

Support Employment Program Educational Seminar

Recently a seminar held by the REACH Out Self-Advocate Committee featured the Supported Employment Program of Community Living Brant. The Supported Employment Program supports individuals to work towards their goal of competitive employment. This support includes developing an individualized employment plan that identifies steps necessary to work towards an employment goal. The steps may include resume writing, job readiness training, developing interview skills, informational interviews, how to conduct a job search, building confidence and self-esteem, on the job support and job retention strategies.

Competitive employment has a direct impact on Income Support received from the Ontario Disability Support Program, which can cause confusion and misunderstanding of how competitive employment will affect a person's monthly income. This seminar helped to dispel some of these misconceptions and answer some questions. Three people who receive support from the Supported Employment Program shared their personal stories of working within a competitive employment environment and some of the steps they took to get there. They each shared that their current jobs are just a step in their employment plans; they all have individual goals to move forward in their careers.

Michelle Horsley shared that her job has allowed her to save and purchase some things that she wanted such as a car and a computer. She feels an increase in her independence is due partly to her job. Michelle also said that working definitely has its ups and downs, a job isn't always fun and it's a lot of hard work.

Stefennie Jagt spoke about how employment has increased her confidence and independence. As well her monthly income is definitely higher than it was when she was only receiving ODSP Income Support. Stefennie also talked about the rough days of working, trying to get along with people and not wanting to get out of bed and walk to work on cold days, but she can't imagine not working now. Stefennie has goals of moving on to a better job some day.

Tim Leonard talked about overcoming his personal challenges and struggles to find and keep a job. Tim also talked about how his current job isn't what he identified in his employment plan and he continues to have a goal of working in horticulture, but he appreciates the paycheque of his current job and enjoys working with the staff team he's with.

For more information about the Supported Employment Program call 519-753-6303.

