



Awareness

Accessibility

Accommodation

Ability

Action

Upcoming Events THE DOOR IS WIDE OPEN

**BTA in partnership with
AbilitiesFirst
Symposium**

**'Moving from Vision
To Action'**

Tuesday June 23, 2009

1/2 day 7:30 am-noon

Building an Inclusive and
Accessible Community

**Best Western
Brant Park Inn**

19 Holiday Dr. Brantford

Register online **FREE** at
our website or contact
elaine.austin@cme-mec.ca

**Community Living
Burlington's 5th Annual
Charity Golf
Tournament**

Thursday June 25, 2009

**Crosswinds Golf &
Country Club**

Contact Chrissy Lilly at
905-336-2225 x 232 or
www.clburlington.ca

**Catholic Community
Services of York Region**

Cordially invite you to
attend their

**29th Annual General
Meeting—Richmond Hill**

Tuesday June 30, 2009

Registration 6:30 pm

Contact Vangie Mendoza
by June 24 at 905-770-7040
x 301



The WHITING Group of Canada consists of WHITING® Door Manufacturing, AMDOR® and DRW Supplies, and is known throughout North America for its quality products and exceptional customer service. Operating since 1967, WHITING Door has become Canada's premier manufacturer of roll-up doors for trucks and trailers with a full range of door types and replacement parts. Since its inception in 1991, AMDOR has grown to become a major player in the specialty roll-up door market – designing and manufacturing shutter style roll-up doors for the fire truck, emergency and specialty vehicle market in North America. Recent innovations from the WHITING Group include Luma-Bar™ LED lighting systems used in a wide variety of emergency vehicle applications and CommandLIFT™ automatic door openers –the first real powered opener for truck and trailer doors.

Under the guidance and direction of the owner and president, Bruce Whitehouse, the company has grown to 48 employees. He has also devoted his time and played a key role in assisting with the overall design, development and implementation of the Business Takes Action

Advisory Council (BTAAC). Bruce stressed that employee "fit" is paramount in every workplace and they have always hired people for what they can bring to the organization;

"Disabilities are essentially a non-issue."

Three years ago the WHITING Group made a conscious business decision to approach Community Living in Burlington (CLB) and to bring an individual working with CLB onboard, as a permanent employee. CLB's mission for the past fifty four years has been to enrich the quality of life, development and community integration of individuals with developmental disabilities in Burlington. Once a job was identified by the WHITING Group and CLB, they collectively determined who could perform a traditional job in a manufacturing environment and fully described all the tasks involved. Joyce Jagt, a job coach from CLB was assigned to work with the employer to identify the processes required to complete the tasks and provide training for the new employee.

William Short was hired to work in the sub assembly or pre-production area and was fully trained with assistance from CLB and Alan Morris, WHITING's Plant Manager. The WHITING Group changed

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June's "Myth of the Month"

Myth: "Someone will always have to help them"

Fact: This is not the case with proper training. Individuals with disabilities have adjusted to their disability in most cases. It does not affect their ability to work unaided.



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THE DOOR IS WIDE OPEN (CONTINUED)

their processes by moving and then re-aligning the functions to accommodate William allowing him to perform the jobs to the best of his abilities. I asked William what he loved about working and he replied “the job and the different areas he gets to work in”. Today William lives independently in his own apartment and is living a life filled with new opportunities and experiences. His number one goal is to buy his own car which is not uncommon or different than any young man’s dream!

According to Alan, William has been a tremendous employee from day one and is fully functional in four different production areas. He is very eager to work, steadfast, and loyal. Alan said “there is really nothing he cannot do”! William’s co-workers are more than eager to assist him on the shop floor as needed.

Many myths exist about how expensive it is to accommodate persons with disabilities in the workplace. Studies have demonstrated that the average cost to accommodate an employee is less than \$500.00 (Disabilities Possibilities, Jan 2008).

Bruce explained that cost was not even an issue to accommodate William. Many employees with disabilities require little more than what you are already offering them. One suggestion he recommends for other employers to offer would be flexible work hours and/or restructuring workstations.

Another tool available to employers considering the hire of individuals with disabilities is to offer sensitivity training.

Although the WHITING Group was not aware of this type training (to promote sensitivity to others perceived as different) to their employees when William joined the team, Bruce indicated that it would be a part of a “best practices” to help everyone during the transition. He believes that it is very important for all corporations and residents to support all individuals with or without disabilities within their own communities. The WHITING Group believes in corporate social responsibility and strives to build and retain the best workforce that includes an inclusive and diverse workforce as a top priority.

Working in a community is a big part of inclusion. People with developmental disabilities want and need to work at jobs where they receive equal pay for equal work, feel valued as employees and build the self reliance that will lead to further employment opportunities. Accessibility is a good investment for any business. It brings more consumers through the doors who are willing to support inclusive workplaces and removes barriers that keep skilled employees out of the workforce.

One thing is definite at The WHITING Group. The *door will always be open* for persons with disabilities and they will absolutely continue to hire the best people for the position. It is important to remember that persons with disabilities often have the same skills as people without disabilities – the only difference might be the way they perform the task.