



WORK-WISE

Keeping you current on North Okanagan's employment scene

The Abilities Edition

ROCKING A DIVERSE ABILITY? NEURO-ATYPICAL? READ ON: THIS IS FOR YOU.

September is Disability Employment Month in BC. Here are a few (of the many!) local employers who have brought diverse abilities on-board, and how it's been win-win for everyone involved, from staff to customers to the bottom line.

Safeway: A post on Facebook got a lot of traction: "Rave, Vernon Safeway. I'd just like to point out how awesome Safeway is for employing people with disabilities. When I went in I was confused when I first got to the till and the happy smiley lady didn't answer my question while she was typing on the till. But the boy bagging my food said 'Sorry sir, she's deaf' — then she handed me a writing pad to tell her what I needed. It makes me so happy to see." The post got 65 comments, from "Well done Safeway" to "Safeway you're doing something very right".



Hytec/Kohler: The team is proud to have five associates trained to provide mental health first aid to staff on the floor. "We have also launched a Mental Health campaign called "Not Myself Today", which allows associates to express how they are feeling with emoticon pins," shares HR Generalist Maral Khoshkholgh.



Gumtree: Hired a Baker's Assistant with a brain injury who has been rolling out (and in) the dough since 2015. "She's a consistent, wonderful employee and we're really happy to have her here," says co-owner Kyla MacAulay.

WorkBC staff at Kindale share some of the inclusive local employers they have worked with: Superstore, Home Depot, Walmart, Bulk Barn, Black Press, Morning Star, Nature's Fare, Askew's Foods, Alliance Traffic Group, Adecco, and more!

Oodles of Access

Your WorkBC-Vernon location offers accessibility options to help make your job search successful. Here are a few of our faves — if you don't see what you need here, give us a buzz at 250-545-2215 x 230 to see what we can do:

- Interpreters for deaf or hard-of-hearing job seekers
- NVDA screen-reader technology
- Online workshops if in-person isn't your jam
- Virtual appointments via Skype
- A high-contrast keyboard for added visibility
- A sit/stand computer station for folks to roll up with ease
- An elevator, as there should be in a three-floor building
- An accessible washroom with a power door, a grab-bar, and space to maneuver
- Access to what we call "Employment Related Disability Supports" if necessary to find or keep a job, such as eye glasses, hearing aids, accessible technology, and more.



Bonus Bucks

If you have a disability (it doesn't have to be diagnosed, just self-reported), and you aren't eligible for EI, there's a fantastic program called "Working Together" that can pay part of your wages. Knowing this gives you an edge when you're out there applying for work, and helps sweeten the deal for an employer to choose you. If you're interested, talk to your Case Manager at WorkBC — or apply to get a Case Manager by visiting apply.workbc.ca. No cost to you!

WorkBC

September is Disability
Employment Month in B.C.



GET TO KNOW: WORKBC STAFF



Celena Sandaker is one of those people you feel lucky to know. She posts new jokes on the wall in the office bathroom every Monday, just to put a smile on co-workers' faces. Her favourite thing is seeing a job seeker "exceed their own expectations and realize all that they are capable of doing". She loves her job helping people with disabilities find work.

Celena works for Kindale from an office in the WorkBC-Vernon Centre, where she offers WorkBC services including: interview coaching, resume help, recommending job seekers to employers, helping new employees succeed on the job, and more. You should come in and meet Celena already!

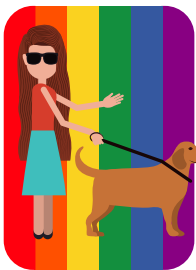
What's something you love about your job?

I get to help people. The best part is when I see one of those "aha" moments in someone's eyes.



September is Disability Employment Month in BC. What are some successful accommodations you have seen made for Clients you have worked with?

Schedule accommodations are the most important and most successful thing an employer can do. One employer allows the Client's wife to attend staff meetings because the Client is unable to take notes. Another agreed to the Client using a cheat sheet attached on a zip string to his belt. Another added a ramp for a Client in a wheelchair so she could reach the security pin pad. He then promoted the Client to keyholder, with a raise.



What diverse abilities have you worked with?

Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, FASD, developmental delay, brain injuries, mobility issues, cerebral palsy, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, ADHD...a whole rainbow of ability!

What do you want someone coming in to your office for the first time to know about you?

I'm here for YOU.

What do you think makes you good at your job?

I'm patient and open. And I don't judge.

SPOTLIGHT:

Success Snippets

"For years, Kimberly struggled to find work. Ever since her husband's passing in 1992, and then the stroke she suffered a year later that paralyzed her right side, she'd barely been able to make ends meet." Through support from WorkBC, she was able to start her own business organizing people's homes. WorkBC was able to access funding for technology that helped her succeed: a tablet with software that translates her speech into text for emails.



Mary Jane, who lost partial hearing, shares: "I wanted to prove that I could still go to work." With help from Employment Services, she did just that. "It's a good job. I'm getting up and doing things. I'm a lot happier."

Employ! is a local program for youth looking for work.

Facilitators say that local employers have been great at providing accommodations to young people with disabilities, including: Apple Auto Glass, Canadian Tire, Altech Auto, VegPro, Universal Packaging, and Elephant Storage.

Christine was diagnosed with a terminal illness. She wanted to work. She turned to the WorkBC-Vernon Centre for help. "With my illness, I have had to consider how much I want to disclose. They helped me figure that out." Christine found work. "There is always someone out there that will recognize you and the gifts you have despite your illness. It's about getting those doors to open, and once you take that first step, then you'll be on your way."

If you have a diverse ability, and you want to work, don't be shy — we are so eager to join you on your journey. Reach out at the number or email below to take that first step.



	Reach WorkBC Employment Services:
	3105 33 Street, Vernon BC, V1T 9P7
	250-545-2215 x 230
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