

CLEC brings together mayors from across county

News

Employers urged to hire individuals from Community Living

Posted By Ron Giofu/The Amherstburg Echo



Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley speaks at Community Living Essex County's "Luncheon with the Mayors" last week in Kingsville. Bradley is challenging all mayors in Ontario to encourage the hiring of those with disabilities.

KINGSVILLE — Community Living Essex County is seeking to educate people into what they do and to encourage others to get involved.

To that end, they held "Luncheon with the Mayors" last Wednesday afternoon at Lakeside Park in which mayors from around Essex County attended along with other dignitaries and CLEC support staff.

Tony DeSantis, manager of community relations with CLEC, said the goal of the event was to network and for the organization to make contacts. He pointed out they are looking to have more people they support hired into the workforce and was encouraged by the number of local mayors who supported the challenge put out by Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley.

Bradley was the guest speaker and said Essex County has responded better than other areas to his challenge. He said mayors have the voice to advocate and said those supported by Community Living adds to the workforce, not detracts from it. He encouraged towns and cities to review bylaws with their planning departments to ensure there is nothing discriminatory against those with disabilities.

"We have a long way to go. We should be doing the maximum, not the minimum," he told the audience.

Bradley added that the economy should not be seen as an acceptable excuse from employers not to hire those with disabilities.

"They can do it if they want to," said Bradley.

New accessibility legislation should be embraced, he added, and that municipalities can't view the act "as a burden."

Greenhouse operator Chris Cervini said he welcomed people from Community Living Essex County with some apprehension at first, but is now glad he did. Admitting he was "hesitant" at first, persistence from DeSantis paid off. Cervini said he is now in the process of hiring a third person.

"Everybody needs a place to belong," he said.

Anne Marie Fantin, a parent of a son with a disability, said that by him getting an opportunity he has now started his own lawn care business.