

Mayors support inclusive hiring

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Chatham-Kent businesses are being challenged to provide job opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

The challenge has been issued by Mayor Randy Hope, who has accepted a challenge from Community Living Wallaceburg and Community Living Chatham-Kent to explore municipal employment opportunities for those with disabilities.

The pledge by Hope follows an invitation by Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley to other municipalities to do the right thing and take up the challenge of hiring people who have a disability.

"The strength of our community is in our diversity," said Hope. "People overcoming personal challenges develop strengths that can also be a great asset to the communities we live in. This initiative will recognize that."

Community Living Wallaceburg and Community Living Chatham-Kent provide support and services to individuals with intellectual disabilities including assistance in finding competitive employment.

"People with intellectual or related disabilities have skills that employers are seeking and we congratulate Mayor Hope and Chatham-Kent for undertaking this initiative," said David Katzman, executive director of Community Living Wallaceburg.

During the past 24 months, employment programs offered through both community living organizations have assisted more than 57 people achieve their dream of securing real employment while earning a competitive wage.

"Competitive employment translates into inclusive communities ensuring that individuals who have an intellectual disability become contributing citizens and this benefits the entire community," said Lu-Ann Cowell, executive director of Community Living Chatham-Kent.

Cowell said studies have shown that workers with disabilities, when compared to non-disabled workers, are often on par with or exceed job performance measures such as attendance, safety, quality of work and have less job turnover.

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