



Community Partnerships: Promoting Employment for People with Developmental Disabilities

Partners: District 5370 and 5360 Rotary Clubs;
Alberta Association for Community Living (AACL);
Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Boards and
Program (PDD),
Alberta Seniors & Community Supports

Background

The dreams parents have for their sons and daughters with developmental disabilities are no less than the dreams they and other parents share for their children without disabilities, to: have every opportunity for a career, make a contribution; earn an income and be valued as community members. People with developmental disabilities share the aspirations of their families and want nothing more than the opportunity to demonstrate their potential. Unfortunately, the vast majority of Albertans with developmental disabilities are unemployed or underemployed.

For people without disabilities, a good job helps to give purpose to life and affirms a valued place in society. Imagine if, as a result of a disability through no fault of your own, you were relegated to a life on the sidelines. Individual Rotary clubs throughout Alberta, AACL and its Member Associations, Provincial PDD Program and Community PDD Boards are committed to working in partnership with the business and broader community to create meaningful employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities - to create the kind of possibilities that contribute to the fullness of community life. Inclusion in community life today creates better communities for everyone tomorrow.

Making a Difference by Working Together

We will work in partnership to:

Create real jobs -- Rotary Clubs and members will work in partnership with AACL and PDD to develop jobs for people with developmental disabilities within the business community. Together we will explore the possibility of creating genuine and meaningful employment opportunities. AACL and PDD Community Boards will link employers to potential employees with developmental disabilities. AACL and PDD will also provide the resources, expertise and on-the-job supports to ensure a successful outcome. Through the Partnership employers and employees will learn how to sustain and facilitate the successful inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the workforce. Each Rotary Club partner will set its own commitment as to how many people with developmental disabilities they would hope to see employed during the course of the Partnership. Individual Rotary members may also consider the possibility of creating an employment opportunity for a person with developmental disabilities. Through this initiative there is the potential for Rotary Clubs and members to directly and personally make a powerful and wonderful difference in the life of a person with developmental disabilities.

Make Dreams Real -- Rotary Clubs, in partnership with AACL and PDD, through their community involvement and commitment, will promote the employment of people with developmental disabilities. The highly respected community voice of Rotary will be coupled with the voices of families who have sons and daughters with developmental disabilities. The community needs to learn more about the potential of people with developmental disabilities and the value of creating real jobs. The Partnership will develop resource materials (e.g., print ads, posters, brochures, radio ads, etc.) which can be shared with the business and broader community through a variety of media. These collaboratively developed public awareness materials will highlight Rotary Clubs' commitment to the employment of people with developmental disabilities.

Community Resources

Many individual examples of successful employment for people with developmental disabilities exist in Alberta. People with developmental disabilities are working in offices, restaurants, stores and factories. Canadian employers, for example from Canadian Tire to Winners, have repeatedly expressed the value of hiring people with developmental disabilities as being "good for business and not a social program". A wealth of community resources exist that have contributed to these successful outcomes, which we will use in this Partnership. However, people with developmental disabilities still represent a large and untapped labour resource. This is an unfortunate loss of human potential. Through this Partnership, Rotary Clubs and members will have the opportunity to strengthen the community by helping to welcome people with developmental disabilities into the fullness of community life.

The Partners

Rotary: Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotarians, members of more than 29,000 Rotary clubs in 161 countries.

AACL: The Alberta Association for Community Living is a non-profit, voluntary association of more than 40 member organizations from across Alberta representing the interests of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families for almost half a century.

PDD Community Boards and the Provincial PDD Program: Provide the funding and supports to assist adults with developmental disabilities to live, work and participate in their communities as valued citizens.

There are Partnerships in: Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Lloydminster, Lethbridge, Westlock, Athabasca, Barrhead, and Whitecourt with more than 20 clubs.

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