

## How You Can Include Someone With An Intellectual Disability?

Including people with intellectual disabilities in your workplace, volunteer organization, service club or circle of friends is something that helps build a community that treats people equitably. Here are some ideas on how you could "think inclusively" in your community:

### At Your Workplace

Approximately 30 local businesses currently employ someone with an intellectual disability, in full-time, part-time and contract/casual positions.

Here are a few reasons why someone with an intellectual disability can be an asset to your workplace:

- 1. Commitment.** The person you hire with an intellectual disability will be one of your most committed employees. They will be highly motivated and will want to prove their worth. They will work hard at the tasks that are asked of them and not necessarily be looking to move on, even from entry level positions. That kind of work ethic can be great for the whole company!
- 2. Customer Appreciation.** Your customers will notice and appreciate that you are inclusive. It is an advantage to a business to set themselves apart from their competition in a positive way, and this is one way that marketability can be achieved. In addition, the intellectual disability network, and their friends and families, is quite large locally, not just with people connected to Community Living, but also the people with a disability in general. Being inclusive can be a smart customer growth decision.
- 3. Business Values.** Being an inclusive employer can contribute to the values you wish to convey with your business, and that heightened profile in the community can also benefit in other ways, such as: increased applications for employment opportunities, partnership invitations for significant community events and recognition in local or industry-wide programs.

Being an inclusive employer is about getting work done at your business and becoming a leader in community building.

### Volunteering and Service Clubs

While Renfrew County is known for its volunteer spirit, it's no secret that fewer and fewer people are contributing to volunteerism and service clubs than in the past. Including people with disabilities in your volunteer efforts can go a long way to helping achieve your goals.

Much like employers, people with intellectual disabilities are committed to being part of causes when someone includes them in the opportunity. People connected with Community Living are involved in many activities, which expands this volunteer's reach to a group of people who may not be familiar with your cause. These are people who can support the organization, attend functions and help spread the word.

Many organizations locally do include individuals in a volunteer capacity, and they are benefiting from that decision to be inclusive. You could too.

### **With Friends and Family or Social Circles**

You are probably already connected to a social circle that includes someone with an intellectual disability. Perhaps you sit near each other at hockey games, or have joined the same community group, or live in the same neighbourhood. Making a further step to being friends is pretty easy when you already share common interests.

Here's another idea: the next time you're having a get-together of some sort, make a choice to include someone with an intellectual disability. It could be a neighbourhood BBQ, an Epicure or Tupperware party, a garage sale, church service - anything! It always feels good for both parties when you include someone.