



Welcome to the 10th anniversary of the Durham Region Employment Network's (DREN) Annual EmployABILITY Awards.

Over the past 10 years we have had the privilege of profiling and honouring many employment and partnership success stories. This has included a range of employers in Durham Region, agencies who support persons with barriers to employment, and most importantly courageous individuals who have achieved their goals and dreams. We have also honoured devoted citizens, media personnel and innovative programs in our community. Over the past few years we have partnered with the Region of Durham to recognize employers who have gone above and beyond with accessibility.

Throughout the years we have had a range of keynote speakers, special guests and Master of Ceremonies. It is important to acknowledge Ken Shaw of CTV news who has supported this event since inception! The Honourable David Onley has also visited the EmployABILITY Awards on more than one occasion and offered his support to DREN throughout the years. The EmployABILITY Awards have received support from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and more recently through special project funding from the Ontario Disability Supports Program. As well, special thanks go out to the many corporate sponsors who have supported the awards throughout the years!

Finally, this event has been the vision of the Board of Directors of DREN and embraced by our community. We feel the EmployABILITY Awards have allowed us to work towards and achieve this vision and profile many of the great success stories of our network.

This year's theme "Collectively Committed to Making a Difference" speaks to a community that fosters opportunity and nurtures success. Our nominees were welcomed by employers who saw possibilities, service providers who identified strengths and a community that put the focus on abilities. Congratulations to everyone for making a difference.

Warm regards,

Donna McAllister,
Executive Director

Lisa Yassein,
Chair, Board of Directors

ABOUT DREN

The Durham Region Employment Network (DREN), a not-for-profit agency, was established in 1993. The organization was developed in response to the need for a single, coordinated effort to unite and share information on the vast array of employment, education/training and community services and programs available in Durham. Our Vision Statement is: To lead the development of equal access and opportunity to employment resources and services by enriching community partnerships.

At DREN, we believe the experience and expertise of member organizations is our strength. We advise and refer hundreds of individuals to over 60 member agencies that offer employment services, education/training services and community support services across Durham. We offer our members innovative workforce solutions by hosting Job Developer Meetings, Network Meetings, workshops and a Job Posting Service. We promote members through community outreach.

DREN is governed by a Board of eleven dedicated, volunteer Directors and managed by a staff complement of four people:

DREN Board of Directors:

Lisa Yassein (Chairperson)
Leesa Venning (Vice Chairperson)
Karen Anderson (Secretary/Treasurer)
Gaynor Blake (Ex Officio)
Candice Bridgman
John Brudek

Paul Feldman
Jennifer Gardner
Deborah Hastings
Linda Higginson
Pauline Reid

DREN Staff:

Donna McAllister, Executive Director
Diana Fletcher, Administrative Assistant
Allyson Partridge, Event Coordinator
Evelyn Bowman, Office Assistant

We invite you to visit our website at www.dren.org and drop by our office at 60 Bond Street West in downtown Oshawa.



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1. THE ACCESSIBILITY AWARD

The Region of Durham's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) presents this award to individuals or businesses for achievements of accessibility. Honourees were chosen based on the success for the removal of barriers to ensure accessibility within their business.

PAUL FELDMAN

Nominated by Town of Ajax AAC

BIBLES FOR MISSIONS THRIFT STORE

Nominated by Municipality of Clarington AAC

DURHAM MEDICAL

Nominated by City of Oshawa AAC

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nominated by the Township of Scugog AAC

DURHAM REGION TRANSIT

Nominated by Durham Region AAC

2. THE VOLUNTEER CITIZENSHIP AWARD

This award is presented to recognize significant contributions in the area of volunteer work, leadership or staff achievement for persons with disabilities.

ALISON MCCULLOUGH

2011 Nominee

Nominated by: Tutorwiz Education Centre

Alison McCullough has been Community Development Librarian since 2007, when the position was first created at Oshawa Public Libraries. Since then Alison has shown exemplary leadership in the advocating for disabilities by developing workshops, building collections, providing tools, and finding partnerships. Some examples include:

Partnerships and Collections

- CNIB Partners Program – with funds from the ‘Friends of Oshawa Public Libraries’, members who declare a perceptual disability have access to the CNIB Library, either downloading from the digital library or accepting deliveries through the mail, routed to the library.
- DAISY Reader Lending Service – with funds from the Community Access Program (administered through DREN), DAISY Readers are available for loan at all branches.
- Autism Resources – Autism Ontario, Durham Chapter donates current autism resources on an ongoing basis to the library, who then makes it available to anyone in Durham Region through the InterLibrary Loan program.

Tools

- Close-captioned Television – with funds again from the ‘Friends of Oshawa Public Libraries’, a new CCTV was purchased for the McLaughlin Branch, as well as a touch-screen monitor for one of the catalogue workstations.
- Adaptive Software upgrades – with funds from the CAP program, adaptive software was added or upgraded on the accessible workstation.

Workshops

Under the banner “Building Community / Sharing Resources” Alison developed a series of workshops that was built on ‘in kind’ partnerships within the community. For disabilities, this included a Dragon Naturally Speaking demonstration (with Paul Feldman); Bone Density Information Session (with Canadian Paraplegic Association); Success and Learning Disabilities (with Oshawa Psychological Services and Learning Disabilities Association of Durham Region); and Diabetes (with the Oshawa Community Health Centre and Durham Diabetes Network); Epilepsy, and more. Further to this, guides to resources were also created and displayed in relevant locations all across Oshawa. For instance, Low Vision brochures are located in eye clinics, etc.

Alison is also known for the expos she runs; most recently ‘International Day of Persons with Disabilities Expo’, held in concurrence with the United Nations proclaimed date, last December. Twenty community agencies that support disabilities were able to showcase their services and programs to the public. Alison used this event to also bring information to co-workers.

Alison conducts library orientations to various community groups, both onsite and offsite. This includes the Leisure Club at the CMHA and Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work ‘Youth the Future’ programmes.

This passion is not just contained within her work life. Alison spends her holidays with her brother who is supported by Community Living in Kingston.

LIZ ONLEY-WISEMAN

2011 Nominee

Nominated by: Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences

Liz Onley-Wiseman has been Manager of Volunteer Services at Ontario Shores for almost five years, and during her time with the organization has been instrumental in supporting the development and facilitation of many programs and services for individuals with mental illness. Under her leadership, volunteers donated more than 10,000 hours of service to Ontario Shores in 2010.

Liz is very dedicated to assisting persons with disabilities and it is through her excellent work that programs such as the Ontario Shores Supported Employment Program (OSSEP) is able to manage their increased referrals and participation. OSSEP, under the umbrella of the Vocational Rehabilitation department works in concert with Durham District School Board to provide educational supports to both inpatient and outpatients patients over 21 years old. Without the support of Liz and the volunteer services who provide tutoring supports, the program would not be able to operate or expand in the future.

Other notable contributions Liz has championed at Ontario Shores include opening an on-site gently used clothing store supported through volunteers and patients and has worked diligently to expand the hospital gift store leading to patient vocational programs geared towards transferable work related skills development such as customer service.

Liz is committed to making a positive difference at Ontario Shores and through her work with volunteers models the belief that learning, growing and discovering is all part of a patient's journey to recovery.

Liz recently won the 2011 Maralyn MacKenzie Achievement Award for Excellence in Volunteer Resource Management through the Durham Region Association for Volunteer Administration (DRAVA) and is an excellent candidate for DREN's 2011 Volunteer Citizenship Award.

3. THE MEDIA AWARD

This award recognizes a person or organization for presenting a relevant message to the public and promoting awareness of the services and supports that are available for persons with disabilities.

**PAUL DOBBS, JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY
2011 Winner**

It is not easy to ignore the social media revolution. Media is no longer defined by print, radio and television and it is no longer only delivered by seasoned professionals. Social media is the new media and is providing the opportunity for those with limited resources to broadcast their message to a vast audience. In 2006 Times magazine named the person of the year: YOU, in part because they found that people were using social media to share their experiences and promote their messages. In effect social media became the people media. Times wrote that the people media was about “helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.”

With this in mind when choosing the winner of the media award we went to YouTube. A video sharing and social networking site it is the second largest search engine worldwide. We typed in Employment AND Disability AND Durham and the first video that popped up was entitled “Northern Lights Canada working with DREN”. The video was produced by Paul Dobbs. Paul Dobbs has been developing videos for the DREN gala for years as well as for the John Howard Society. This work is time consuming, labour intensive and demands a creative touch which Paul Dobbs delivers with a true passion for the subject matter. For his unwavering support, countless volunteer hours and talent Paul Dobbs deserves this award for broadcasting important messages and sharing people’s success stories so eloquently.

4. THE INNOVATION AWARD

This award is presented to recognize, an innovative program, special project or new venture that removes barriers to employment

JOHNATHON BOVILLE

2011 Winner

Nominated By: Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre

Michelle Campbell has been working with Johnathon Boville for 3 years now assisting him in finding suitable employment as a chef that will allow him to learn on the job as well as an employer that is patient and understanding.

Johnathon is very active in his community volunteering his time for fundraising events for the youth and schools and is an active BIA member. He has created and built on his own the largest Kettle Cooker in Ontario and you will see him at many local events throughout Durham Region selling kettle corn.

Johnathon is very proud of his success; he has been able to follow his dream of working as a chef, owning a successful catering company and continues to grow his new venture Great Canadian Popcorn Company. Johnathon is always thinking of new ways to grow and reach out to the community.. His success demonstrates to other individuals how they can overcome their barriers and could think outside the box of being an employee to being a business owner.

5. The EmployABILITY AWARD

Three awards under this category will be presented to an employee, employer and agency based on the following criteria:

- An individual who, despite a substantial barrier to employment, successfully obtained and maintained competitive employment.
 - Businesses and employers for their efforts in removing barriers and hiring people with disabilities.
 - Service providers for their commitment to move persons with disabilities from job preparation to job placements.
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DAVID VELLA

Lakeridge Health

Nominated by: Cheryl Cove, Northern Lights Canada

David came to Northern Lights Canada as a client in April 2010. During the job development phase of the program employment options were discussed between David, the NLC Employer Liaison and Case Manager, topping David's employment idea list was a 'porter' at Lakeridge Health. NLC Case Manager and Employer Liaison both supported the idea knowing that this job entailed a variety of 'duties' during a shift. This variability would provide David with the diversity to maintain his focus on the job.

Northern Lights Employer Liaison Bev Sirrs had strong contacts with Lakeridge Health Oshawa and approached them regarding David's skill set and challenges. Some of David's strongest skills are his communication and interpersonal skills. This skill set appealed to Lakeridge Health and based on previous positive experience they were willing to support David.

David has taken his new job very seriously, he states he arrives on time for each shift and willingly takes any shift offered. He even enjoys the solitude of the nightshift when these come up. David enjoys the people he works with, "they are always nice and supportive when I have questions". He stated he feels good about his work performance and recently had a 'spot inspection' by his supervisor who readily praised his hard work. David remains very enthusiastic about this job; he recognized that maintaining a job was difficult due to his disability, with the variety; this job is everything that he had hoped for. This experience increases his confidence and self-worth reinforcing the positive experience of paid employment.

Regular contact with David's employer has meant that NLC could witness from the beginning that David was working hard. Doing a good job was important to David, the employer recognized this and has praised David's good work ethic.

DOUG NOTTON
Walmart (Bowmanville)
Nominated By: Bev Sirrs, Northern Lights Canada

Doug has been participating in vocational programs at Northern Lights Canada for over ten years. Initially Doug participated in the Bridge to Employment program in order to secure employment within the community. Northern Lights worked with Doug to help him secure a job at Walmart.

Doug really loves every aspect of his job. When asked what he loves most about his work, without hesitation, he answered, “greeting the customers”. He also said that this is the best job that he has ever had! He enjoys having the responsibility of having a regular job, and feels that it gives him purpose.

Doug said that his job has greatly increased his feelings of self-worth and happiness. He is a respected part of a team, and knowing this makes him feel valued and helps to make him a dedicated employee.

The employers were in constant contact with Doug and Northern Lights Canada while the hiring process was being carried out. Once Doug was hired he had to go through some testing, of which the staff made some accommodations so Doug would feel supported.

Securing the job and building a solid working relationship with the employer were the stepping stones towards success for Doug. He received intensive on-the-job training, which allowed him to learn the job while being fully supported. Doug has been working successfully since November 2010.

JASON HANCOCK

ATL Industries

Nominated By: Kristina Kalm & Jackie McGregor, Northern Lights Canada

Jason met with Vocational Specialist Kristina Kalm and Employer Liaison Jackie McGregor of Northern Lights Canada. A face to face interview quickly revealed that Jason was someone that was obviously motivated to be a contributing member of his community but that it would take time get him to a sustainable level of independence. It was September 2010 when Jason's resume was submitted to ATL Industries in response to a job ad for a general labourer.

Jason and Jackie attended an interview at ATL with Bill Beaudry. Bill seemed to take to Jason right away and could see his potential. Bill was happy to agree to a two week job trial to give Jason an opportunity to see if he would like the work and to ensure that he would be a good fit for ATL. Although things haven't gone completely without incident at ATL, Bill and the team have worked hard to accommodate Jason making him feel like "one of the guys".

Bill and his team are a shining example of an employer that is willing to work with disabled individuals and to ensure that they are accommodated and ultimately remain successful. Jason has a long term career at ATL and has realized his dream of obtaining meaningful employment come true.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

Town of Ajax

Nominated By: Bev Sirrs, Northern Lights Canada

When Michael first came to Northern Lights Canada, he was a student at Durham College. Northern Lights was asked to assist him to find part time work so that he could begin to build his skills and experiences.

Northern Lights assisted Michael to apply for a permanent (part-time) position with the Town of Ajax and he was the successful candidate. Northern Lights provided on-site job coaching which was instrumental in assisting Michael to increase productivity and even be considered for his current position.

Michael is a very dedicated employee and has been able to take on extra shifts as employer / co-workers know how reliable he is and can always count on him. Michael is more outgoing and comfortable in his work setting and he definitely feels like he has accomplished a significant goal.

This job and the steps along the way have definitely improved Michael's self-worth. His gradual success and support offered have assisted.

SAMANTHA REID

A Stone's Throw Pub & Grill

Nominated By: Nancy Traviss, Community Living Oshawa/Clarington

Samantha has participated in several placements with Community Living Oshawa/Clarington. Samantha's experiences have given her more confidence in herself and her abilities. Samantha accepted a position as a cleaner at A Stones Throw Pub and Grill in Bowmanville. Community Living provided job coaching and monitored her on site progress.

After the owners of A Stones Throw Pub and Grill heard about the employment supports offered through Community Living Oshawa/Clarington, they approached the agency looking for a cleaner. The employer has welcomed their new employees with a positive attitude and they are happy to have them as part of their team.

The restaurant owners, kitchen, and wait staff have all been very supportive and helpful. Samantha loves the hours she works as this allows her to continue her volunteer work and other activities in the community.

The job has given Samantha more confidence in herself and her abilities. Samantha's positive attitude adds to the friendly and inviting atmosphere at the pub.

Our Special Thanks To:

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Durham Region Local Training Board

Durham Region Police Services Board

Speakers:

Minister Madeleine Meilleur - Guest Speaker

Mayor John Henry – Guest Speaker

Don Pitman – Program MC

Ken Shaw - Awards MC

Tim McCallum – Guest Performer/Speaker

Volunteers:

Jacqueline McGill – presentations

DREN Board - Setup

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THANK YOU TO OUR DREN BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF