

# Adams accepts challenge from Sarnia mayor

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley has thrown down the gauntlet-and Leamington Mayor John Adams is accepting his challenge.

Recently, Bradley challenged all mayors in Ontario "to do the right thing and take up the challenge of hiring persons who have a disability".

While Adams admits he can't make any promises, he said he will certainly discuss with the human resources department and CEO Bill Marck the possibility of job opportunities within the municipality for the intellectually challenged.

"Whether it be in the municipal building, with parks and rec, full-time or a summer position," said Adams, "I will see if we have anything to fit in with the staffing organization."

But, he said, he would also like to encourage local business people to consider an employee with intellectual disabilities.

After a brief meeting with Tony DeSantis, manager, community relations and resource development for

Community Living Essex County, Adams said he was impressed with the young CLEC client DeSantis had invited to join them - Danica Gorrell.

Adams said he was impressed with her enthusiasm and her independence.

"It was great to see that she had gotten out on her own and is anxious to get a job," said Adams.

"I want to find a job working with people," said the friendly Danica. "I know I can be a good employee-I just need a chance."

"I live on my own," added Danica, "and really like to be independent."

DeSantis said Sarnia has a history of hiring persons with intellectual challenges, including several for summer positions helping to maintain beautification in the city.

He said there are several excellent candidates for employment within CLEC, including Danica, "they just need to be given the opportunity".

Jacquelyn Ciliska, employment support worker with CLEC, said she works with 15-20 CLEC clients looking for

work in Leamington.

She said many of them would make outstanding employees-like Danica, for example.

"Danica is full of energy and outgoing," said Ciliska, "and is reliable, motivated and dependable."

She said Danica went to college and took the 'work skills' program to develop the skills necessary to become a successful employee."

While many people take their jobs for granted, Ciliska said to many of the intellectually challenged clients, their job is their life.

"That's the reason they get up in the morning," she said, "and they are so proud."

She said inclusion is also so important to her clients and by actually working within the community it gives them a tremendous amount of pride.

But with the economic downturn, Ciliska said finding employment opportunities for her clients has become a much more difficult task.



**Leamington Mayor John Adams has accepted the challenge presented by Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley to encourage local employers to consider hiring intellectually challenged workers, such as Danica Gorrell (centre), when jobs become available. Pictured with Adams and Danica is Jacquelyn Ciliska, employment support worker with Community Living Essex County.**