

Supported Employment

NOVEMBER 2009

Celebrating Employers



hire people with disabilities. Abilities First is an umbrella organization that provides support and resources for local employment service providers for adults with disabilities and works to develop relationships between community employers and persons with disabilities.

The annual banquet was held at the Brantford Golf and Country Club, with many local employers, employees and service providers in attendance. City Counsellor, James

On September 23, 2009, Abilities First held its third annual Employer Awards Banquet. An Ability First employer is someone that acknowledges and understands the business case for hiring people with disabilities and actively pursues opportunities to

Calnan kept the evening moving along with grace and humour as the Master of Ceremonies and keynote speaker, Mike Lipkin, had the audience captivated with his motivational message, One Life, One Meeting.

A total of twenty-one local employers received an Abilities First award, recognizing them as employers that truly strive to create inclusive workplaces. Two local companies were honoured to receive this award for three years running, Airvent Metal Products and Instore Focus Inc. The Supported Employment Program of Community Living Brant would like to congratulate all this years recipients but special appreciation goes to Canadian Tire Brantford and Tija Ceramic Studio, two local employers that we are pleased to have a partnership with.



Danielle's First Job



When you first meet Danielle you are immediately struck by her infectious smile; she is friendly and has a warm and gentle personality. Danielle has always maintained a positive outlook in her employment pursuits.

Danielle became an employee at TIJA Ceramics Studio in May, 2009. She exhibited a shy and quiet disposition at first, however since her employment she has developed into a more outgoing person. Danielle has addressed a variety of challenges and has learned new skills and gained confidence working for TIJA Ceramic Studio.

Danielle's responsibilities at TIJA include pouring slip (or clay) into different moulds to produce a product called green ware, cleaning the seams of the green ware and preparing the pieces to be shipped for firing in a kiln at 1900 degrees for up to 24 hours. When the ceramic pieces leave the kiln they are then called bisque which means an unfinished ceramic. At this point customers can paint and glaze the bisque to their preference.

Danielle has familiarized herself with painting pieces of ceramics by painting and customizing pieces that she selected. Danielle's position at TIJA has become not only a job but a creative past time that she enjoys when she comes to the studio on her own time with friends and family. Danielle's responsibilities at TIJA have expanded to include general cleaning duties, which Danielle says she doesn't mind doing but prefers producing the green ware. Danielle has built a great rapport with her employer and she has become a part of the TIJA Ceramic Studio family. Danielle is very proud of her employment. Congratulations Danielle! Keep up the great work.

For more information on TIJA Ceramics see www.tijaceramicstudio.com

Mission Statement: To empower people to find meaningful relationships and self worth within the community.

Philosophy: Everyone has an ability to do something, there is no such thing as disability only ability!

Achieving Goals



When Jason Barter is asked what his employment goals are he says he wants to work somewhere where he can help people. Well, Jason is definitely helping people through his employment at Colborne Street Price Chopper and his volunteer work at the Brantford Fire Hall.

Jason has been working at Price Chopper on Colborne Street since July, 2009 and has become a valued employee and part of a great team at the store. Jason's job, every Friday afternoon at the store is to face and stock the shelves. Jason's favourite duty is to crush the cardboard that he collects

throughout the store as he's working; Price Chopper's cardboard crusher is a great piece of machinery. Jason also helps out his co-workers with whatever they ask him to do and occasionally helps to bring in the carts. Jason says his favourite part of his job is to help out his co-workers and his boss Alex. Jason is very proud of the work he does at Price Chopper and has met some nice people and made some great friends.

Jason also volunteers at the Brantford Fire Hall on Clarence Street every Tuesday morning. Jason's volunteer duties at the station are to ensure the fire trucks have all the equipment on them that they might need in an emergency response. Jason also sweeps and mops the hallways of the station and squeegees the main floor where the trucks are stored. Jason's response to what he likes best about

volunteering at the fire station is hanging out with the guys and helping out his community. "Working with the guys at the fire station makes me feel pretty good about myself," says Jason.

When asked about his plans and goals for his future Jason says his goal is to live a happy life with his wife Amie, have a good relationship with their extended families and have a job where he can be helpful to other people.

With Jason's great attitude toward work, life and helping others, he's well on his way to achieving his own goals and

helping others achieve theirs.



"I Am On My Way"



I have been involved with several programs at Community Living Brant for over four years now. I have learned many new things with the help of Community Living Brant.

While I was still in high school I participated in fun activities with the Transition Program such as bowling, pizza and movie nights and lots of crafts. I have participated in cooking and self esteem classes and G1 prep classes through Community Living Brant's Literacy Program. I attempted to write my G1 driver's license about three months ago. I passed the sign section almost perfectly and missed the knowledge section by one

question. I am reviewing this part with the help of the Literacy Program and am planning to try again.

With the help of the Transition Program and the Literacy Program I attended and graduated from the Future Directions Program at Mohawk College. I learned more math while I was there, made new friends and enjoyed myself. Going was one of the scariest things I have ever done. But I made it through. Future Directions helped me learn new things to work on getting a job.

I'm currently involved in the Supported Employment Program where they helped me to get a volunteer placement working at the Park Road Veterinary Clinic; I like pets. While there I feed the cats, take the dogs for walks, I do laundry, lots of laundry!! and clean the vents.

I volunteered first for a few weeks and then I had an interview with the doctor. Later they called me and said that I got hired. I was very excited. I have been

there a year now and I really like my job. I work six hours a week. My support worker helped me learn to take the city bus to get to work. She taught me what number the bus was and where I get off.

I started going to the gym about six months ago with my Transition support worker to try something new and now I can go on my own with my friends.

All of the things that I have done with the Transition, Literacy and Supported Employment Programs have given me more confidence to try new things. I'm really a shy person. Sometimes it's scary but it's worth it.

I want to finish my G1 and get my license and I want to some day live on my own.

By: Rebecca Daniels