for sore eyes when 43 teams donned their ten-gallon hats and cowboy boots and burst out of the chute with over 1,500 pledges! Denim and western gear were the garb of the day for those rolling balls at the pins in their sights. Sponsorship, both cash and in-kind

and donations of prizes from 140 community partners provided the stock for the day! The value of the time so graciously given by our many volunteers was priceless. This year we raised a total of \$126,058 through cash and in-kind donations!

To the bowlers, sponsors, donors, volunteers and community members, the Swift Current Branch of SaskAbilities says thank you for the amazing support! 🤝



## JOIN SASKABILITIES TODAY!

I know my membership will help improve the quality of life for thousands of people experiencing disability in Saskatchewan.

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