

2009

PROCEEDINGS:
**2ND ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
AND EMPLOYMENT**
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**“Bridging the Needs Between Education and Employment
– Best Practices**

December 3, 2009

Westin Nova Scotia Hotel

Halifax, NS

Executive Summary

The Second Annual Symposium on Inclusive Employment and Education was a joint effort of the Collaborative Partnership Network, the Nova Scotia Disabled Persons Commission, and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The purpose of the Symposium was to celebrate December 3rd, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and to develop strategies to facilitate greater inclusion in the pursuit of education and employment.

The theme of this year's Symposium was "Bridging the Needs Between Education and Employment". It was agreed that Canada's ratification of the UN's Declaration of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities presented a framework for greater access to education and employment. However, the consensus was that more work across government and community had to be done to facilitate inclusion to its fullest potential. Several initiatives are underway including discussions about formulating a provincial disability strategy, the development of a labour market strategy for persons with disabilities, and educational programming to make Nova Scotians with disabilities aware of their rights.

One in five Nova Scotians live with a disability. Coupled with an aging population and the right of all to social inclusion, this has substantive implications for policy and programming. During panel discussions, the Symposium heard of policies and initiatives within the Departments of Education and Labour and Workforce Development to break down barriers and promote seamless transitions for school to work.

The issue of fiscal realities in Nova Scotia is also addressed. Government leadership in promoting strategies will have to fall within strict criteria to ensure effective and positive results. While programs are reviewed, government's role is to invest in education and employment in a sustainable manner.

The Symposium also was a celebration of partnerships of persons with disabilities and employers to create inclusive workplaces. The Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership

Award promote employers and entrepreneurs who have excelled to promoting Nova Scotians with disabilities in the workplace. There was a possibility of two (2) business and two (2) self-employment nominations from four (4) regions across the province. The overall provincial winners were Acadian Seaplants Limited (Cornwallis) and Red Arrow Digital College (Halifax).

Several workshops were held focusing on the opportunities and challenges persons with disabilities have in accessing education and employment. Presenters from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and the Deafness Advocacy Association of Nova Scotia (DAANS) respectively spoke about how adaptations and assistive technologies have opened the world of employment for their membership. A presentation given by the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia (BIANS) defined brain injury and its annual economic and labour costs, as well as the importance of rehabilitation after an injury is sustained. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) gave a workshop on the importance of finding a proper fit for an employee with a mental health issue. Lastly, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC) presented on issues of human rights and persons with disabilities in accessing education and employment. Specific attention was paid to the right to accommodation as “an adjustment to take account of specific circumstances” versus the common misperception of “special treatment”.

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Part I: Setting the Framework	4
Part II: Inclusive Employment Luncheon	9
Part III: Workshops and Presentations	12
Appendix “A”	16
Symposium Agenda	16
Appendix “B”	21
Recorded Address by the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario	21
Appendix “C”	22
Keynote Address	22
Mr. David Sampson, Vice-chair of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission	22
Catisha Scanlan, Grade 12 Student	22
Appendix “D”	24
Afternoon Address: Government and Community Partnerships and the relationship with Persons with Disabilities	24
Rick Williams, Deputy Minister, Office of Policy and Priorities	24
Appendix “E”	26
Provincial Awards Acceptance Speeches	26

Part I: Setting the Framework

The first annual symposium on inclusive education and employment was held on December 3, 2008. The event brought together the Disabled Persons Commission, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and Teamwork Cooperative to discuss a human rights framework for the continuing challenges persons with disabilities face in accessing education and employment. That year, the symposium focused on the possibilities offered by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to enhance accessibility to education and employment. The objectives of the event were to:

- Bring together a diverse group of Nova Scotians with expertise in the areas of education and employment to discuss the future impact of the Convention on programming and policy. Engage members of the disability community and broader community in the province in a dialogue on the pressing needs for people and how a human rights framework could move these issues forward.
- Produce a report that will inform government, community groups and educational institutions on new directions needed to promote social and economic inclusion of Nova Scotians with disabilities.
- Draw attention to the significance of the Convention.

The symposium heard from a host of individuals from diverse educational and employment backgrounds and experiences. It also heard the stories of individuals living with disabilities seeking social and economic inclusion. Seven recommendations emerged from these discussions:

1. Develop a coordinated cross government approach or provincial disability strategy
2. Develop duty to accommodate training for employers
3. Develop policies (as part of a provincial strategy) that are coordinated across government departments to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities.
4. Develop duty to accommodate training for the Department of Education staff, teachers, parents and students.
5. Ensure that governing bodies such as schools boards have designated members who are persons with disabilities and care providers.
6. Develop better support programs for persons with disabilities
7. Create tools to support teachers to better manage classroom dynamics.

In 2009, the December 3rd Forum provided a means to build on the thoughts and ideas put forward the year before with specific focus on addressing barriers that persons with disabilities continue to face in pursuing education and employment.

Opening Remarks: Anne MacRae, Disabled Persons Commission

Krista Daley, Human Rights Commission

Janice Ainsworth, Teamwork Cooperative

The three directors of their respective organizations offered greetings and opening remarks. In the context of the theme for the day, “Bridging the Needs Between Education and Employment” and the seven recommendations of the 2008 symposium, each set the stage for the discussion of the day.

Janice Ainsworth set the stage for the day by talking about the power of partnerships. She spoke about how the three organizations came together in 2008 to support the first symposium. Partnerships that facilitate empowerment and collaboration is the basis for moving the agenda forward to ensure full access to education and employment for persons with disabilities. She also spoke about the necessity to recognize persons with disabilities as individuals and that success lies in understanding their unique educational and employment requirements. During the past year, 1200 people with disabilities have been employed. She noted that instead of receiving 22 million dollars per year from government, they are now making contributions back to the government in taxes. They have joined the labour force and will enjoy the social and economic benefits most take for granted.

Anne MacRae, Executive Director of the Disabled Persons Commission, spoke of the Human Rights framework and progress made over the past year. She reported that the DPC has been involved with a group of disability organizations that are drawing a framework for a provincial disability strategy. The group met with government in the fall and waiting for a second meeting to move the strategy forward.

The Disabled Persons Commission was also tasked with conducting a process to hire a labour market coordinator who will start his job in January and will be tasked to develop a labour market strategy for persons with disabilities.

The Millennium Development Goals (MGD) has 8 international development goals; 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve these goals by 2015. They include reducing poverty, achieving gender equality and power of women, global partnership for development. We will do our part to achieve this, by focusing on including education and employment. – Anne MacRae

Krista Daley, Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission echoed her two co-sponsors by stressing the importance of partnerships in advancing the inalienable rights of all persons with disabilities. She spoke of the ongoing challenges that Nova Scotians living with disabilities face

daily in accessing education and employment. These issues comprise a healthy bulk of complaints and inquiries handled by the Human Rights Commission. She reported that these complaints usually stem from the lack of accommodation in an educational setting.

The Human Rights Commission has undertaken three projects stemming from the 2008 symposium. The first is the development of a fact sheet (available on the HRC's website) on the issue of the duty to accommodate. The HRC is also working with the DPC to better help persons with disabilities recognize and exercise their rights. One step towards this was an information session held the DPC to present the services the Human Rights Commission offers for persons with disabilities

Lastly, she spoke of the HRC's continuing commitment to advising the government of Nova Scotia in achieving its goals for social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Keynote Address: David Sampson, Vice-Chair of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, with student Catisha Scanlan.

David Sampson, Chair of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and President of the Nova Scotia Health Authority spoke about the relationship between education and employment for persons with disabilities. He framed this relationship as a fundamental issue of human rights – both access to education and employment as being guaranteed within the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

Sampson highlighted two personal experiences that spoke about the hopes and aspirations of persons with disabilities. The first was of meeting a couple dealing with a disability outside a hospital. The couple was planning their future regardless of the challenges facing them. The second experience he had as a school superintendent. When he asked an assistant about the progress of a non-verbal student who didn't have use of his limbs, she told him of how much the student loved to have his peers read to him, and how in turn he was teaching them human values of patience, caring and compassion. In both experiences, Sampson was struck by the strength persons with disabilities to teach the importance of being our brother's/sister's keeper, allowing them to take full opportunity to participate in all aspects of life.

One in five Nova Scotians live with a disability. Yet, despite this number, persons with disabilities still face discrimination when seeking education and employment. Complaints to the Human Rights Commission in this area outnumbered those based on gender and race. Access to education and employment not only has its economic dimensions, but infringes upon a person's right to be included and make a contribution to their society.

Sampson challenged his audience to consider the legal and moral justification for *accommodation* as social *inclusion*. This stresses the need to accommodate each of our differences. He concluded with a poem Mohammad Ali composed for a Commencement Address he gave at Harvard University, which was "Me, We".

Sampson invited Catisha Scanlan on stage. Cathisha spoke of her disability and aspirations for academic and career goals. She told the audience, “I am in grade 12, I want to attend university, I want to be an educator. I was diagnosed with profound hearing impairment, I could not distinguish sound, even with the help of two hearing aids, I still rely on lip reading. In university I will continue to require accommodation and support from my Professors; I want to graduate with a degree in deaf studies. I am indebted to many people for their support throughout the years. My parents have taught me to advocate for myself.”

Government Representatives’ Round Table on Education and Employment

Moderator: Lois Miller, Executive Director, *Independent Living Nova Scotia*

Department of Education: Don Glover, *Acting Director of Student Services*

Department of Labour and Workforce Development, Jacques Pelletier, *Director, Labour Market Partnerships*

Lois Miller, Executive Director of Independent Living Nova Scotia, moderated the panel. She briefly spoke of the youth transition program ILNS delivers with its community partners. Access to Community Education and Employment, ACEE, offers 20-24 participants various modules including literacy and numeracy, independent living skills, career exploration and employment readiness. She noted that a similar program is offered in the Canso Strait Area and other communities have expressed interest in developing their own. She then introduced round table participants:

Jacques Pelletier, Director of Labour Market Partnerships Division of Skills and Learning Branch, Department of Labour and Workforce Development, spoke on the issue of devolution of federal employment programs to the Province of Nova Scotia. He explained the funding structure of the Labour Market Agreement over the next five years. Specifically, he identified challenges in breaking down traditional barriers that persons with disabilities face in accessing employment. He said that hiring a Labour Market Coordinator to raise awareness of disability issues with employers throughout the province was critical to getting persons with disabilities into the workforce. Further work has to be done to raise literacy and educational levels for persons with disabilities, according to Pelletier.

Don Glover, Acting Director of Student Services with the Department of Education, spoke of the changing nature of education programs for students with disabilities. In 1996, the Department overhauled its special education policy. The first generation of students to benefit from this policy is now graduating. The emphasis of this new policy was giving students the tools they needed to achieve and to promote the involvement of parents in the education of their children. This is done through the flow of information parents need to make informed choices on, for instance, assistive technologies. On the road to employment, Glover stated that the Special Education policy has a definitive statement on transition from school to the community and employment. The key to this process is providing fact sheets that explain key terms that the student has used throughout his/her education.

The Way Forward: Governmental Planning and Priorities

Dr. Rick Williams, Deputy Minister of Policy and Priorities

Province of Nova Scotia

Deputy Minister Williams spoke of change and difficult times. His message was that government had to be smarter with the resources it has at its disposal. The present era has comparisons with the fiscal and economic climate of the 1990s, but the approaches to address the present realities is based in examining what worked and what didn't at that time. He reported that, while the current recession has put increasing demands on government spending, it does not account for the province's structural deficit.

Three years from now our deficit will exceed \$9 billion. Only a small portion will be caused by the recession, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of that is structural deficit. – Deputy Minister Rick Williams

The projections of servicing the structural deficit in the near future will impede our ability to generate growth in the province.

In light of this reality, the current government is seeking to what Williams calls "right-sizing the [public] sector". If this isn't done our fiscal situation will deteriorate. He said that the problem stems from government funding unsustainable programming initiatives.

Williams identified five key policy areas in which government is currently looking. These are the following:

1. Developing a fiscal management plan designed for government to live within its means. This requires an extensive consultation and program review period, with the intention to better deliver services.
2. Moving towards a sustainable health care system. This will attempt to seek a greater positive return on the province's health care investment.
3. Redefining the relationship between education, especially at the post-secondary level, with employment and job creation.
4. Build the economy through attracting new investment into the province,
5. Overhauling the province's social programming system to look at changing the approach of social service delivery. Senior officials speak of "blowing up" the present income assistance programs to enhance greater access to education and employment

He concluded by stressing that a traditional "protecting turf" response, because government needs to do things better. It needs to have solid evidence of positive outcome and sustainability to justify program investment.

Part II: Inclusive Employment Luncheon

Greetings from Her Honour

The Honourable Mayann E. Francis, O.N.S., DHumL
Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia

Inaugural Presentation of the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen.

As the Queen's representative in Nova Scotia it gives me great pleasure to join you today in this celebration of potential.

I would like to start by offering my support for the work being done here today during the Collaborative Partnership Network Society's symposium. No barrier is ever overcome until we understand why it exists in the first place.

Without that understanding, there is no change. I wish you a productive and enlightening day.

It is important work that you do. Creating and maintaining employment between individuals with disabilities and Nova Scotia employers is a win-win. And not just for the individuals and employers involved.

We live in a province where the population is both aging and declining. This means the workforce is declining as well. In the coming years, there will be fewer and fewer available workers.

In such circumstances, it is sheer folly to believe we can continue to ignore a significant body of potential workers.

Employing persons with disabilities is not "doing them a favour." They are workers and our province needs workers. Plain and simple.

The same holds true for education. Leaving untapped potential in thousands of Nova Scotians is both cruel for the individuals involved and wasteful for our society. We simply can not afford to continue to squander such precious resources.

You know that. That is why you are here today. But many do not know. We must spread that message across the province.

It is my hope that this new award, Lieutenant Governor's Disabled Persons Employer Partnership Award, will help in that effort. And I also hope inspire.

I want to congratulate the two inaugural winners – Business Category Finalist Acadian Seaplants and Self-Employed Category Winner Red Arrow Digital College and its founder Derek Lewis.

You – and the other regional nominees - have looked beyond limitations and seen potential. You have seen the potential of people to grow, to achieve and to contribute. Persons with disabilities expect nothing more. But they should expect nothing less.

I will leave you with the words of Brian Tracy, an American author and motivational speaker who has touched millions with his message of personal development.

“The potential of the average person is like a huge ocean unsailed, a new continent unexplored, a world of possibilities waiting to be released and channeled toward some great good.”

Thank you. Merci.

Lieutenant Governor’s Disabled Persons Employer Partnership Award

These winners represent for regions from across Nova Scotia, and could win a business or self-employment award.

Sydney to New Glasgow Region

Strait Area Transit (Employer)

Strait Area Transit made a commitment to hire persons with disabilities and further their careers; they offer all inclusive client-centered means of transportation.

Amherst to Halifax Region

Truestone Cleaning and Restoration, Steve Tomlin (Employer)

Truestone is a small cleaning business, and has employed several TeamWork/WorkBridge clients. Steve helps with job interviews, job placements, and tailoring schedules, to ensure they feel welcomed in their positions.

Red Arrow Digital College (Self-employed)*

Founded by Derek Louis, Red Arrow is well respected in the IT community and graduates find employment within three months.

Kentville to Windsor Region

Gladys’s Ribs (Self-employed)

Deaf from the age of three, Gladys has worked at a series of jobs, over time, raising 2 kids as single mother, she continues to gain new customers.

* Provincial winner

RBC, Kentville.

Royal Bank is a recruiter of persons with disabilities, needed accommodations are made, and persons with disabilities are considered equally for each job, encourages equality in every area, and works closely with Community Inc.

Yarmouth/Digby/Bridgewater Region

Joel Deveau, Compact Disc Duplication (Self-employed)

Joel Deveau, under the self employed heading, created a successful business duplicating CDs for local markets. Local markets enjoy his services.

Acadian Sea Plants Limited (Employer)

This business knows what it means to give back to community. The company was voted a winner, not only because of its contribution to youth and persons with disabilities, but also because of their superior products.

Part III: Workshops and Presentations

CNIB: “Workplace Adjustment and Adaptation”

Presenters: Peter Parsons, Chris Judge and Holly Bartlett

This presentation was designed to provide an overview of the services offered by the CNIB and accessibility issues for people who are visually impaired in the workplace.

CNIB offers the following services:

- Assistance with independent home living skills
- Library books on CD
- Counseling services for those making the adjustment to vision loss
- Assistive Technology
- Orientation and mobility: teaching people to use a white cane; to develop new routes, develop plans for people to get to their workplace and get around.

The presentation focused on accessibility and, specifically, highlighted commonly overlooked issues in a workplace. These are usually easy and inexpensive modifications involving marking the edges of steps to make them easier to see; reducing office clutter in the aisles and consistently placing office furniture; e-mailing in a strong black font; making sure the workplace is equipped with contrasting door frames and marking glass doors with a recognizable strip; and including Braille lettering on elevators. They were told that it's crucial for a new employee to get orientated to their new environment. The workshop was also introduced to assistive software such as JAWS and Kurzweil, a screen reader and “text-to-speech” navigator respectively.

DAANS: “Employer and Person who is Deaf”

Presenters: Linda Quigley, Executive Director, DAANS and Linda Glass, Northwood

This presentation was to provide awareness of deafness in Nova Scotia and some accommodations that can be made for a person who is deaf in the workplace.

6000 people in Nova Scotia are deaf, making the overall rate stand at 18%. There are 1200 people who are deaf over the age of 65, and 500 under 18. 85 Nova Scotians are deaf and blind. 49.2% of the deaf population is unemployed. 30% of the population can lip read.

One of the largest obstacles for a person who is deaf from gaining employment is a fear an employer has in not being understood or not understanding them. However, people who are deaf are employed in most professions and trades including, government employees, police, librarians, teachers, lawyers and doctors. The only career they aren't allowed to engage in is long-haul truck driving that carrying toxic chemicals.

An employee of Northwood was introduced. Donna Glass is deaf and has worked for Northwood for two and a half years. She has held different administration and governmental positions and, in her current job, she assists seniors who are deaf. Donna uses interpreters for staff meetings, as well as text messaging through a Blackberry to communicate with her supervisor as needed. Other staff members who are deaf use a combination of technology (Blackberries, TTYs) and ASL in their work. Other staff are trained on ASL. Northwood is also equipped with flashing fire alarm systems.

Linda Quigley conducts one to three hours of employer training/orientation for working with deaf staff. She is also providing 70 employers with training including WHMIS and Occupational Health and Safety

BIANS: Brain Injury: Returning to the Workplace

Presenters: Brian Tapper, Vocational Counsellor, Capital District Health Authority

Brain injury is defined as an “insult to the brain caused by an external force – any type of accident – that may produce a diminished state of conscience, decrease in physical functions and impaired vision.” Impairments can be temporary or permanent, and they can cause problems in terms of physiological well-being. Brain injuries are invisible and without visible cue to the issue.

Brain injuries have a significant economic impact. Sports-related injuries alone costs hundreds of millions dollars to the economy, and injuries although is estimated at \$14 billion. There are 2200 new traumatic brain injuries per year, but this number is much higher if strokes and tumors are counted. The cost of direct care and loss of productivity is estimated in the \$4 million range.

It is estimated that 12% of people with a brain injury will never live alone or look after themselves. This is due to severity and the lack of supports. Another 20% will never return to work and 30% will be under employed. The majority will struggle on a daily basis.

It’s important for persons living with brain injuries to get back to work for, not only economic reasons, but for their own social and mental well-being. However, the natural desire for people to return to work as soon as possible has to be weighed against the new realities of their health. These factors may include fatigue that may interfere with performance. Brain injuries affect five areas of cognitive functioning: memory, concentration, initiative, problem-solving, insight and flexibility. Memory strategies are vital.

Other effects may be neurological functioning, physical and sensory abilities (including vision and hearing), reduced mobility, communication (speech impairment and word slurring, and word finding). They may have problems with acquired learning such as reading, spelling, math, writing and time management.

The rehabilitation time for this type of injury can take from three months to a year.

Reintegration in the workplace is challenging because of both a lack of understanding and unreasonable expectations. One obstacle to employment is the fear of self-identifying. However, the onus should be placed on the employer to ask how the injury affects the employee's abilities. Long-term employment and support is important. Equally important is a supportive manager or supervisor, and a method of continuity if they move on. It is necessary to engage in proactive education with the employer to avoid misunderstandings on the job and implement suitable accommodations. Examples of this include moving a workspace to a quieter venue if the person is easily distracted or considering using a tape recorder if their writing skills are affected. If physical stamina is an issue a gradual return to work or frequent breaks during the day might be appropriate. Also, a system of job monitoring may be implemented. This may involve a peer support/mentoring system or a more formal job coach to teach new skills.

CMHA: Employer and Person with a Learning Disability

Presenters: Carol Tooton, Canadian Mental Health Association, Michelle Kulyk, Sólás Naturals and Rose Hurlburt, KCV Consignment

The unemployment rate among individuals who receive a mental health diagnosis stands at 70%. There is a common occurrence for persons who go on short-term disability leave for a mental health issue; quite often there is a "restructuring" in the workplace while they are away and the job has changed. The employee can't do their new job and is forced to leave. When people tell employers of the difficulties they encounter in the workplace, it is considered as he/she cannot work.

CMHA conducts a workshop/seminar, "Mental Health Works", geared towards providing employers with a basic knowledge of mental health issues to be a support to their employees. This includes the importance of "people first" language. One basic concern of employers is how to separate inappropriate behavior and mental health. Another would be how to discuss mental health issues with their employees. It was also noted that there are repercussions throughout the workplace when an employee has to take stress leave as their workload has to be redistributed. This has to be addressed.

Michelle Kulyk, Production Manager and Product Developer of Sólás Naturals, hires persons with mental disabilities in various facets of the business. This includes cosmetics sales and inventory as well as making candles. They also work with local adult services, the Plank & Hammer and the Package Mill, and packing services. Potential employees are given a day-long interview to see if the fit is good for them and the employer. Once hired, accommodations can be made to help the employee. For instance, if literacy skills are weak, a colour coded chart and diagrams can be used for instructions and tasks.

Rose Hurlburt, owner of KCV Consignment, started the business after bad experiences with employers. She worked for a law firm and could do the job with the help of specialized software and time adjustments. Her employer could accommodate her in some ways but, without all requirements, she left due to it not being a good fit. She says that, in her experience, most employers are not eager to provide accommodation.

NSHRC: What You Need to Know About Human Rights and Persons with Disabilities

Presenters: Ann Divine and Louise Adongo

Ann Divine, Manager of the Race Relations, Equity and Inclusion team at the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission opened the workshop by telling her first experience in seeing how human rights impacted disability the first time she had to push a wheelchair. She used the illustration to underscore the importance of protecting, promoting and upholding the right of individuals and groups in our society. She spoke of the definition of human rights under the Declaration of Human Rights. It speaks to the individual's right to *freedom* of personal choice, *equality* or the impact of personal freedom on others, *personal* rights, and the *responsibility* to others to uphold a person's dignity with compassion. She said that the human rights process is continuous one.

The Human Rights Commission provides information, education and structure for the dialogue in the province. The Commission was founded in 1963 was born out of the many issues facing disadvantaged people in Nova Scotia. Louise Adongo briefly reviewed the evolution of human rights in the province. Race, ethnicity and religion were protected in 1963. Physical disability was added to the Human Rights Act in 1974 and mental disability in 1986. Aboriginal origin, age and sexual orientation were included in 1991.

They said issues of disability and employment are the most reported complaints the NSHRC receives. The employment rate among Canadians with disabilities aged 15-64 is 51% compared to 75% in the general population. Policies have to be adopted to ensure:

- The contributions of all are recognized
- The acceptance that barriers limit some groups (and individuals) from participating and contributing
- Identifying the required elements of an equity policy that addresses accessibility
- Developing an accessibility policy for use by organizations/institutions/services

The presenters discussed issues around *accommodation*, which is defined as “an adjustment of a rule or practice to take into account the specific needs of an individual or group of persons”. This is not giving “special treatment”, rather recognizing difference and treating people equally and fairly. The employer's *duty to accommodate* means all reasonable measures should be taken to accommodate an individual to the point of undue hardship.

Appendix "A"
Symposium Agenda

**2nd Annual Symposium on
Inclusive Education and Employment
International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

"Bridging the Needs between Education & Employment - Best Practices"

Thursday, December 3, 2009 ~ 8:30am to 3:30pm

The Westin Nova Scotian Hotel, Hollis Street, Halifax, NS



Registration Information: *(PLEASE PRINT)*

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Address: _____ Prov: _____ Postal

Code: _____

Ticket price includes symposium and luncheon *(Price is not dependent on choice of events).*

Please rank (1 - 4) the following in order of preference (*NOTE: This does not guarantee you a seat at the session*).

MORNING WORKSHOPS (10:35am)
DISCUSSIONS (1:30pm)

_____ CNIB (Mobility Training)
(Deaf)

_____ Canadian Mental Health Association
(Autistic)

_____ Brain Injury Association
(Physical Disability)

_____ Human Rights & Persons with Disabilities
(Intellectual Disability)

AFTERNOON PANEL

_____ Employer & Person

_____ Employer & Person

_____ Employer & Person

_____ Employer & Person

Attending the Full Day? Yes ☐ No ☐
(11:30am)? Yes

Attending Luncheon ONLY ☐

Any dietary restrictions? If so, please explain:

Special accommodations required? If yes, please explain:

No. of Tickets: _____ x \$75 per person

Total: \$ _____

OR I would like to sponsor a table(s) for 10 people:

Registration form must be received no later than **Thursday, November 26, 2009.**

Please make cheque(s) payable and mail with form to: **Collaborative Partnership Network**

The Village at Bayers Road, Suite M278, 7071 Bayers Road, Halifax, NS B3L 2C2

FAX with credit card information to (902) 422-3992 or **Register by Phone: (902) 422-8900**

Circle one: Visa MasterCard *(Credit card payments require cardholder signature)*

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____
_____/____

Cardholder's Signature:

Draft - October 30, 2009

The Second Annual

Symposium on Inclusive Employment and Education

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

“Making the Millennium Development Goals Inclusive: Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and
Their Communities Around the World”

Theme: Bridging the Needs Between Education and Employment –Best Practices

Thursday, December 3, 2009 – 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

****Agenda:**

8:30 Morning Refreshments

9:00 Welcome and Introductions (Master of Ceremonies - Dave Mooney)

Opening Remarks: Collaborative Partnership Network,

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, Disabled Persons Commission

Recommendations from 2008 and Agenda for Today

Keynote

Deputy Ministers’ Round Table on Education and Employment

Break

10:35 Concurrent Morning Workshops: Best Practices in Employment for Persons with Disabilities

1. CNIB (mobility training)
2. Canadian Mental Health Association - Carol Tooton
3. Brain Injury Association - Brian Tapper and others
4. “Human Rights and Persons with Disabilities: What You Need to Know” – NSHRC

11:45 Art Sale

“Best Practices” Resource Materials

12:00 Inclusive Employment Luncheon

Featuring the Lieutenant Governor's Persons with Disabilities Employer Partnership Award with the Honourable Mayann E. Francis, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia

Keynote Address by the Honourable David C. Onley the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

1:30 Concurrent Partnership Best Practice Panels and Interactive Learning Sessions

1. Employer and Person Who is Deaf -Best Practices
2. Employer and Person Who is Autistic-Best Practices
3. Employer and Person Who has a physical disability-Best Practices
4. Employer and Person Who has intellectual disability-Best Practices

2:45 Wrap Up - Highlights of the workshops and panels

Next Steps

3:30 Closing of Symposium

****Specifics of agenda to be updated as speakers confirmed.**

Appendix “B”

Recorded Address by the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Thank you for the opportunity of speaking to you at inaugural presentation of the Lieutenant Governor’s Persons with Disabilities/ Employers Partnership Award. As the first Lieutenant Governor of Ontario with a physical disability, accessibility is the overarching theme of my mandate. For me and for the Collaborative Partnership Network Society of Nova Scotia the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is a very important date. As such, I made commitments some time ago to take part in a number of today’s celebratory events within Ontario; otherwise I would have been delighted to join you in person to honour the organizations and entrepreneurs who are receiving this award.

But let me take this moment to say now the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities is a cause very close to my heart. I believe it is vitally important for employers who are committed to accommodating persons with disabilities be recognized and celebrated. Despite an exhaustive body of research demonstrating that persons with disabilities make excellent workers, their employment rate is easily five times higher than that of the national average. Much of this unemployment comes down to myths and misperceptions by potential employers. So I am pleased therefore to participate in congratulating employers for being honoured as stellar examples to us all.

As the Queen’s representative in Ontario, I congratulate the regional winners in each category for this award and applaud the overall provincial winners - Acadian Seaplants Ltd and Red Arrow Digital College. And I commend my esteemed colleague, the Honourable Mayann Francis, to encourage Nova Scotia’s employers to look beyond disability to see all peoples’ unlimited abilities within. Thank you.

Appendix “C”

Keynote Address

Mr. David Sampson, Vice-chair of the Nova Scotia

Human Rights Commission

Catisha Scanlan, Grade 12 Student

David Sampson:

We join in solidarity today with individuals and organizations in recognizing the human rights of People with Disabilities. This is the second year we have worked together to celebrate this day, this collaboration is so important, collective voices are eventually acted upon, Henry Ford said that coming together is beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.

I am speaking from my past as Vice Chair of NS Human Rights commission, HR plays a vital role. My other experiences in the public school system, as President of the Health Authority in NS, relate to the frequent exclusion of People with Disabilities from opportunities. Permit me to give you a glimpse of myself – two experiences that stand out: I believe that we are meant to be our brother’s and sister’s keeper, we are meant to be advocates on issues that cry out for fairness, we must be on the front line on these issues, shoulder to shoulder with those in need, so that we all stand together on the front line. Many here share this belief, so I feel safe to share some observations: two years ago, following a recent consultation with my physician, I tried to get my head around the news I had received. A young couple sat next to me, the man was in a wheel chair and physically disabled. They spoke about his challenges and dreams, his courage had not been silenced, his disability had not killed their friendship, she was there to support him. As I listened, it seemed that his courage became my courage, his hope my hope. I thank them for their gift that day.

There was another experience as a school superintendent, there were mentally challenged students, and physically challenged, one student couldn’t speak or move his limbs. I asked the assistant about her experiences, she talked about the reading program and how other students read to him, how they cared for him, how his eyes lit up when he was with other students, then she said: “without saying a single word, he teaches values which we all cherish: humility, caring, compassion, gentleness. Sometimes we are so focused on what we give, we lose sight of what we receive.” Disability itself does not discriminate, it touches people across race, gender, religion, rich and poor, from birth, through illness, it is a part of human experience, and although it is not discriminatory, people with disabilities are discriminated against, HR are engaged when there is discrimination for no reason, at the commission we strive towards equitable access to employment and education, and for opportunities in NS. As we pause to reflect on the theme of today: empowerment of people with disabilities, it is important for us to recognize that they have opportunities to take part in every aspect of life.

Globally, one in five is identified as living with a disability in NS. Despite such high numbers, many persons face barriers and live on the margins of society, there is negative stereotyping, they are denied basic human rights such as education. At the human rights commission, the majority of inquiries involve discrimination in the area of employment, and the people with disabilities area is more than racial and gender discrimination combined. This information emphasizes the importance of strengthening partnerships, the individual ability to address issues of discrimination. As partners, we recognize that people with disabilities want the same opportunities as everybody else. Education and employment are good examples – a person might not be able to get good employment because of a lack of education – we hear people say “Stay in school”, and we know from our work that each person wants to be an integral part of society. Why isn’t this put into practice? What are the barriers? They are attitudinal. The Major of Halifax said: we should be building people up in our communities, not tearing them down. How do we do this? The major barriers to full participation are in the areas of education. Education is the foundation of so many other things. Our first societal interaction, it sets our identity in many ways, solidifies how we see ourselves and others. The NS Dept of Education recognizes the basic right of every student to have equal access to education. This is mirrored in the HR act – all children in NS have the right to education, it is essential to the foundation of our society. Schools, university, must do more to ensure people with disabilities get the education they need. The NS policy states the right to appropriate education resides on the right for every individual to receive the education they are entitled to. Why do people with disabilities face barriers in getting this fundamental right? There are physical, social, attitudinal barriers. In employment, paid work is another foundation of our society, it eliminates poverty, and has other intrinsic values, such as enhanced self esteem. The average person spends 2000 hours a year working, if someone is excluded from this, they suffer consequences like low self esteem and loss of place in society, these consequences affect us as a society. If we want to be a just society nobody should be excluded. The question for me is how to persuade others that inclusion is the right thing to do? There is an HR foundation for inclusion, flowing from int’l law to Canadian law to NS law, but if this is so, why aren’t we there yet? We need to do more to educate ourselves about the barriers people with disabilities face on daily basis. If President Obama were here he would say: yes you can. People with disabilities and those who advocate for them, it’s all about accommodation, a legal obligation to accommodate a person’s disability in the workforce or education center, including job coaching. This also means we all have to accommodate each other’s differences. True accommodation, in the legal and societal sense, will result in inclusion. This day we hope to raise your awareness of needs, and challenge you to make a difference. We have a duty to understand the value of investment in people, regardless of disability. I’d like to introduce a young lady who has received accommodation and support, she epitomizes for me the investment that is necessary. Catisha Scanlan.

Catisha Scanlan:

Thank you for asking me to be here today. I am in grade 12, I want to attend university, I want to be an educator. I was diagnosed with profound hearing impairment, I could not distinguish sound, even with the help of two hearing aids, I still rely on lip reading. In university I will continue to require accommodation and support from my Professors; I want to graduate with a degree in deaf studies. I am indebted to many people for their support throughout the years. My parents have taught me to advocate for myself.

Appendix “D”

Afternoon Address: Government and Community Partnerships and the relationship with Persons with Disabilities

Rick Williams, Deputy Minister, Office of Policy and Priorities

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important event. I want to acknowledge two people who have been great advocates over the past decade, Dr. Joan Cummings was my mentor and colleague at university for many years, and continues to influence me on disability issues with the DP commission. The second person, Charlie MacDonald, was my first client, but is now a friend and colleague. Under their help I produced the Needs Report, laid out the intellectual basis for much of what I've done since – now hardly a day goes by when I don't think of the central themes of our work together – change, renewal, collaboration.

When times are tough and we face major challenges, the last thing we should do is be 'conservative'. In these circumstances innovation is most needed. Let's talk about these 'tough' times. In the 90s I was engaged with issues that were shattered by the political events at that time, I think about those times now, when we are in similar challenges, how we dealt with them, what worked and what didn't. A month ago the premier redefined our circumstances, we are in a recession, a return to normal economic growth won't solve our problems. Three years from now our deficit will exceed 9 billion dollars, only a small portion is caused by the depression, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ is structural deficit, reflecting spending trends that exceed our ability to generate revenue. Unless we find ways to right-size the sector and grow the economy our fiscal situation will deteriorate. We are in this situation because previous governments used cash flow to build things like university reduction programs and Pharmasave, which were not sustainable in the long run. Our premier has made the right decision to reduce services. Looking out into the future the economy may recover, but the federal government will still be looking to address their deficit. My current job is to head a new office of policies and priorities, we are in the process of seeking government approval with 5 thrusts: first, living within our means, this is the fiscal management plan, trying to apply lessons learned in 1990s, such as don't do it all at once and be strategic, link up budgetary measures to where we want to go with improving services and government capabilities. Big challenge to understand that municipalities, schools, universities, they must be engaged in our review process, our commitment is to go step by step, engage stakeholders. Program review will also come to bear on voluntary agencies, budget minders are sometimes tempted to weed out weaker organizations, the ones funded from year to year, such groups might adopt a defensive structure rather than embrace the possibilities for change and renewal.

Sustainable health is another area – generating a mantra – we need to move towards sustainability, but also seek more return on our massive investments in this field. We spend more per capita than most provinces, but our health outcomes are worse.

Third area is jobs and learning, post secondary education should be our greatest drivers for economic development, linking educational programs to job opportunities, so education and training related to job creation will be central.

Only about four percent of our spending goes to direct investment in job creation. The objective is to focus on strategic priorities, attract investment and build new economic capacities.

We'll face skills shortages in the next 20 years.

Our fifth area is the social program area, tentatively called Affordability and Social Prosperity, where the overall approach to income assistance is under review, to access education and training. Senior officials talk about blowing up the term 'income assistance' as we know it, so looking at changes in the approach of family support programs, youth programs, and so on.

Middle stages of intensive planning program, ranging from limited focus to saving a billion, those who are approved will be announced in the throne speech for 2010/2011 budget.

In closing I want to return to the core themes: integration, innovation, change and renewal.

A reactive turf response won't be helpful, we need to know how to do things better, we are asking this about everything – rural schooling to assistive programs, we need solid evidence to justify up front investments, proving sustainability. As I work on these new policy processes, I remember the leadership provided by Joan and Charlie in the 1990s, they laid foundations for what we're now trying to do in government – integration of services, breaking down of silences. My key message is – great things can happen in tough times. Work with us. Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts.

Appendix “E”

Provincial Awards Acceptance Speeches

Acadian Sea Plants

Thank you Your Honour, for this important distinction. I’m pleased for this accomplishment, our company has received many awards, but this one is the one I’m most proud of, because it gives our company the human touch. Most of the time companies are focused on selling products and profits, and are not recognized for having the human touch. It should be a matter of course to help others, but it isn’t always so. I know we are being recognized for the employees at our R and D centre in Cornwallis – I congratulate each one of them, who took the initiative to create a work environment that is supporting. You are great role models and leaders for our company. I also thank the Digby Employment Opportunity team, and those individuals who agreed to work with us, helping to make a successful company. The employees in Cornwallis believe that persons with disabilities deserve to work and take their place in the world. The collaboration of agencies is essential for this to happen.

I thank you for the opportunity you have given us to participate in your important role, to assist those who are challenged to help them realize their potential.

Red Arrow Digital College

Hello, my name is Derek Louis; I first want to thank her Honour Lieutenant Governor and the network society for this award. When I first heard I won, I felt I didn’t deserve it, most times I forget that I have a disability, even though I’ve been living with it for much of my life. Winning this award made me take a step back and examine my life as a whole. When I was a baby I had an infection which left me with a compromised immune system, blind in left eye, I did not allow any limitations to confine me or define me. Later on I was stabbed 20-30 times, the damage was extensive, all my abdominal muscles were removed, my spleen, gall bladder, part of small intestine, since I have no abdominal muscles I wear an abdominal brace. I was thinking how I got through everything, living with a disability is like waking up one day and being stranded in the ocean. What decision do you make – do you close your eyes and surrender to the ocean, or do you keep going and take another breath and another breath, until somebody comes for you – and somebody always comes for you – and the agencies in this room affect so many lives, and we need to keep going because we owe a debt, and we can help.

I know that fate is fickle, so remember to fight if you find yourself in the ocean, because we’re all coming.