

Introduction



At the Durham Region Employment Network (DREN), we believe in equal access and opportunity to employment for all. By enriching community partnerships, we work towards achieving this objective.

As such, we are thrilled to once again host the EmployABILITY Awards Gala tonight – Monday, May 25th at the Tosca Banquet Hall in Oshawa. This is a very special evening that celebrates successes in employment for people with disabilities and recognizes the employers, organizations, and community for their contributions and support.

As you read about the nominees and their stories, and view the presentations this evening, you will be inspired by the determination of these individuals. We hope that you will leave tonight with a sense of pride towards our community that fosters these successful outcomes.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, which appears to read "Carol Edwards".

Carol Edwards,
Executive Director



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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.

Accessibility Awards will be presented to:

Bowmanville GoodLife Fitness

- Nominated by the Municipality of Clarington AAC for removing barriers within their fitness facility. Measures were taken to provide exceptional service to members with disabilities.

Corporation of the City of Oshawa

- Nominated by the City of Oshawa AAC for a long list of accessibility achievements. These successes include both physical accessibility measures as well as providing specialized services to people with disabilities.

Kathleen Matinlassi

- Nominated by the Township of Scugog AAC for special efforts that enhanced the quality of life for residents at the local nursing home. These efforts also brought the business community of Port Perry together for this accessibility achievement.

Lafontaine Trading Post

- Nominated by the Town of Whitby AAC for enhancing accessibility at their downtown store. Removing this physical barrier was a community minded decision that allows access for all.

2. The Innovation Award

This award is presented to recognize an innovative program, special project or new venture that assists clients with barriers to employment in their quest to obtain employment.

The submission should outline how the person in charge identified a need in a group or area of employment and how the program was developed to meet that need. The impact of the project must be clear. For example, the project's availability to people with barriers to employment, if the project allows people to gain self-esteem and achieve personal goals, if it helps other agencies to increase their understanding and knowledge of persons with barriers to employment, etc.

Eligible projects must be underway or completed at the time of the submission. The project must be new or innovative – it cannot be a slight modification to an already existing or past program; and the project cannot have been previously submitted for this award.

2009 Winner:	Terri Gray, Dewey's Café
Nominated by:	Claire Barriage, Community Living Oshawa Clarington

Dewey's Café (located in the Bowmanville Public Library and named after the Famous Dewey Decimal System) offers great coffee, muffins, and cookies, but more importantly a sense of self worth.

A team headed by Terri Gray identified a void in the Clarington community as there was a lack of opportunity for individuals with intellectual disabilities to gain employment skills and training in a supportive environment. Successful applicants to Dewey's Café are interviewed and hired for a one year contract, where they will be assisted to operate a viable community based business as they develop skills relevant for future job opportunities. All this is made possible with thanks to a joint partnership with the Clarington Project (an initiative of Community Living Oshawa Clarington), the Clarington Public Library, and the Municipality of Clarington.

Since opening in January 2006, the café has employed more than 25 people among who several have gone onto competitive employment while others have

decided to pursue Post Secondary education. The café has become an intricate part of the downtown core and a viable business with access to over 34,000 library members and over 650 Municipality staff. So many of those that have passed through the doors leave with new found skills, friendships and community connections they did not have before.

This endeavour could not have happened without the innovative “out of the box” thinking when a need was identified and many people brainstormed to make the business a reality for those facing too many barriers to mention.

3. The Volunteer Citizenship Award

Two awards will be presented to recognize significant contributions in the areas of volunteer work, leadership or staff achievement for persons with disabilities. Any person associated with one of our member agencies is eligible whether that person is a paid employee, administrator or volunteer.

A nomination should outline why the individual’s contribution to the agency has been outstanding, mentioning specific examples. Suitable candidates might include:

- a. Staff member with a long history of service.
- b. Individual who has made personal sacrifices on behalf of clients.
- c. Administrator who has motivated staff to persevere under adverse conditions.
- d. Staff member who has demonstrated exemplary conduct when dealing with clients (patient manner, providing for their needs while making them feel respected and comfortable.)
- e. Staff member who has exceeded the obligations of daily duties to meet the needs of clients (or helping them to find an appropriate referral agency), keeping the clients’ interests as a priority and showing concern for the clients’ ultimate well being.
- f. Individual who has made an effort to look for the latest trends and learning styles in order to enhance their ability to communicate with and help clients who have different disabilities.

2009 Winner: Miriam Beach
Nominated by: Epilepsy Durham Region

On behalf of Epilepsy Durham Region, we would like to nominate Ms. Miriam Beach for the Volunteer Citizenship Award for her outstanding contribution to students living with epilepsy or a seizure disorder.

Each spring Ms. Beach hosts information sessions through our Racing Against Drugs awareness program. During this week long festival, Ms. Beach provides 3,500 grade 5 students with knowledge about epilepsy and how they can provide emergency support to someone experiencing a seizure. Her 'Pit Stops' are always the exciting place to be, she incorporates her sense of humour, nursing and ski instructor expertise to make the sessions with students fun and informative. Her no nonsense and positive attitude enlightens and empowers children to achieve improved self-esteem and challenges young minds to learn more about epilepsy and seizures disorders.

Ms. Beach has been a volunteer for five years with Epilepsy Durham Region, her tenure has included many leadership roles among them providing training for new volunteers and hosting various outreach and educational sessions.

It is with pride that we nominate Ms. Beach, and an honour to include her amongst the friends of Epilepsy Durham Region we are indebted to her generosity.

2009 Winner: Frank Murphy
Nominated by: Terry Woods, Head Injury Association of Durham

Mr. Murphy has been the Executive Director of the Head Injury Association of Durham (HIAD) since January 1991. HIAD is a charitable, non-profit organization whose members are residents of Durham Region who have experienced brain injuries; along with their families, friends and others that cope with daily life experiencing traumatic residual effects. HIAD's mission statement is what Frank Murphy works at relentlessly on a daily basis, "to enrich the lives of people of Durham Region particularly those who live with the effects of brain injuries, their families, friends, and communities."

Through the years, Frank Murphy has been involved with many different committees and agencies relating to brain injury. Some of these organizations have come to pass, but he still perseveres. Mr. Murphy has educated primary and

secondary school students within Durham Region about safety prevention numerous times through awareness talks. In July 1999, Frank obtained Ministry of Health funding to hire two community support staff. This support advanced his endeavours to work with individuals with a brain injury and their caregivers striving to meet these individuals' desired personal goals. In February 2006, after years of working with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Frank finally obtained the funding for the association to relocate into the long sought after disability-accessible offices and day activity program area for people living with brain injuries. This day service is very popular and has been remarkable in enriching the daily lives of hundreds of individuals furthering their level of self-esteem, respect, and comfort with themselves, replacing former feelings of vulnerability and desperation.

Frank Murphy continues to maintain HIAD's clients' health and interests his priority providing the *results*, not just communicating the concerns, for clients' "ultimate well being." Since 1991, Mr. Murphy has coordinated monthly support group meetings for survivors and their families. Through his efforts, support groups are now available in Ajax, Uxbridge, and Port Perry for people in the north Durham area. Some of the committees and agencies Mr. Murphy has been connected to are: Safety on Wheels, Community Injury Prevention Coalition, Safe and Sober Waterways, Safe Cell Phone Use Subcommittee, bike and road safety committees, Durham Safety, Ontario Brain Injury Association, Operation Look Out, Head Injury Association of the Eastern Regions, Head Injury Planning and Advisory Group, Central-East Acquired Brain Injury Network. The list goes on. He connects people to service agencies and supports including O.D.S.P., Ontario Works, employment and health services, and the like. Frank Murphy has accomplished tremendous results in his efforts to improve the quality of life for people with acquired brain injuries. He chairs committees, counsels survivors and their families, advocates for the individual's basic rights for food, shelter, job retraining, and income replacement. He maintains the operation of HIAD including the budget to the ministry, and he is accountable to the HIAD Board of Directors.

Christmas does not go by without Frank as Santa nor July without Frank flipping burgers and hot dogs at the annual HIAD picnic. He is consistently trying new ideas to raise funds and to educate for brain injury awareness. Mr. Murphy's title as Executive Director does have a written job description, but his efforts, personal sacrifices, and sacrifices made by his own family, to enriching the lives of all individuals who have reached out to him have gone far beyond the guidelines.

There are so many reasons why Frank Murphy should be the recipient of the 2009 Volunteer Citizenship Award, but I ask you to focus on two:

1. He is long overdue for this recognition.
2. Through Frank Murphy's efforts in the community, people living with acquired brain injury and other disabilities in Durham are taking their rightful place as fully contributing citizens; they live and respond to equality and respect.

4. The EmployABILITY Award

Three awards under this category will be presented to local employers who were instrumental in leading a person with a disability from job preparation to competitive employment. The employer will be recognized for demonstrated commitment to removing barriers to employment and assisting the client with his or her employment goal of gaining competitive employment and economic independence.

A nomination should describe the successful competitive employment of persons with disabilities and must include:

- A description of the impact on the worker's standard or quality of living
- Any changes in self-sufficiency, social life or improvement in self-esteem
- Any accommodations and how they were achieved (e.g. providing adaptive technology, eliminating barriers - physical, communication, attitudinal, cultural or systemic, offering flexible hours when needed, etc.).
- An explanation of why the partnership between the employer, agency and the client should be included.

Awards will be given to employer, agency and the client based on the following criteria:

- a. The partnership should have eliminated or reduced a clearly defined barrier to employment.
- b. As a result of the partnership, the employee should have gained work experience and remained with the same employer for at least 3 months.
- c. Employee should be receiving a competitive wage.

2009 EmployABILITY Award Stories

Nominee #1:	Rosemary Allison
Employer:	Tim Hortons, Oshawa
Nominated by:	John Brudek, Heather Cleveland, Challenging Directions Enterprises, WMHC

Rosemary has been participating in rehabilitation and vocational programs at Whitby Mental Health Centre for over ten years. For the majority of this time, she had no desire to secure employment within the community. She reached a turning point, however, in 2007. Rosemary was offered an opportunity to work at Dave's Diner, a transitional training program. This was Rosemary's very first paid job. She was supported by her vocational instructor, and was introduced to safe food handling techniques, customer service skills, and proper cleaning procedures. She did well in this type of work.

In March 2007, Rosemary went for an interview at Tim Hortons, north Oshawa location. She completed a two week job trial, and was offered a permanent part-time position at the completion of the two weeks. It has now been over a year, and Rosemary continues to be a valued employee of Tim Hortons. She has overcome many obstacles, and gained many more transferable skills. Rosemary is 44 years old. To enter the workforce at this age is courageous and a testament to the strong woman Rosemary truly is.

Rosemary really loves the hands on aspect of her job – literally! When asked what she loves about her work, without hesitation, she answered, “doing the dishes”. She enjoys having the responsibility of holding down a job, and the money is always nice.

Rosemary said that her job at Tim Hortons has greatly increased her feeling of self worth. She is part of a team, and knowing this makes her feel valued and important.

Rosemary has a very unique personality that brings something special to the workplace. She has a very good working relationship with her supervisor, and is incredibly reliable. Her peers can see that she values her job, and this can only influence the work team in a positive way.

To accommodate Rosemary, the employer allowed her to complete a two week job trial. After deemed a good fit, she was hired for part-time hours. In addition,

Rosemary relies on public transportation, so her schedule was created with available bus routes in mind.

The employer makes Rosemary feel like a valued member of the Tim Hortons team each day she is there working. They are happy to have Rosemary there, and continue to welcome our clients to apply for available positions.

Securing the job trial, placement, and building a solid working relationship with the employer were the first steps towards success for Rosemary. She received intensive on-the-job training, thus allowing her to learn the job while being fully supported. She continues to receive weekly support from this agency.

Nominee #2:	Robert Berger
Employer:	Tim Hortons, Oshawa
Agency Name:	John Brudek, Challenging Directions Enterprises, WMHC

Robert has secured employment for the first time in twenty-five years and has been working competitively for ten months now.

Robert has been overcoming mental health issues during his recovery over the past twenty-five years. With a positive outlook, he has overcome the mental and physical challenges to get up everyday and participate in the workforce. He mentions that he has now beaten the stigma of mental illness successfully by working in a good job. In his recovery Robert states that patience has definitely been a virtue.

Robert has stated that the greatest part of his work is just having a full-time job and that is rewarding enough. He states that he feels more like everyone else in society by going to work every day. Robert mentions that he is now contributing to society as opposed to depending on society to support him. He is not focusing on his mental health difficulties but on his recovery with the improvement with his overall self esteem.

Robert now feels that his peers see him as a true person. Finally, Robert emphasizes that it is great to earn competitive wages. He inspires his co-workers! They see how much pride he has in his work, and it has a positive impact on the team as a whole.

Robert received on-the-job training from his employer, after he completed a two-week job trial, as accommodation. They also provided him with the necessary safety equipment.

Robert feels like part of the Tim Hortons team everyday he is there working. They are very happy to have him as part of their team, and feel that he inspires his co-workers. Tim Hortons encourages our clients to apply for available positions.

Letting Robert know that we had the confidence in him to enter the workforce after twenty-five years was the first step to success. Securing the job placement and building a solid working relationship with the employer were the following steps. He received on-the-job training by his employer and vocational instructor, thus allowing him to learn the job training while being completely supported. Robert is still supported at Tim Hortons on a weekly basis by this agency.

Nominee #3:	Andrew Cripps
Employer:	Tim Hortons, Port Perry
Nominated by:	Heather Cleveland, John Brudek, Challenging Directions Enterprises, WMHC

Andrew began attending Challenging Directions Enterprise in 2005. He participated in the woodworking program as well as production assembly, gardening, and welding. He was very pleased to be part of the program and Andrew didn't express in obtaining employment within the community. That all changed in November 2007. Andrew approached his vocational instructor about the possibility of exploring work opportunities. The two worked on his résumé and his job readiness skills. Within a couple of months, an opportunity arose in Port Perry. Andrew was offered a position as a maintenance worker at Tim Hortons.

Andrew is responsible for keeping the lobby of the store clean, as well as the parking lot, two days a week. Andrew is an excellent worker who takes great pride in his job. His supervisor, Judy, is very happy with his job performance, and always has positive things to say about him. Andrew has been with Tim Hortons for over a year.

Andrew really enjoys having structure in his life, and working at Tim Hortons provides that for him. Andrew is happy with the money he earns from his job, as well as the opportunity to be part of a team.

The job has definitely improved Andrew's self worth. Being able to say you have a job that you really like helps. Andrew enjoys being at work, and says it helps promote his mental health.

Andrew is one of those employees that can always be counted on. He is an excellent team player who is ready to help out when needed. His supervisor, Judy, has much admiration for his work ethic.

Tim Hortons has been very accommodating with Andrew's hours. He relies on public transportation, so his manager Judy, has tailored his schedule around the bus availability.

Andrew is an excellent worker, and states that he feels valued. He is part of the Tim Hortons team 100%.

Securing the job placement and building a solid working relationship with the employer was the first step towards success for Andrew. He received intensive on-the-job training by his vocational instructor, thus allowing him to learn the job while being fully supported. When Andrew began to feel more confident his instructor gradually reduced his time spent on the job with him. He has recently passed his one year anniversary at Tim Hortons. He continues to receive support he needs from this agency, as well as his co-workers and supervisors at Tim Hortons.

Nominee #4:	Janet Dick
Employer:	Royal Bank Financial Group
Business Liaison:	Kathleen Denehar
Nominated by:	Faelyne Templer, Avocation Employment Alliance of Durham

Janet has displayed a singular determination to succeed. Janet's disability causes her tremendous pain due to the arthritis in her knees and hands as well as fibromyalgia. Yet she sought the support she needed to upgrade her computer and customer service skills to be able to seek the job that she loves – a customer service specialist at Royal Bank. Janet works part time, has a special stool and uses back support when she sits. With her cane close by, Janet can access any area of the bank, and has worked with the bank's job accommodations specialists to ensure that she has the accommodations she requires to be successful on the job.

Janet loves helping people. Janet is an extremely generous individual who is committed to making a difference in other people's lives. Her goal every day is to create a bright spot for her clients through her interaction with them.

Janet shared a story about one of her clients that truly exemplifies her commitment to customer service. A client approached the banking counter, and began writing a note to Janet. Janet recognized that the person was Deaf, and began signing to that person. The client was so pleased, and felt so valued after that interaction, and made a point of telling Janet how impressed they were that RBC had a teller fluent in ASL. Janet's greatest delight is seeing her customers smile.

When Janet came to Avocation, she was unsure if she could be successful in the job market. She felt her skills were outdated, and was afraid that she had nothing to offer to companies.

Being hired by RBC was a turning point for Janet. As connected as Janet was to the community through her volunteer work, the job at the bank helped her to feel even more a part of the social fabric. Janet has been invited on several occasions to be a motivational speaker and has often said that she never dreamed that she would someday be asked to share her experiences to motivate other people!

Janet has a disability that is visible. With her cane and special chair, clients and staff know that Janet is a person with a disability. This has helped them to increase their celebration of diversity, and has often helped Janet's clients feel at ease when they have canes and walkers.

RBC has always had an outstanding commitment to accessibility, and Janet's presence at the branch level helps make that commitment a reality for staff and customers.

Janet was able to work with a dedicated Job Accommodations team to ensure that she received the accommodations she needed. She uses an altered workstation to prevent aggravating her arthritis and fibromyalgia.

RBC has consistently demonstrated its commitment to accessibility. Janet was hired through a diversity initiative called "Project Hired" that was dedicated to increase the number of employees with disabilities. Janet has always been treated as part of the team, and her special talents are consistently celebrated.

Our main role has been one of cheerleader for Janet. Janet's drive and determination are the characteristics that have brought her the success she now enjoys. RBC provided the accommodations, and the OT assessment. Avocation has worked with RBC's diversity team for a number of years and we have always been so pleased with how much they 'walk the walk'.

Nominee #5:	John Hill
Employer:	Home Depot
Business Liaison:	Jackie Madore
Nominated by:	Kristina Kalm, Northern Lights Canada

John is a wonderful, kind and talented man with a great sense of humour. He was very motivated to return to work and felt that his anxiety was blocking his return. John started working with ODSP Employment Supports (ODSP – ES) and Northern Lights Canada (NLC) in August of 2007.

Prior to his journey to Northern Lights Canada, John took part in a program which encouraged participants to challenge themselves. He met another member who was in a choir group and expressed his interest in joining. John was accepted without any formal music training and has been there since March of 2007. He has gained self-confidence via singing small solo parts as well as designing the spring and Christmas concert programs each year. He stated that it is a great honour for him – to contribute and be part of a group that brings entertainment to others. He said it makes his heart soar! Joining the choir was his first challenge. His next challenge was to re-enter the workforce.

John was subsequently moved into our job development service and began working with Bev Richards on his employment quest. John came to us with work experience as an Art Director in Merchandising Services. A position became open at Home Depot in the Décor Sales Department. He persevered in his quest to obtain competitive employment and was successful in the interview! He began work on Dec. 8, 2007. John is still at the Home Depot and is a very diligent and dedicated worker who exhibits wonderful customer service abilities.

John enjoys working with people, and the opportunity to do so, while at the same time, discussing décor and design appeals to him. He has a warm, caring and sensitive nature which customers find welcoming, assuring and trustworthy. He derives pleasure from assisting others and enjoys the interaction with his fellow co-workers.

John feels that his self-confidence has improved and he exhibits a brighter outlook on life. Even though he may have challenging times, as we all do, he still views each day and new opportunity as a gift.

John expressed keen motivation to return to work. NLC helped him to establish a list of potential employers and initiated the job development process. NLC assisted in arranging the interview at Home Depot, and attended with John. It seemed to those working with John, that in addition to determining his employment goal, he needed assistance with recognizing or recapturing his worth. He has many skills and strengths to offer and just needed a little assistance and support in order to regain his confidence in his existing abilities. The NLC job developer indicated that there would be ongoing support and service provision via NLC should it be necessary. This included job coaching, as well as ongoing follow-ups to assist with solving any issues on the job.

Nominee #6:	Alana Ibbitson
Employer:	Rose of Durham
Business Liaison:	Francis Slater
Nominated by:	Claire Barriage, Community Living Oshawa Clarington

Alana was referred to Community Living Oshawa Clarington (CLOC) in March 2004 by the ODSP Employment Support Program. Alana had no previous employment and had just graduated from high school where she had completed some co-op placements. Alana was extremely shy and very unsure of what she would like to do. Alana required motivation throughout her journey in finding employment due to her minimal experience in obtaining employment. She would also require accommodations such as, her need for job coaching, at the beginning of placement, to expose her to a routine pattern of duties.

We were able to secure part-time employment at Rose of Durham in October 2004. She was hired as an office cleaner. Rose of Durham accepted Alana right from the beginning and was willing to make any accommodations needed to ensure success. Alana was supported to face them and overcome the barriers with little difficulty. Alana is able to receive criticism and learn from the suggestions.

Over the years when Alana and I would discuss her dreams for the future, she would talk about living on her own one day. Through the continued support from her co-workers and CLOC staff she is working towards more independence and would like to find her own place in the next 6 to 12 months.

Alana really enjoys seeing the babies and children that attend the program; she also enjoys vacuuming and emptying the dishwasher. She loves knowing that

Francis is always there when she needs her. But most of all she enjoys the independence and purpose employment has given her.

Finally, Alana feels part of something important and she enjoys being part of her community. She has a strong commitment to the Rose of Durham and to all of the friends she has made there.

Initially Rose of Durham was looking for a cleaner to come in before or after business hours; because this was not suitable for Alana they immediately made accommodations to the work hours. They provided Alana with job coaching when learning a new task and accommodated her need for any time off and allowed her to flex hours if needed. We continued to support Alana to ensure her success at Rose of Durham.

Right from the beginning Rose of Durham welcomed Alana as part of their staff team. She is included in office gatherings (farewell parties, Christmas, etc.). We work with Francis to help Alana when she needs Job Coaching for new job skills.

To ensure employment success we relied on open communication between the employer, employee and job coach. It is only with this tool, we are able to ensure success for Alana and the Rose of Durham team. We continue to be a liaison between family and employer and employee.

Nominee #7:	Peter Jessen
Employer:	Tim Hortons, Port Perry
Nominated by:	Heather Cleveland, John Brudek, Challenging Directions Enterprises, WMHC

Peter returned to full-time employment after not working competitively for twenty-two years. Peter has been involved in woodworking and property maintenance training programs at Challenging Directions Enterprises, at the Whitby Mental Health Centre over a number of years. He expressed an interest in competitive employment, and when he learned about the opportunity to work at Tim Hortons, he was thrilled. Peter went for his interview and the rest is history! He now travels four times a week, from Whitby to Port Perry to a job he takes great pride in.

When asked what he loves about his job, Peter stated, “The people. I love working with the people, meeting customers, helping them out. It’s the perfect job for me.” He also likes the responsibilities he has, when it comes to keeping the store clean. He takes care of the interior and the exterior of the building; this

entails mopping, sweeping, wiping down tables and chairs, and emptying all of the garbage cans.

Peter feels really good about himself. He likes being like “everybody else”, by going out to work everyday, and earning a living. He enjoys working out in the community, and plans on being at Tim Hortons for a very long time.

Peter makes a very positive impact on his workplace. His co-workers can’t help but notice what a dedicated worker he is. He is someone that can be relied on to help out in whatever area he is needed in.

Tim Hortons has been very accommodating with Peter’s hours. He relies on public transportation, so his manager Judy, has tailored his schedule around the bus availability. She is also very accommodating about his hours when Peter has medical appointments, and so on.

Peter is a valued and respected member of the Tim Hortons team. His manager, Judy, is quick to compliment his work performance, and she is very happy to have him as an employee. Judy has been hiring people with disabilities for a number of years, and she plans on continuing to do so. Peter eliminates the stigma of mental illness – he has one – but that doesn’t stop him from being a contributing member of the workforce.

Securing the job placement and building a solid working relationship with the employer was the first step towards success for Peter. He received on-the-job training by his vocational instructor, thus allowing him to learn the job training while being fully supported. Peter was quick to pick up the duties, of the job. Today, Peter is training others at Tim Hortons. He continues to receive the support he needs from the agency, as well as his co-workers and manager.

Nominee #8:	Kamal Kishor
Employer:	Tim Hortons, Oshawa
Nominated by:	Heather Cleveland, John Brudek, Challenging Directions Enterprises, WMHC

Kamal represents a unique situation. Kamal actually travels to his job at Tim Hortons from Whitby Mental Health Centre where he is an inpatient.

As part of his recovery, Kamal initially participated in vocational training programs at Challenging Directions Enterprise. Kamal had experience in woodworking and

property maintenance programs from September 2007 through to July 2008. Kamal's progress was excellent at Challenging Directions.

On July 30, 2008, Kamal began a support employment placement at Tim Hortons North Oshawa. Since that time Kamal has continued to work at Tim Hortons and has been given more work responsibilities as time has gone on. Kamal overcomes the stigma and challenges of mental illness, and being an impatient, by participating in the workforce on a daily basis.

Kamal states he enjoys the working environment and it makes him happy. He feels that keeping busy at work is a very positive step in his recovery. Kamal really enjoys the duties of his job. He was first hired to clean the parking lot; today that is only one of his responsibilities. Kamal takes care of the exterior of the store, as well as the interior. He empties the garbage cans, cleans the bathrooms, sweeps and mops the floor, cleans dishes, and wipes down the tables and chairs.

Kamal's confidence level has grown since he has been working at Tim Hortons. He feels good about having a job to go to, and is proud of the work he does.

Kamal has made a difference in the workplace. Everyday he is helping to eliminate the stigma of mental illness. His peers, as well as his supervisors, respect the man that he is, and the work ethic that he brings to the job. He is a great asset to the Tim Hortons team.

Kamal completed a three day job trial – that was enough time for the employer to determine he was a great fit for the position. Training was provided by the employer. Tim Hortons is very accommodating when Kamal needs time off for appointments, etc.

Kamal is a valued member of the Tim Hortons team. He is often complimented on his work, and his manager continues to increase his hours. Kamal is an excellent 'ambassador' to our agency. He has shown Tim Hortons that our clients have the potential to be amazing workers if given the opportunity.

Securing the job placement and building a solid working relationship with the employer was the first step towards success for Kamal. He received on-the-job training by his vocational instructor, thus allowing him to learn the job while being fully supported. When Kamal began to feel more confident his instructor gradually reduced his time spent on the job with him.

Nominee #9:	Randy Marryatt
Employer:	Thornton Arms Pub and Grill
Business Liaison:	Rhonda Saunderson
Nominated by:	Kim Prinzen, Region of Durham – Ontario Works

Randy was referred to the Ontario Works Employment Placement program for his first assessment on May 18, 2006. He was looking for work and had not worked since 1994 and had been in receipt of Ontario Works assistance since 1996. During this time he battled substance abuse, health issues (extreme weight loss) and mental health issues. He was referred to the workabilities workshop to work on his presentation and interview skills. His appearance was addressed, where he had his hair cut and learned how to put his clothes together. He was ready and motivated to work. Randy's transformation was quite remarkable.

Randy was referred to Thornton Arms Restaurant in Oshawa by his Employment Placement Consultant, Kim Prinzen. He met with the owner, Rhonda Saunderson, and he started working there under a six month training plan on June 27, 2006. Randy continues to work at Thornton Arms; he has been employed there for almost three years now and is a valued member of their team.

Randy enjoys the variety of his job at Thornton Arms Pub and Grill. He is responsible for cleaning the restaurant, food preparation and washing the dishes. He enjoys the staff and appreciates the feeling of being part of the Thornton Arms family.

Randy's self worth has increased exceptionally, he is proud of the work he does at Thornton Arms and more importantly he is very proud he has sustained his employment for this length of time. He has always enjoyed going to work and always arrives early for his shift.

The employer said, "Randy has made a difference in the workplace in many ways. First of all, he is 100% reliable so I know he will be at work and he always does his best. He gets along well with all staff, the kitchen and the front staff. By hiring Randy I feel I have made a difference in his life and that's a great feeling. Randy is a valued part of the Thornton Arms team".

Many accommodations were made along Randy's journey to get him to where he is today. Transportation funds and other funds for work clothes and shoes were

issued to Randy to ensure he was able to get to work and dressed appropriately. The workabilities workshop and volunteer experience helped prepare and motivate him and gave him the confidence to start working again.

As well, on-going monitoring of Randy's employment was provided, HR support, training dollars and WSIB coverage helped to ensure his continued success. The funding really helped to ensure time and patience was provided during the initial training period.

Throughout this process, Thornton Arms Pub and Grill has been extremely supportive towards Randy's success. Without their ongoing encouragement none of this would have been made possible. Rhonda Saunderson gave Randy an opportunity to get to where he is today. In Randy's own words, "It was hard to get my foot through the door and Rhonda gave me that chance".

Ontario Works initially referred Randy to the Thornton Arms Pub and Grill directly through the Employment placement program. After Randy's Employment Placement consultant met with him, his background and experience was then discussed with Rhonda Saunderson, owner of Thornton Arms Pub and Grill. Rhonda agreed to give Randy a try and he started employment at Thornton Arms Pub under a 6 month training plan. There were some issues throughout the training plan that were reviewed with Randy and Rhonda together and he continued to work on these issues to improve them. After the 6 month training plan was completed, continued HR support was made available and provided whenever required.

Nominee #10:	Juan Carlos Mosquera
Employer:	Allan's Independent Grocer
Business Liaison:	Tyler Allan
Nominated by:	Janis Thompson, Community Living Oshawa Clarington

Juan accessed employment supports with Community Living Oshawa Clarington (CLOC) after being unemployed for a length of time with unsuccessful attempts at finding gainful employment on his own. He was attending a sheltered workshop for \$8.00/day. The more time passed, the more Juan's self esteem and confidence began to decline. Juan spent a great deal of volunteer time mentoring individuals with disabilities and helping them make life choices, while he was having a hard time making his own dreams come true. Juan accessed

Employment Services at CLOC whom assisted him in securing employment at Allan's Independent Grocer.

Juan enjoys having a sense of purpose. He enjoys the relationships with his co-workers and being part of the team. He appreciates the strategies that have helped him to do a good job. He receives a regular paycheck which has helped him to re-establish his independence.

The job has made Juan become more confident and helped him to feel good about his customer service skills and a contributing team member.

Juan has proven himself as a competent employee at Allan's Independent Grocer and that people with disabilities can contribute positively to their communities.

There were minimal accommodations made to assist Juan at Allan's Independent Grocer. Checklists have been created to assist Juan to complete the required tasks. Flexible shifts and work hours have assisted Juan to continue to participate in extra curricular activities.

Tyler Allan, owner and operator of Allan's Independent Grocer, believed in Juan's potential immediately during the job interview. He felt Juan would compliment the staffing element at the store. Allan's Independent Grocer is involved in a number of community events, and hiring a person with a disability just proves the commitment they have to the community. Juan very much feels a part of the team and says his co-workers "look out for him" and make him "feel like family".

CLOC has been involved with Juan from the beginning. We assisted Juan with resume building, interview preparedness, the interview process, and job retention. Contact with both Juan and the staff at Allan's Independent, as well as regular visits to the worksite ensure his employment success.

Nominee #11:	Donald Smith
Employer:	East Side Mario's, Oshawa
Business Liaison:	Garfield Mitchell
Nominated by:	Lisa Yassein, Bev Richards, Northern Lights Canada

Donald Smith is 61 years of age and has experienced a life time of barriers and tough times. Donald has a developmental disability and as result is unable to read or write. As well Donald has a significant speech impediment that makes him difficult to understand. Donald has had significant challenges and barriers and often life has been challenging for him. His two years of successful employment at East Side Mario's should be celebrated.

Donald assists with food prep, dishes and general kitchen assistance. He enjoys all aspects of the job. Restaurant manager, Garfield Mitchell, reports that Donald does a good job with all tasks and is very fast.

Increased self-worth is the most important aspect of this success story. Donald celebrated his 2nd year at East Side Mario's on March 22nd of this year. His self-worth has been increased by the on-going contact with his co-workers and by the feeling of accomplishment he feels from his on-going success. Being accepted by the East Side Mario's family is a significant aspect of Donald's life.

Donald sets a good example as he always shows up for his shifts and has demonstrated commitment to his job. There tends to be a high turn over within the restaurant business yet Donald has maintained his job for two years which sets a good example for others.

His co-workers have developed skills by working with Donald and an understanding of how to work with people who have barriers. Since Donald can be hard to understand, co-workers must be patient and develop ways to increase communication and build an effective relationship. Donald has taught his co-workers about perseverance and the ability to overcome obstacles.

Since Donald is unable to read or write, he requires assistance in copying his hours from the schedule and in reviewing any workplace communication. There were some initial difficulties with Donald missing shifts since he did not understand the schedule. Garfield assisted Donald to work out a system to ensure Donald was always aware of his hours. As well, Donald at times has a hard time fully understanding workplace procedures and will make requests or demands that may not be appropriate at the time, such as requesting his pay cheque during non-pay weeks. Garfield shows a great deal of flexibility in assisting Donald to understand procedures.

Through all of the ups and downs, Garfield has demonstrated a caring commitment to his employee. From the very beginning Garfield was willing to look beyond the barriers and give Donald an opportunity. He has never belittled Donald because of his difficulties; instead he has set an example to his team by finding ways to effectively resolve situations. This has often taken a great deal of time from Garfield's busy schedule but he always seems willing to find a positive solution.

Northern Lights has offered on-going support. Initial support was offered to set up the interview with East Side Mario's and we attended the interview with

Donald. We assisted with the hiring process and to ensure all paperwork was completed appropriately and with initial training.

At a minimum, Northern Lights conducts monthly follow-up to ensure everything is going well for both the employer and for Donald. We are also on-call to assist with any issue that may come up along the way. On-going and frequent communication is maintained with Donald and East Side Mario's to ensure this successful story remains a success.

Nominee #12:	Matthew White
Employer:	McDonald's, Beaverton
Business Liaison:	Lorie Pearn
Nominated by:	Caron Weber, Community Living Durham North

Matthew absolutely loves his job which shows in his positive attitude and dedication to his work. He smiles from ear to ear when asked about his role as an employee of the McDonald's team for 5 ½ years.

A customer of the store, who was sitting with Matthew talking to him during Matthew's lunch break said, "Matthew is a #1 employee. He is an ambassador for people with a disability. Matthew is so friendly and liked by everybody."

Matthew graduated from Brock High School in 1998 and started volunteering at Holy Family Catholic School where he cleaned windows, washed tables, watered plants and helped out wherever he was needed. After 5 years of volunteering at the school, Matthew decided he would like to try working at McDonald's. Matthew received help creating a resume from the Community Facilitator of the Foundations Program with Community Living Durham North. The tasks that he became proficient at during his volunteer experience at the school were reflected on his resume. Matthew got an interview with McDonald's which he attended independently even though he has Down Syndrome, a learning disability and a speech impediment. Matthew's confidence with his abilities and his desire to work must have been apparent in his interview as he was successful in obtaining employment with McDonald's.

Matthew said he enjoys "everything", when asked what he likes most about his job. He especially enjoys talking to the customers and the friendships he has made with co-workers. Matthew takes pride in keeping the lobby and men's bathroom clean. He likes the birthday cake on his birthday, the pin he received

for 5 years of employment and the annual Christmas party. Matthew likes the independence that the job and the money give him.

Matthew is proud of the good job he does but most of all he is proud of the fact that he brings money into the household. Matthew has older siblings that have moved out of the home and he feels equal to them because he has a job just like they do. Matthew likes to take his mom out for lunch and walk to town and make purchases independently with his own money.

Matthew is happy that so many people know him by name and he is accepted and treated “good” by the people in his community.

Matthew is a great role model. Matthew is friendly and gets along with everyone at his workplace. Matthew is so dedicated he even comes to work when he attends his one week out of six week rotation at the Respite Program of Community Living Durham North in Port Perry. At Matthew’s request, staff at the program drives him to and from work, from Port Perry to Beaverton, for his regular scheduled shifts.

The employer said, “Matthew is a very valuable member of the McDonald’s team. He is well respected by his teammates. Matthew enjoys crew outings, employee meetings and participates in daily incentives/awards. Matthew is a great asset to the team and all of our customers enjoy coming in the restaurant”.

Community Living Durham North staff assisted Matthew to create a resume that he could take into McDonald’s to start the process of attaining his goal of employment with McDonald’s, the rest he did on his own. Over the years that Matthew has been employed at McDonald’s the agency meets with Matthew regularly to discuss his rights as an employee and ask him if he feels he is being treated fairly, has any concerns about his job or wants our assistance in any way. Matthew has always said, “I am happy working at McDonald’s” and “I love everything about my job.”