



## CAES YEAR IN REVIEW 2018



### LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's so important in the provision of Employment Inclusion Services to challenge our assumptions and to make time and space to reflect, assess and evaluate the user experience. How well are we serving employers and job seekers? What are we doing really well and what do we need to do better? This past year has been significant with respect to our team's development and the development of CAES overall. We've built better processes for helping job seekers to support each other and to develop strategies for managing the anxiety that comes along with a job search in this economy. CAES has also built evaluations into our work so that we can use input from employers and job seekers to improve our services. We have an extremely strong team at CAES comprised of people who possess the courage and commitment to challenge themselves and our services to reflect, innovate, build, evaluate and improve. This is what helps us strengthen the Canadian workplace through inclusion.

Sean McEwen, Director



## PREMIER'S COUNCIL AWARD

In 2018, Sean McEwen, Director of CAES, was recognized with the “Excellence in Employment” award by the Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Throughout his career, Sean has worked relentlessly to improve employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities. Sean is committed to representing the diverse interests in the skills development and employment of people with disabilities. This builds mutual understanding and develops concerted efforts to address issues and employment barriers, through which government, employers, educators, service agencies, and potential employees all benefit.

One cannot underestimate the importance of the role that Sean has played, and continues to play in creating inclusive communities. In short, it is difficult to highlight the many achievements and strides that Sean has made and continues to make towards advocating for diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Cal Schuler, Diversity and Accessibility Consultant

## ACCESSIBILITY IN YYC

I can look back over the past year with great pride at the progress made by CAES. Along with our employer, community, civic and government partners, CAES has done a great deal of work in promoting inclusive, barrier-free, and universally designed environments. CAES is continuously called upon to respond to changing needs in the community, with an increasing number looking to us for direction and guidance concerning the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Our efforts have brought advantages and opportunities to many individuals - not only those with disabilities and/or other related mobility, sensory, or cognitive challenges. Children, seniors, mothers with strollers, job seekers, companies building and/or renovating their premises, and people gaining access to facilities, can all benefit from increased accessibility.

We have provided many opportunities to host and deliver professional development training, and information sessions on building disability confidence with a diverse group of employers. We continue to encourage open conversations, and inclusive attitudes, that remove barriers for people with disabilities to make valuable contributions to our community and society. As we dive into 2019 we look forward to providing more education, awareness and policy advocacy to increase the accessibility of our communities.

Cal Schuler, Diversity and Accessibility Consultant





## DISABILITY PRIDE

#CAES team members were proud to walk in the Disability Pride Parade in the summer of 2018. Pride celebrations have long been a topic of conversation for many groups – with the Disability Pride movement picking up momentum internationally only in the past few years. Some may be primed to ask why Disability Pride is important in the first place. Individuals with disabilities have been historically marginalized and made to feel “less able” than their peers. There has long been a train of thought that when individuals with disabilities thrive, they do so **IN SPITE OF THEIR DISABILITY, NOT BECAUSE OF IT.** In my opinion, I think celebrating Disability Pride is not celebrating a label, difference, or even perhaps the overcoming of barriers. Rather, my vision of Disability Pride would be one that celebrates a re-framing of disability in its entirety.

“DISABILITY PRIDE IS ABOUT CELEBRATION, EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT. FOR ME, THE EDUCATION PORTION OF PRIDE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT. DISABILITY PRIDE CREATES CONVERSATIONS THAT HELP US LEARN AND UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER BETTER. IT’S AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM AND CELEBRATE OUR DIFFERENCES.” – ANDREA VAN VUGT, DIRECTOR OF DISABILITY PRIDE ALBERTA

We look forward to joining others in celebrating Disability Pride this year at the June 9, 2019 parade!

Hayley Richards, Engagement and Communications Coordinator

## SUCCESS STORY: TONY AT WORLD HEALTH

Tony has been a part of World Health Club’s facility maintenance staff since 2013. Due to a franchise closure, Tony was relocated to another World Health location in March 2018. To alleviate the challenges that come with a work transition (i.e. new location, environment, coworkers) World Health’s managers and supervisors all stepped in to provide Tony with guidance during his shifts. Due to the amalgamation of staff from the old location with the staff at Edgemont, Tony’s shifts were reduced from 5 days per week to 2 days. To ensure growth continued with the company, new training opportunities were offered and CAES was invited to collaborate and support Tony in this process.

Tony has continued to persevere through all that has come his way. He has even embraced more changes by exploring new volunteer positions and participating in community events. Tony recently celebrated 5 years of employment with World Health and received a jacket he proudly wears when he is out in the community. CAES would like to commend World Health in their continued support, not only of Tony, but of their entire staff and their commitment to ensuring that everyone was transferred to a new location and retained their employment.

The author Kakuzo Okakura once wrote, “**THE ART OF LIFE LIES IN A CONSTANT READJUSTMENT TO OUR SURROUNDING.**” This was an art that Tony has had to practice immensely this past year. His canvas was full of discomfort, learning curves, uncertainties but also growth, new friendships, interests and opportunities.

Jasmine Pettigrew, Career Consultant and Bernadette Lumugdang, Diversity and Engagement Consultant







## CASE CONFERENCE: HALIFAX

This year saw 11 CAES team members attend the CASE Annual Supported Employment Conference in beautiful Halifax. The keynote speaker this year was Theo Fleury and he gave a raw and inspirational speech about his history with trauma, how it has shaped his life and how he has utilized his own story to develop resources for others. He encourages those who have experienced trauma to share their stories as well, in hopes of evoking change in the way people view trauma and how they cope with it.

“THERE’S A GIFT AT THE END OF PAIN AND SUFFERING, AND THAT’S WHY WE GO THROUGH IT...AND BY PUTTING A VOICE TO YOUR PAIN AND SUFFERING, YOU CREATE A STORY, YOU CREATE CONNECTION, AND THAT CREATES CHANGE.” – Theo Fleury.

There was a definite focus in many of the sessions on trauma, and there were also many innovative supportive employment models highlighted. Reverse job fairs were elaborated upon where individuals that are interested in the same industry would sit at a table and employers would approach them. A couple of other organizations shared their well-established partnerships with companies that provide job seekers with internship rotations, realistic evaluations, and even exit reviews at the end of their internship to give them a realistic employment experience.

We returned to Calgary feeling inspired, more connected as a team than ever before and straight up jazzed to be a part of the Canadian inclusive employment force.

Ashton Bennett, Career Consultant

## INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS

In 2018 CAES continued to work alongside our Indigenous counterparts in the Treaty 7 area, specifically with Community Futures Treaty 7 and Johnathon Red Gun, CFT7 Disability Coordinator. Our long-standing partnership with Community Futures Treaty 7 entered its eleventh year as we were invited to help plan the 11th Annual “Change in Action” Employment Summit and Career Fair held in May of 2018.

This annual event helped create awareness, and provided training and networking opportunities for all the people who attended, including Indigenous Employment Centres, Business Community Members, Service Providers, Job Seekers (First Nation People and First Nation Persons with disabilities), and Educational Institutions. This summit always serves to enhance current relationships and build new ones; the Career Fair portion saw over 300 people attend!

CAES staff also attended both the Tsuu T’ina Post-Secondary Career Fair and the Stoney Nakoda Nation Job Resource Centre Career Fair in March of 2018.

CAES’s capacity is increased and strengthened through our collaborations. We are honored to continue to partner with our Treaty 7 family.

Hand to Heart,  
Hiy Hiy

Jennifer Fournier, Diversity and Engagement Consultant



## “DIVERSITY DOESN'T STICK WITHOUT INCLUSION”

Laura Sherbin and Ripa Rashid's article titled "Diversity Doesn't Stick Without Inclusion" does a masterful job of explaining what I've been feeling lately; that we've been expending way too much time on the topic of diversity, and not enough on inclusion. I find all too often that a lot of employers will tell you that they have a handle on this diversity piece, that their numbers are good. Or sadly enough, some employers will tell you that their numbers are low for a certain representation, and 'Do we have any of those people?'

Not all organizations focus on diversity. Organizations where inclusivity is evident in their recruitment and onboarding, in their literature, and more importantly evident in their workplace, **RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF INCLUSIVITY**. These employers don't have an issue with diversity, because they recognize the value of building an inclusive workplace as an important recruitment strategy, and that people from diverse backgrounds will want to work for them because they are inclusive.

Sherbin and Rashid point out specific attributes that drive inclusion: inclusive leaders, authenticity, networking, visibility, and clear career paths. The authors summarize the article by commenting that diversity without inclusion is a story of missed opportunities. Perhaps it's time for those of us who professionally engage with employers to change the topic of conversation **FROM DIVERSITY TO INCLUSION**.

Stephen Wright, Diversity and Engagement Consultant

## CASS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, approximately 175 people gathered to celebrate 30 years of #CASScommunity. For over 30 years, Calgary Alternative Support Services has been working towards building inclusive communities throughout Calgary by creating community advocates and providing support and advocacy to Calgarian's with disabilities.

The night kicked off with an opening ceremony, prayer and land acknowledgment from our good friend and Blackfoot Elder, Johnathan Red Gun. This was followed by festive eating and a demonstration from one of the finest dancers the pow wow trail has to offer – Shirley Hill. Shirley shared her laughter and fancy footwork with us and explained some of the history of pow wow dancing and the regalia she was wearing. Later our CEO, Steven Law was on hand to share a few words of gratitude for all the staff, members and community advocates that make CASS what it is today.

Our Social Committee picked a meaningful venue to host this event. Fort Calgary is a beacon of the pioneering spirit, a fitting venue to host CASS' 'pioneers in advocacy'. We left feeling inspired to champion inclusion and advocacy for the next 30 years.

Chance Bellegarde, Career Consultant





## DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Each year the CEFN collaborates with community partners to host a variety of Disability Employment Awareness Month events. The generous support of the Government of Alberta, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and our community partners, allow us to host a wide variety of events.

DEAM 2018 involved events targeted to specific demographic partnerships; 'DEAM Jobs for All' was a unique DEAM event that functioned as an inclusion seminar for new Human Service Professionals. We also had the pleasure of hosting another first for DEAM; 'Advocates for Advocacy' a panel held at MRU featuring a range of professionals who all identified as disability advocates.

As we had in previous years, we continued to accept nominations for our DEAM Employer Awards, and received over 35 nominations for 6 Award positions! We were proud to award 6 DEAM Employer Awards to businesses that represent a range of industries and size; our full list of Award recipients is available on the [CEFN website](#).

Although it's been said, it bears repeating – our DEAM events would not have been possible without the support of Alberta CSS, local partnerships, and Service Provider collaborations across the province. Our continued and unified voice in our #ProclaimDEAM campaign resulted in THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA, MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUING A PROVINCIAL PROCLAMATION OF OCTOBER AS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH. We were thrilled to receive this Proclamation from Minister Sabir himself, who spoke so elegantly at our DEAM Employer Awards Gala. We applaud the Provincial Government's commitment to creating inclusive workplaces and were proud to celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month alongside them.

Continuing in this theme, DEAM events for 2019 are already shaping up to involve substantial provincial collaborations. We can't wait for another exciting October celebrating DEAM with you all!

Hayley Richards, Engagement and Communications Coordinator,  
CEFN Coordinator

