

Municipality of Leamington

Agenda

Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)

Wednesday June 10, 2015 at 3:00 pm

Room 112

111 Erie Street North, Leamington ON

1) CALL TO ORDER

2) ADOPTION OF LAAC MAY 13, 2015 MINUTES

3) BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

- a) Review Accessibility Checklist for Revisions
- b) Follow up on Accessibility Improvements at the Heinz Arena

4) NEW BUSINESS

- c) Site Plans for review

LDSS - 80 Oak St West

Comfort Inn - 279 Erie St South

Seacliff Heights - 40 Seacliff Dr East

- d) Review of AAC YAK Newsletter

5) ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

6) ADJOURNMENT

/jv

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Municipality of Leamington

Minutes

**Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)
Wednesday May 13, 2015
3:00 pm Locker Room Lounge
Kinsmen Complex - 249 Sherk Street, Leamington ON**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Donald Giesbrecht
John Hammond
Karen Lewis
Paul Child
Robert Bahry

STAFF PRESENT

Bechara Daher, Manager of Building Services
Danielle Truax, Manager of Planning Services
Judy Vanroie, Building Services Assistant

1) CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm

2) DELEGATION

CIP Grant Program

Danielle Truax, Manager of Planning Services, explained that the CIP grant program pertains to the uptown business area and that renovation grants would include things like energy efficiency, fire safety, accessible washrooms, etc. Applicants would receive 25% back of the cost to renovate up to a maximum of \$15,000 but they need to spend a minimum of \$5,000 in order to qualify. Danielle explained that the program started at the end of 2011 and will run until the end of 2016. Approximately 10 business have taken advantage of the program. Danielle will be bringing a report to council with respect to expanding the boundary area as a number of businesses fall just outside the present boundary for qualification. Committee members were encouraged to let Danielle know when they run into accessible issues as she is willing to approach businesses on their behalf. Danielle offered to approach the owners of the Gingerbread House to discuss alteration of the entrance to make it wheelchair accessible.

Re-design of Barrier Free Parking for the Zoning By-law

Danielle explained that the Zoning By-law specifies the size and ratio for barrier free parking spaces. Committee members stressed that hash marks and signage are a must. The Zoning By-law is scheduled for review at the end of this year.

Danielle is currently reviewing the Development Manual which addresses minimum standards to build by. She noted the manual doesn't have a section for accessibility and felt it was important to add a section. A number of very good suggestions were given to Danielle to take back with her, i.e.: removing islands next to accessible parking spaces. Once policies for the manual are drafted, Danielle will ask to meet with the committee again.

3) ADOPTION OF LAAC APRIL 29, 2015 MINUTES

Moved by: Robert Bahry

Seconded by: Donald Giesbrecht

That the minutes of the LAAC committee meeting held April 29, 2015 be adopted.

Carried

4) BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

a) Review Accessibility Checklist for Revisions

This will be ongoing.

b) Revisit Wish List for 2015 - for any new items to be included

The committee would like to work on alterations for the Heinz Arena to create more accessible seating.

It was also suggested to add that the committee will be helping Danielle with the accessible section of the Development Manual.

c) Site Plans for review

St Michaels Church, 21 Elliott St - already approved

Old Colony Mennonite Church, 735 Mersea Rd 8

Committee members to forward Bechara their comments by Monday

Leamington Medical Village Hospice Building - 197 Talbot St West
Building all at grade level - already under construction

LDSS - 80 Oak St West

This will be a 2 storey building with an elevator. John suggested we view the virtual tour at our next meeting

Office Complex - 33 Princess St

They are looking to close the street in front of the parking lot

Residential Development - 131-141 Talbot St E

Committee members to review and forward comments to Bechara

Members asked that electronic copies of site plans be provided prior to the meetings and to hand out 11 x 17 hard copies at the meeting for everyone to follow.

d) Tour Heinz Arena

Tour of the arena was left until after the meeting. There were a number of good suggestions as a result that would provide accessible seating for a minimal cost.

5) NEW BUSINESS

The AODA's 10th anniversary awards are coming up and they are asking for nominations.

6) ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday June 10, 2015
111 Erie St North, Room 112

7) ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm

/jv

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THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF LEAMINGTON

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Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee - Accessibility Checklist

Name of Location _____

Address _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Parking Lots and Sidewalks

- ☐ Well Lit
- ☐ Even surfaces that allow easy access for strollers, wheelchairs, walkers and scooters
- ☐ Kept clear of obstacles such as portable signs, shopping carts, etc.
- ☐ Have barrier free parking spaces (2 cars wide) with posted sign and space should be painted yellow with wheelchair shown on ground

In Winter

- ☐ Sidewalks and parking spots kept clear of ice and snow, with all snow banks removed for ease of movement

Entrance and Exits

Must have one of these:

- ☐ Self-opening doors
- ☐ Disabled push button (both doors)

Entrance Mats are:

- ☐ Non-skid and laying flat
- ☐ Clean and free of water, snow and ice build up

Entrances have/are:

- ☐ Well lit
- ☐ Even surfaces
- ☐ Ramp if stairs present
- ☐ Handrails for ramps and steps ideally on both sides
- ☐ Doors that can be opened easily (consider door handles, weight of door)
- ☐ Doors that open and close at a safe speed
- ☐ Signs on glass doors marked at eye level

Shelves, Racks and Displays

- ☐ Secure and do not move or tip when leaned on
- ☐ Placed to let you move around them easily
- ☐ Within reach, or assistance is available

Other Recommendations:

- ☐ Seating in entrances and exits
- ☐ Phone available and accessible
- ☐ Price tags facing up on lower shelves and down on upper shelves
- ☐ Provide scooter cart
- ☐ Include a family washroom

Tables

- ☐ Accessible to wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters

Floors and Aisles

- ☐ Well lit
- ☐ Free from slip and trip hazards (e.g. water, ice, broken tiles, and uneven surfaces)
- ☐ Wide enough for wheelchairs, walkers, and scooters
- ☐ Free of clutter (e.g. boxes, produce, merchandise, and displays)

Stairs (In and Out of Building)

- ☐ Well lit
- ☐ Railings firmly attached - ☐ one side ☐ both sides
- ☐ continuous railing
- ☐ Edges marked with a contrasting colour, texture, or lights
- ☐ Not slippery
- ☐ No carpet or loose tile

Carts and Baskets

- ☐ Available
- ☐ Accessible
- ☐ Easy to manage
- ☐ Maintained

Public Washrooms (if food is served)

- ☐ Well lit
- ☐ Clear sign showing accessibility washroom
- ☐ Wheelchair accessible
- ☐ Appropriate grab bars, counter height, etc.

Visually Impaired

- ☐ Large print on all signs
- ☐ Braille on ☐ Washrooms ☐ Elevators
- ☐ Entrances/Exits
- ☐ Assistance available when needed

General Comments:

Date: _____

Approved by: _____



AAC YAK Newsletter

**Essex County Accessibility Advisory
Committee**

Spring 2015, Volume 10

13th Annual Accessibility Workshop - Opening Doors and Minds

The Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee is diligently working towards another great day of learning and networking at our 13th Annual Accessibility Workshop - Opening Doors and Minds. This year's event will be held on **Tuesday, October 20, 2015** at the [Heritage Park Alliance Church](#) located at 2501 Sixth Concession (and Huron Church Line Rd), Windsor, Ontario.

For more information on this year's Accessibility Workshop, visit the County of Essex website at www.countyofessex.on.ca.

Subscribe to Accessibility News

You can now receive automatic notifications when any news related to accessibility is posted on the [County of Essex website](#). It's easy - just complete the [online subscription form](#) and then confirm your subscription request which will be sent to your email address. You can also unsubscribe at any time. Upcoming accessibility news notifications will include information on the 2015 Annual Accessibility Workshop.

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Updates

The following AACs have contributed information regarding their activities during 2014 and planned initiatives for 2015:

Essex County Accessibility Advisory Committee

Accomplishments of ECAAC During 2014

- Published 9th edition of the AAC YAK newsletter
- Participated in development of new accessible County of Essex Website
- Provided comments to the Committee on the Independent Review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

- Participated in National Access Awareness Week by hosting a Wheelchair Basketball Game at Western Secondary School
- Developed and distributed copies of a handout on disability etiquette, attitudinal barriers and respectful language
- Reviewed and supported Essex County Library Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Reviewed and provided input on draft blueprints for renovations to public washrooms in main floor foyer of Civic Centre
- Appeared as a delegation before County Council to present the annual accessibility achievements report
- Hosted the 12th Annual Accessibility Workshop

2015 ECAAC Initiatives

- Hosting 13th Annual Accessibility Workshop on October 20th, 2015
- Participating in National Access Awareness week and International Day for Persons with Disabilities Day activities
- Publishing 10th edition of AAC YAK Newsletter
- Review and make recommendations on County policies as required
- Participate in AODA 10th Anniversary celebrations
- Review County of Essex Multi-year Accessibility Plan

For more information, please contact Gord Queen, Chair, Email: pgordonqueen@msn.com; Christine Easterbrook, Vice Chair, Email: mindovermatter2@sympatico.ca; Mary Brennan at (phone) 519-776-6441, ext. 1335 or email at mbrennan@countyofessex.on.ca.

Town of Essex Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Town of Essex Accessibility Advisory Committee is happy to introduce our committee members for the 2014 - 2018 term. They are: Brandon Chartier, Rob McLean, Richard Kokovai, Claudette Gauthier, Geraldine Dozois, Darlene Edwards, Lisa Wallace, Julia Welch and Earl Brownell. Our Council representatives are Councillor Sherry Bondy and Councillor Randy Voakes. Donna Hunter, Director of Corporate Services (Treasurer) is staff liaison and Lynn Moroz is secretary.

Activities for 2014 included:

- A review of accessible parking within the Town of Essex
- An increase in the fine for non-compliance with the accessible parking by-law
- The launch of an accessible web site
- The production of accessible documents
- The review of site plans for the Town
- Review of plans for new municipal facilities including Fire Station 1 and EMS Station and the Tot Park
- A survey to determine the needs for accessible taxicabs within the Town
- A tour of some of the parks and facilities

- A multi-year accessibility plan adopted by Council and published to the Town's website
 - Installation of accessible doors on the Harrow Arena washroom doors
 - Updated the accessibility checklist and arranged distribution of same to businesses throughout the Town of Essex by the Fire Inspector
- We are anticipating a very active and productive term and look forward to working together for accessibility.

For more information, please contact Earl Brownell, Chair, Email: earlbrownell1@gmail.com; Claudette Gauthier, Vice-Chair, Email: cgauthier7@cogeco.ca; Lynn Moroz, Municipal Contact, Email: lmoroz@essex.ca.

Lakeshore Accessibility Advisory Committee

Activities for 2014 included:

- Identified municipal accessibility initiatives. Reviewed and commented on 2014 Municipal Accessibility Plan, the Belle River Downtown Revitalization & Restoration and other projects in Lakeshore
- Optimist Park - located beside the OPP station - accessible adult/senior exercise equipment was installed for all public to use year-round along the new perimeter path
- Attended Lakeshore's accessible Annual Canada Day Celebrations and Sunsplash Festival
- Provided comments on draft plans for Lakeshore's Multi-Use Recreational Facility's Aquatic Centre, which is now under construction, as well as several new public and private buildings to ensure persons with disabilities will be able to access them
- Organized and hosted a free Public Seminar entitled "Diabetes - What You Need to Know". Advertised in local newspapers and on the Town's website and Facebook pages
- Belle River Lions' Park - north of Belle River High School - new baseball concession stand now has fully accessible washrooms
- Grab bars were installed in a number of male washrooms located in public parks
- Purchased new graffiti-proof Accessible Signs with fine and time limit
- Paid additional costs to provide Accessible Port-a-Johns at parks from April to October and also at West Beach
- Set aside funds towards improved Sidewalks and Curb Cuts as determined by Public Works

Initiatives for 2015 include:

- Reviewed and recommended new Multi-year Municipal Accessibility Plan (2015-2019)
- Recognizing International Day of Disabled Persons (December 3, 2015)

- Comber Park - renovating washrooms inside the Community Centre and outside concession stand for accessibility, including automatic doors and touchless fixtures
- Festivals - Canada Day and Sunsplash - Advise organizers to ensure they are totally accessible for all
- LAAC delegation attending 13th Annual Accessibility Workshop in Essex County and the Accessibility Awareness Day at the University of Windsor on March 18, 2015
- Continue to advise the municipality and all Lakeshore businesses to help them become more accessible
- Continue to provide accessible playground equipment in Lakeshore parks - ongoing project continues to identify needs and fund when possible
- Organize and host another free Public Seminar relating to accessibility

For more information, please contact Tracey Bailey, LAAC Chair,
Email: t.bailey@communitysupportcentre.ca and/or Rita Arsenault, Lakeshore Manager of Special Projects, at (phone) 519-728-1975, extension 282 or Email: rarsenault@lakeshore.ca.

LaSalle Accessibility Advisory Committee

Highlights from 2014 and What's Happening in 2015:

Canada Post Community Mail Boxes

A tour of the Town by John Boyko, member, LAAC revealed several observations about the locations and conditions around community mail boxes. There did not appear to be consistency in the requirements for curb cuts or level ground in front of the mail boxes. The Committee explored who has authority to decide where a community mail box is located and discussions took place with Canada Post. Not only are the existing locations often inaccessible, but with the decision by Canada Post to discontinue door to door delivery, the issue will become a larger one in the future. Letters were sent to local municipalities and Canada Post urging all to ensure that accessibility for persons with disabilities is taken into consideration when planning future installations.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The Town's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was adopted in February 2014 providing a blueprint for removing barriers for persons with disabilities and promoting accessibility in the community.

Meeting with Public Works Staff regarding curb cuts and community mail boxes Peter Marra, Director of Public Works and Mark Beggs, Manager of Roads and Parks for the Town attended a committee meeting to discuss curb cuts and community mail boxes. This was very productive in that Mr. Marra and Mr. Beggs were able to explain the criteria for curb cuts, use of detector plates and slope. In addition, Mr. Marra explained that the location and design of community mail boxes is the responsibility of the developer in conjunction with Canada Post with

the Town having final sign-off on location. Canada Post has its own minimum design standards for the installations. Mr. Marra asked that any concerns about accessibility on the public right-of-way be referred to Mr. Beggs at mbeggs@town.lasalle.on.ca for follow-up.

Strawberry Festival

The Committee discussed a complaint received about signage used by Robertson's Amusements at the 2014 festival. The sign contained words to the effect that people with mental illnesses were not allowed on certain rides. Robertson's advised that the wording is a TSSA requirement. The Committee submitted alternate wording for Robertson's to use and this was forwarded to the amusement company for next year's event. In addition the guide to accessible festivals and events was shared with the Strawberry Festival Committee.

Tour of New Civic Centre and Police Station

Committee members toured the new LaSalle Police Service and Civic Centre buildings. Many positive accessibility features were noted and some observations on improvements to accessibility were made.

2015 Work Plan

The Committee is in the process of reviewing its multi-year plan to determine priorities for 2015. Four new members were appointed to the Committee and for the first time in the Committee's history, it is co-chaired by two members of Council. In order to accommodate the schedules of the new membership, meetings will be held the second Wednesday of the month (with the exception of July) at 4:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Councillor Mike Akpata, Co-Chair, Email: makpata@town.lasalle.on.ca; Councillor Jeff Renaud, Co-Chair, Email: jrenaud@town.lasalle.on.ca; Brenda Andreatta, Municipal Contact, Email: bandreat@town.lasalle.on.ca.

Leamington Accessibility Advisory Committee

Activities for 2014 included:

- Installation of barrier-free bus shelters at Food Basics, Pickwick Dr., Garrison Avenue, Talbot St. East at the Sun Parlour Home, the Half Century Club and Camelot Avenue
- Ongoing adjustments to transit bus schedule
- Reviewed and approved site plans for Roma Club, Firebox, the Bank Theatre, Zellers, etc.
- Addressed complaints regarding accessibility

Initiatives for 2015 include:

- Revised accessible parking design and standards
- Modification to existing accessible entrance at the Post Office
- Completion of set fines for parking in accessible parking spaces without a permit
- Review of Accessibility Checklist
- Review of any new site plans
- Search out some guest speakers to participate in our meetings

For more information, please contact Karen Lewis, Chair at Email karen.lewis@utoronto.ca or Judy Van Roie, municipal contact, at Email jvanroie@leamington.ca.

Contact Details for Other Accessibility Advisory Committees

Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committee - Ken Houston, Chair, Email: iadele@bell.net; Marie Allen, Vice-Chair, Email: marie@communitylivingessex.org; Paula Parker, Municipal Contact, Email: pparker@amherstburg.ca.

Kingsville Accessibility Advisory Committee - Thomas Neufeld, Chair, Email: tneufeld77@gmail.com; Jackie Barraco, Vice-Chair, Email: jackannbarr@distributel.net; Scott Brown, Municipal Contact, Email: sbrown@kingville.ca

Tecumseh Accessibility Advisory Committee - Laura Moy, Municipal Contact, Email: lmoy@tecumseh.ca; Linda Stanczak, Chair, Email: stanczaks@hotmail.com.

Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee: Gayle Jones, Municipal Contact, Email: gajones@city.windsor.on.ca.

Disclaimer:

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CAPTCHA: A Barrier to Accessibility

CAPTCHAs are a common security measure used on websites to verify a user is a person, not a bot. The acronym stands for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart (CAPTCHA)." They are often used to control spam and are composed of an image file of letters and/or numbers that the user has to type in correctly to post online or create a new email account. They are an inexpensive and effective way to control spam - but they also prevent people with disabilities from using many websites.

CAPTCHAs pose many accessibility problems. The image file used to disguise the characters cannot include alternative text as bots can read ALT text. Additionally, some images are so distorted to prevent bots from recognizing them that people with cognitive and visual disabilities cannot read the characters correctly. In answer to accessibility concerns, CAPTCHAs have been paired with audio. These can still create problems with screen readers unless there is a pause at the beginning of the audio recording. However, this is not helpful for people who are deaf-blind.

So, what can you use instead of CAPTCHA to control spam on your website? One alternative is to ask rotating questions such as, "What colour is the sky?" or a simple math equation using words instead of numbers to ask the question. Filters can be used to detect natural language or pose questions to flagged IP addresses. If your site has light traffic, you could assign a moderator to control web content. If you use CAPTCHAs, take a moment to consider what may work best for your organization to reduce the amount of barriers people with disabilities face while trying to access information or contribute to your organization.

Resources: CAPTCHA by Accessibility and Usability, Penn State University
Inaccessibility of CAPTCHA by Matt May, W3C
Written by: Accessibility Experts

AODA 10th Anniversary Champion Awards

In honour of the 10th Anniversary of the AODA legislation, the AMCTO (with the support of the Government of Ontario) has created the Champion Awards "to recognize outstanding individuals who demonstrate passion and commitment in the promotion and awareness of accessibility and inclusiveness in their community."

To qualify for the award, nominees must:

- Have demonstrated leadership in promoting awareness of accessibility in their community, either through paid or volunteer work
- Be an individual (not an organization)
- Be nominated by 2 members of their community
- Currently be a resident of Ontario

The Awards Review Committee will assess the nominees':

- Demonstrated leadership, passion and commitment in the promotion of accessibility and inclusivity in his/her community
- Contribution to breaking down barriers to accessibility by working collaboratively with other community members
- Creativity, innovation and resourcefulness in finding ways to break down barriers to accessibility in his/her local community on a volunteer basis

- Contribution to the increased participation and inclusion of people with disabilities in the community (i.e. accessible events, increased accessibility of local community services)
- Impact that the initiatives have brought to people with disabilities in the community

Self nominations are not accepted. If you wish to nominate someone, you must fill out a [nomination form](#) and provide additional background information (5 page limit) concerning the individual's involvement in the community and why you think they would be a good candidate for this award. The nomination form and additional information must be emailed to accessibility@amcto.com by **4:00 pm on June 30, 2015**. The person must agree to the nomination.

The Selection Committee will review all nominations and award recipients will be contacted. Awards will be customized based on the merit of the submission.

AODA 10th Anniversary Celebrations

2015 marks the 10th year since the Province of Ontario enacted the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which codifies the provincial government's commitment to making Ontario accessible by 2025. To recognize this milestone, celebrations are being planned across the Province and communities are being asked to share their success stories.

On April 15th, the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), in conjunction with Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, hosted an AODA 10th Anniversary Celebration in Chatham Ontario.

The Honourable Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure opened the celebration with a video message, congratulating Ontarians for having embraced accessibility initiatives over the past 10 years and encouraging the continued commitment to make Ontario a global leader in accessibility. He noted that almost 2 million people in Ontario benefit from these laws, which also have given Ontario businesses a competitive edge. He predicts 7 to 8 billion dollars in additional economic activity by 2025 as a direct result of improved accessibility in Ontario.

Keynote speaker Tracy Schmitt shared an enthusiastic and inspirational message about her many experiences traveling around the world as a teacher with a disability and aspiring para-olympian. She is also the current Manager, Parapan Planning and Integrations for the Parapan Am Games being held in Toronto, August 7 to 15, 2015. With over 1,600 Ontario athletes coming, the Parapan Am Games have been a catalyst for accessibility improvements, as well as huge investments in the Province. Tracy has conducted all the accessibility audits on almost 50 venues for the games. Anyone interested in volunteering at the Parapan Am Games can find out more information at www.Toronto2015.org. As part of the AODA Celebrations in Chatham, 'accessibility success stories' from various municipalities were shared.

- City of Sarnia - Mayor's Challenge to municipalities in Ontario to hire people with disabilities;
- City of Sarnia - Breaking Barriers to Business initiative. For more information visit <http://www.breakingbarrierstobusiness.com/>
- City of Sarnia - 2015 Accessibility Summit, May 29, 2015, registration information is available at: <http://www.city.sarnia.on.ca/living-here/accessibility/2015-sarnia-accessibility-summit>
- County of Middlesex - Improving accessibility in their public Libraries. For more information contact Jennifer Cowan, Accessibility Coordinator, County of Middlesex, jcowan@middlesex.ca.
- City of Barrie - Sunnidale Park refurbishment. They took advantage of the natural environment of the park to create a playground that is both AODA and CSA compliant. Having partnered with their fire association, they created play spaces which promote fire safety and awareness for all children and parents. It also connects into their larger trail system and the Trans Canada Trail.

The celebration ended with a video message from The Honourable David C. Onley, who has been appointed by the Province as a special advisor on accessibility to champion opportunities for people of all abilities in the public and private sectors. As special advisor, he confirmed his commitment to work closely with Minister Duguid, to continue breaking down barriers and promote the economic benefits of inclusion and employment of people with disabilities, and championing accessibility across the province.

Be My Eyes

Be My Eyes is an iPhone app that allows sighted people to assist people with visual disabilities. Blind or visually impaired people can request remote help from a sighted person when needed.

All the sighted person has to do is install the free **Be My Eyes** app from iTunes. If someone requests your help, you can assist that person or decline (in case you are busy and can't help at the moment). If you cannot assist them, the app will select someone else to be their eyes. If you can assist the blind person, a live audio-video connection is automatically set up between the two of you. The blind person points their phone at something. Then you can tell the blind person what you see. The app is very popular, with more than 71,000 people signed up to be helpers. The downside is that this software could be misused by uncompassionate and socially unaware people. For those who want to lend a helping hand, this is a great idea. Why don't you try it!!

How Am I Going To Get My Mail?

Canada Post is transitioning to a new model for delivering mail. Unfortunately, this will create significant difficulties for some people with disabilities and seniors. In an effort to modernize delivery services, more community boxes will be installed, which means less home delivery.

Some of us may already be dealing with community boxes. Existing boxes can pose the following issues:

- Outgoing mail slot is too high for some to reach, especially those using wheelchairs and scooters
- Some have difficulties with using the keys to open their boxes
- Some can't get through the snow in the winter to get to the box (even though Canada Post is supposed to be clearing snow around the mailbox area)
- Some may not be able to get to the location of the mailboxes

Canada Post has been working to make community boxes easier to use. The new community boxes that will be installed in the next 5 years are more accessible. For instance, the outgoing mail slot is situated in the middle of the unit instead of at the top - much easier to reach! If it would be easier for you, your box could be equipped with a sliding compartment tray so that you can pull on the tab and slide the whole compartment forward. You could be assigned a box that is at the right height for you. If you have problems using your hands, you could be provided with a key turner which allows you to use all of your fingers instead of just your thumb and first finger. The new tags for keys to the parcel compartments will now have Braille and raised lettering to help customers with visual disabilities locate the compartment that has their parcel.

If you already have an old community box, you will unfortunately need to wait. You may not get the new one until the 5 year plan has been completed. Call the numbers below if you need some accommodations.

Others may still have home delivery. It is likely that within the next 5 years, you will lose your home delivery. Canada Post realizes that this may pose difficulties for some and they are open to hearing about how their changes will affect you. You can call them at the numbers below to discuss your needs. There is no charge for any accommodations that they may make and those accommodations may be temporary (i.e. just for the winter months) or permanent.

For those who have disabilities that significantly restrict their ability to access their mail and also do not have reasonable alternatives to get it (like someone to get the mail for you), there is a form available called the "Request for Community Mailbox Delivery Accommodation." Call the numbers below to obtain this form and depending on the outcome of your application, Canada Post may be able to provide you with mail redirection service where your mail will be delivered to any individual you designate or to a retail postal outlet of your choosing, including pharmacies, convenience stores and other locations that offer postal services. You would be contacted by a representative of the Canada Post Delivery Accommodation Group to discuss your specific requirements. You may be required to get a doctor to fill out a medical form.

If you live in an apartment building, you will still get your mail like usual.

Canada Post realizes that each individual's needs are unique and they must tailor their solutions to each person's circumstances. No matter where you live, if you have questions, comments or concerns, please call them (toll free) at **1-844-454-3009** or **1-844-607-6301**. They will be happy to work with you.

Mental Health Consumer/ Survivor Employment Association of Essex County AKA Ten Friends Diner

The Mental Health Consumer Survivor Employment Association of Essex County, more commonly known as Ten Friends Diner (<http://tenfriendsdiner.com/>), is located at 1400 Windsor Avenue, Windsor, Ontario. It serves delicious breakfasts, lunches, and a variety of desserts - but it's more than just a place to eat.

The diner's Mission Statement is: "To assist the integration of consumer survivors of mental health services into society through specialized training and intermingling with the public, promoting camaraderie and teamwork."

The Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Employment Association of Essex County recently launched their Mental Health Awareness Program (#LimeGreen) to help educate people about mental illness and break existing stigmas that surround mental illness. For more information about the program you can visit their webpage at <http://mhaessex.org/>.

For over 20 years they have been a safe haven for mental health consumer survivors, providing vocational training and peer support in their fully functional diner and catering business. They have recently added a community garden to their long list of supportive activities.

If you are living with a diagnosed mental illness and have an interest in participating in their program, either through training in the restaurant, working in their community garden, or participating in one of their upcoming life skills workshops, please give them a call at 519-254-3000.

Text with 9-1-1 Service

This is a new, no cost service **only** for those who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech impaired that allows them to text 911 during an emergency. You must **register** your cell phone with your wireless provider before you can use this service. Also, you must have a compatible cell phone and a valid wireless subscription. T911 is not available everywhere. Please check to make sure that it is available in your area at the website listed below.

There are very specific steps that have to be followed in order for your 911 call to be successful. If you could benefit from using this service, make sure that you learn how to use it **before** you have an emergency.

Go to <http://textwith911.ca> for more info on availability in your area and how to do it.

Adaptive Clothing

Are you in need of adaptive clothing? The following link will take you to a listing of online resources. Happy shopping! <http://www.makoa.org/clothing.htm>.

Preventing Discrimination Based on a Mental Health Disability or Addiction

In January of 2014, a new policy was approved by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) on preventing discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions. This policy was the result of a report called **"Minds That Matter"** that was released in September of 2012. This report shared the findings from a 2 year (2009 - 2011), Ontario-wide policy consultation with more than 1,400 individuals and organizations. It outlined 54 recommendations for government, employers, service providers, housing providers and other parties as well as made 26 OHRC commitments to address human rights issues that affect people with psychosocial disabilities. You can view it in its entirety on the OHRC website, www.ohrc.on.ca.

People with any type of disability can face discrimination and social exclusion due to their challenges. However, people with mental health disabilities and addictions have faced considerable stigmatization. The Ontario Human Rights Commission says that everyone deserves equal rights and opportunities as well as freedom from discrimination. This includes people with mental health issues and addictions.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. A person can discriminate knowingly or unknowingly. For the purposes of this article, discrimination refers to negative treatment and prejudicial attitudes that are directed towards people who have disabilities. Oftentimes, stereotypes and unfair treatment towards individuals who have disabilities are the result of a belief system called "ableism". Ableism refers to attitudes that devalue and limit the potential of people with disabilities. They are seen as different from the norm (less worthy) and can lead to inaccurate judgements about their personal characteristics.

According to the OHRC, almost 1 in 5 Canadian adults will experience a mental illness or addiction. Because of the extreme stigma, people who are mentally ill or have an addiction may fear disclosing this information to others. By disclosing, they may risk losing jobs and relationships as well as being denied housing and other services. People with mental health disabilities may choose to not seek the support they need. Sometimes discrimination is found even within the very services that are designed to help them. Because of this, many have low incomes and live in chronic poverty.

Nobody likes to be labelled, especially when that label is based on inaccurate information and fear. Some people may discriminate, either knowingly or unknowingly because they are afraid that the person with the psychosocial disability is violent. This is not true. A very low percentage of people with mental health issues and addictions are violent.

People with mental health issues and addictions are a diverse group and experience disability and impairment in many different ways. For many, these disabilities are episodic, which means they fluctuate and they have periods of wellness and periods of disability. Episodes may last a short amount of time and some will last longer. The degree of severity can also vary widely.

The OHRC protects people with mental health disabilities and addictions from discrimination and harassment. A person's experience may be complicated further when the discrimination based on their disability intersects with discrimination based on another ground such as race, sex, sexual orientation, age, etc.

The OHRC's protection based on disability extends to these 5 "social areas":

- When receiving goods and services and using facilities (including public and private sector) and includes insurance, schools, restaurants, policing, healthcare, shopping malls, etc.
- In housing, including private rental housing, co-operative housing, social housing, supportive and assisted housing
- When entering into contracts with others, including the offer, acceptance, price and rejection of a contract
- In employment, which includes full-time and part-time work, volunteer work, student internships, special employment programs, probationary employment and temporary or contract work
- When joining or belonging to a union, professional association or other vocational association. This applies to trade unions and self-governing professions.

The OHRC's policy on preventing discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions provides practical guidance on the legal rights and responsibilities as they relate to these issues. The policy addresses:

- People's right to be free from reprisal (payback)
- People's rights, particularly at work, in rental housing and when receiving services
- Different forms of discrimination
- The principles of accommodation
- How the duty to accommodate applies to people with mental health disabilities
- Duties and responsibilities in the accommodation process
- Considerations in assessing whether the test for undue hardship has been met
- Other possible limits on the duty to accommodate

- How to balance the rights of someone with a mental health disability or addiction to be free from discrimination where this may conflict with the rights of others
- People's rights to be free from discrimination within programs that are targeted to people with mental health disabilities and addictions
- How consent and capacity issues may relate to people's rights under the Code
- Organizations responsibilities to prevent and eliminate discrimination and how they can create environments free of discrimination.

Employers, unions, housing providers and service providers all have a duty to accommodate the person with a psychosocial disability. The Code sets out 3 principles of accommodation. The first one is called respect for dignity. Respect involves valuing the person as a whole, not as their disability. Dignity involves self-worth. Therefore, respect for the dignity of a person with a mental health disability or addiction must be considered when considering how accommodation is provided. It involves valuing their perspectives and choices.

The second principle is called individuation. Each person's needs, choices, perspectives and values are unique to them. There is no cookie-cutter solution when it comes to the duty to accommodate.

Finally, the third principle is called integration and full participation. Achieving integration and full participation involves breaking down barriers so that persons with disabilities can work, play and live with others on an even playing field. This is especially important for everyone involved so that no new barriers are created in the process. People with mental health disabilities and addictions must make their needs known to the best of their abilities. This may be difficult or scary to do but it is necessary for the success of the accommodation.

Now is the time for change and the ultimate responsibility rests with employers, housing providers, service providers and other organizations covered by the Code. For more information about the policy and what you can do to prevent discrimination, go to www.ohrc.on.ca.

Improved Access to Essex County Council Meetings

Essex County Council meetings being broadcast on Cogeco Cable are now available with Closed Captioning. The captioning of the live meetings is provided through the services of BCCS Inc., Broadcast Captioning & Consulting Services Inc. www.closedcaptioning.com.

This accessibility enhancement to Essex County Council meeting broadcasts is courtesy of Cogeco Cable Canada LP. BCCS Inc.

GrayMatters

GrayMatters is a free interactive iPad app which allows you to make a life storybook. This app is being used with people with dementia to help them preserve memories using photographs, movies and games. This was created by Jenny Rozbruch who was struggling to connect with her aging grandmother with dementia. By using the app, Jenny was able to have more meaningful interactions with her.

GrayMatters is very simple to use. You can upload old photographs and pair each picture with a description explaining the picture. The individual with dementia can look at the pictures at will or with a friend or family member and read the captions. The goal is to stimulate long-term memory. The app can also record the person's favourite music. Simply upload the songs. Music is very good for the brain and body. Playing music activates several areas of the brain. It is very healing and has been scientifically proven to increase quality of life and slow the progression of the disease. The app also comes with simple memory games that people with dementia can play with others.

The GrayMatters app has many benefits:

- Saves precious moments all in one place
- Boosts cognitive function
- Can be personalized to each individual
- Easier to see due to iPad screen size
- Light for ease of use (instead of heavy photo albums, etc.)
- Promotes positive interactions and happy memories

You can find this app at the iTunes store.

This newsletter can be made available in alternative formats.

Please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at (email)
accessibility@countyofessex.on.ca **or call 519-776-6441, extension 1335.**

