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# 2013

## EMPLOYER AWARDS

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Disability Employment  
Awareness Month

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Presented at the  
Manitoba Legislative Building  
in the Rotunda  
on October 30, 2013

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**Azhad Hosein**, United Messenger, was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre for acknowledging the skills of employees with disabilities and increasing the inclusivity of the workplace by implementing accessibility changes.



**Bernard Marcoux**, Caisse Financial Group, was nominated by Aurele Boisvert, Université de St-Boniface, for his strong leadership and



ethical values in supporting people with disabilities, including those with Asperger Syndrome. Due to his diligence, these employees have become hard-working team members.

**Brett Omeara**, McDonald's, was nominated by Juniper Centre for his work with an employee tailoring her position to meet her needs and facilitated increased wheelchair access to the restaurant.



**Cindy Harrison**, Arnold Bros. Transport Ltd., was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for her abilities to capably support employees with



disabilities, address concerns as they arise and offer positive feedback for a job well done. She also facilitates inclusion of participants with disabilities in company events.

**Colleen Cook**, Dollar Tree Canada, was nominated by Trailblazers Supported Employment Services for her abilities to capably train and coach a participant to work in a cash and sales position. She and the employee celebrate their success when mastering specific skills and demonstrated progress.



**Danny Morris**, Mystery Lake Body Shop was nominated by SMD's Northern Regional Office Thompson for providing a valuable work placement and training opportunity for an employee who is Deaf. Danny ensured the work environment was safe and accessible and



provided ASL interpretation during the work experience. Video-conferencing was put in place for monitoring progress, follow-up and evaluation and the use of texting also facilitated communication.

**Darcy McConnell**, Vita Health (Osborne), was nominated by SCE Lifeworks serving persons with intellectual disabilities for unwavering support to a participant. She increases the employee's responsibilities as his knowledge broadens and promotes a collaborative workplace.



**Dave Holstead**, Giant Tiger, was nominated by Reaching Equality Employment Services for his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty to accommodate the needs of an employee who is Deaf. Dave ensured that ASL interpretation was in place where needed (including providing ASL classes for employees) and that the



participant was a valued team member. He facilitated rapport between the person with the disability and his co-workers and provided opportunities for advancement.

**Dawn Wilkinson,** Celebrations Dinner Theatre, was nominated by Connect Employment, for her collaboration and innovative strategies to assist employees with disabilities in overcoming challenges. She clearly demonstrated her belief in the skills and contributions of persons with disabilities to the workplace.



**Debbie Crease,** Pollard Banknote Ltd., was nominated by Connect Employment for successfully guiding a long-term employee with a



disability through challenging work tasks, performance issues and personal situations. She located new duties for this employee when his position was affected by company changes, and ensured his work was recognized and fairly evaluated.

**Debbie Dykstra**, Cargill Ltd., was nominated by Reaching Equality Employment Services for her willingness to go the extra mile to accommodate persons with disabilities. For example, she arranged for specialized equipment for an employee with a visual impairment, negotiated flexible work arrangements and provided subsidized bus passes for those who needed them. Cargill Ltd. also hosted lunch and learn sessions with Reaching Equality staff as guest speakers.



**Debbie Sandland**, Robertson College, was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for her abilities to capably supervise employees and to facilitate skill development through the provision of increasing



responsibilities. She also assists employees in overcoming challenges and, in one situation, encouraged a participant to do a presentation on recycling to all students at the college.

**Dena Gillis and Amy Henderson**, Party On Rentals, nominated by Segue Employment, for providing excellent seasonal employment for consumers with disabilities in their tent setup area. Dena and Amy offer patient and compassionate supervision and go to extra lengths to transport consumers when tent locations are not close to public bus routes.



**Donna and Leo Jansens**, Pen and Paper, was nominated by SCE



Lifeworks for their abilities to facilitate hands-on skill development and knowledge growth among participants. They are supportive, encouraging and provide positive feedback on an ongoing basis.



**Garnet Peters**, Accupipe, was nominated by Segue Career Options for his willingness and patience to work with employees with disabilities to bring about success. He is also open to accommodating individual needs and to working with Segue on an ongoing basis.



**Heather Froelich**, Avion Security, was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre for her company's inclusive Employment Equity Policies and for her abilities to find positions



where the needs of employees with disabilities can be accommodated. Heather provided excellent employee training, as well as opportunities to compete for more advanced internal security positions.

**Henry Peters**, Bergs Prep and Paint, was nominated by Segue Career Options for seeing “the best” in employees enabling them to perform to their potential. He utilizes a supportive approach to overcome any barriers that present themselves.



**Jaime Prokopec**, Workers Compensation Board, was nominated by Connect Employment for his ongoing supportive advocacy of an employee with a disability through company transitions that affected



his position. She assisted him in learning new tasks and capably adapting to change. She also encouraged him to take advantage of opportunities to advance within the company.

**Janice Swan, IKEA** Winnipeg, was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre for successfully accommodating an employee who is Deaf in a food worker position. She capably ensured that ASL Interpretation was provided for the interview and during orientation and training, and educated department managers on how to create an inclusive work environment for those who are Deaf.



**Jaret Olford, Children's Museum,** was nominated by Connect Employment for his dedication as a manager and for encouraging an employee with a disability to advance and assume greater



responsibilities. From the beginning, Jaret recognized the unique skills and talents of this individual and matched him with a position that enabled him to utilize his excellent interpersonal and social abilities.

**Jim Foster**, Walmart, was nominated by Westman Employment Services Brandon, for excellence in accommodating people with disabilities and providing orientation and training to persons in the company's Brandon stores.



**John Carmichael**, Office Max/Grand and Toy, was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre, for successfully



accommodating the needs of a part-time employee who is Deaf at their Scurfield Blvd. location where the majority of employees work full time. Disability-related accommodations included: ASL interpreter support, work lists and schedules and job coaching.

**John McLaughlin**, Foampac Division Pal Group, was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for his abilities to ensure that the skills of participants match the work-related tasks they undertake and to deal with employment-related issues as they arise.



**Kathy Brooks**, Director of Provincial Services, Family Services and Labour, was nominated by Trailblazers Supported Employment Services for being a champion for diversity and accommodating persons with disabilities. She has accommodated the needs of staff



in her area, and assisted individuals in returning to work after acquiring disabilities. She located a unique position in her department for an individual with a brain injury and assisted another participant who needed hearing aids.

**Kelly Robertson**, Vita Health (Westwood), was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for welcoming an employee with a disability to the workplace, providing guidance for success so he can grow in his position and acknowledging his hard work. She ensures the employee is an integral part of the team and is included in the organization's social events.



**Kirsten Godbout**, Diversity Services, University of Winnipeg, was nominated by Epic Opportunities for creating a workplace where all can feel welcomed and valued. She mobilized a work team to support and train persons with disabilities on the job, including increasing employees' duties as they became more comfortable with their work environment.



**Lyall Wilson**, Travel Manitoba, was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for being a champion of diversity, promoting a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere and including the supported employee as part of the team. He sees beyond the participant's disability, and tailors responsibilities to include flexible work hours as needed.



**Lori Hawkins and Sandra O'Malley**, The Sling Sisters, were nominated by Segue Career Options for providing opportunities for consumers with disabilities to test out jobs before committing to

permanent employment. They skillfully identify areas where workers need improvement using a solution-based approach and offer work placements to enhance performance. They work with persons new to Canada with language barriers, building on their strengths to maximize employee talents.



**Matt Bergen**, eBytes Computers, was nominated by Segue Career Options for providing valuable work placements. In particular, those going on to college or university have indicated

the company enabled them to learn new skills to assist them in their chosen fields of study. Matt effectively mentors employees and focuses on their strengths to build confidence and enhance work-related performance.



**Michael Martel**, Martel Bros, was nominated by Connect



Employment for his willingness to recognize employees for their abilities and foster a receptive work environment. Through his leadership, the needs of people with disabilities are successfully accommodated.



**Michael Smith,**  
Centerplate – MTS  
Centre, was nominated  
by SMD’s Employment  
Preparation Centre for  
successfully  
accommodating the  
needs of an employee  
who is deaf, working in a concession stand. This individual took  
orders from written order slips and subsequently prepared the food  
for his customers.



**Miles Mortensen,** Southwood Golf and Country Club, was nominated  
by SCE Lifeworks for supporting an employee in a combined  
maintenance/janitor/laundry position. He introduced flexibility into  
the participant’s work schedule to accommodate his needs. Miles



had sufficient confidence  
in the employee to he  
asked him to assist in  
training a summer student.  
The work at the golf and  
country club is seasonal,  
and it is anticipated that  
the consumer will return  
next year.

**Noreen Graves**, Manitoba Public Insurance was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for supervising and monitoring participants with disabilities in a compassionate and encouraging manner. She provides training to ensure employees can compete for posted positions and facilitates an increase in disability awareness in the workplace.



**Pam Vodrazka**, Walmart, was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre for demonstrating a commitment to workplace diversity by successfully hiring and accommodating an employee with a disability in the store's Fashion Department. Disability



accommodations included: E-maps to direct customers and adaptive equipment to enable the consumer to perform her duties sitting down. The worker was granted star recognition as employee of the month.

**Paul Langel**, Tall Grass Prairie, was nominated by SCE Lifeworks for his diligence in supporting an employee to maximize work-related performance and bring about success. Paul promotes opportunities for advancement, and is concerned about his employee's wellbeing.



**Rae Anne Paxton**, Community Living Disability Services, Family Services and Labour, was nominated by the Civil Service Commission for being a champion of Project SEARCH, a school to work transition program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. She encouraged the involvement of other government branches in this initiative and, to date, has hosted two students. Rae Anne is an excellent coach and



student mentor, promotes inclusivity and acknowledges participants' strengths and contributions. This initiative has led to employment for a number of persons with disabilities.

**Raj Kulathungam**, SCT Welding, Laser and Manufacturing Co., was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre for championing diversity in his workplace. Utilizing a team approach to problem solving, Raj and his colleagues accommodated people with disabilities based on employees' skills, abilities and needs. Accommodations included utilizing memory aids such as posting of signs as reminders to persons with disabilities, job carving and providing additional training.



**Reynold Kroeker**, Canadian Tire, was nominated by Segue Career Options for ensuring that he provides positions within his stores that best match the skills of employees with disabilities. He encourages participants to voice their concerns, empowers employee growth, and facilitates open and honest feedback and evaluation.



**Roy Jabar**, Director of Taxation Audit, Manitoba Finance, was nominated by the Civil Service Commission for his efforts to make physical changes to the workplace to accommodate the needs of an employee



with a disability. Since this participant has been hired, her responsibilities have increased and she has moved from part time to full time status. (Also pictured is Roy's director, Kim Brown)

**Sara MacArthur**, Red River Community College (RRCC), was nominated by Connect Employment for skillfully providing community-based work training to people with intellectual



disabilities as part of the RRCC Recycling Team. She successfully made improvements to the team's work area and ensured they were acknowledged for their contributions to the College.

**Sharon Beer**, Dollar Tree Canada, was nominated by Career Connections, for her abilities to capably train employees on an individual basis, gradually increase duties as workers gain



confidence and demonstrate respect for all. She also provides work placements for high school students. One employee was recently awarded “Shelf Stocker of the Week” for her excellent work.

**Shane Kroeker**, K-Tec Earthmovers, was nominated by Segue Career Options for his willingness to explore the abilities of the whole person



to maximize success. The company provides excellent training opportunities and higher-end employment for those consumers who can take advantage of them. Most recently, Shane took on an employee in a computer graphics position.

**Sid Minuk**, Sid's Complete Care Car Center, was nominated by SMD's Employment Preparation Centre for providing successful community-based assessments for two consumers with disabilities leading to full-time employment. He acknowledged the abilities of his employees and provided a supportive and inclusive work environment.



**Steve Walker**, Hilton Suites and Greenwood Inn, was nominated by Shannon Fontaine, Manitoba Tourism Education Council, for dedication in accommodating and supporting employees with various



disabilities at both hotels to become loyal staff members. He devoted considerable attention to mentoring one valued employee who recently retired after years of service.

**Todd Van Buren**, Workers Compensation Board (WCB), was nominated by Connect Employment for his ongoing work successfully accommodating an individual's disability-related needs and guiding him through an internship placement.



Following completion of the internship, Todd located permanent employment for this consumer with the Information and Technology Department.



***Thank you  
to all the Employers in Manitoba  
who make a difference  
by hiring persons with disabilities!***