



members strong

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



2017-2018

From the Chair



As we reflect upon the 2017-2018 year it has been one of amazing change both for our service provider community and for ODEN. Our theme for our conference taking place next month is “BRIDGING THE GAP – Evolve – Adapt – Innovate” and this truly reflects what we need to do to meet our mandate and to thrive!

ODEN continues to be a leader in advocacy and we are invited by both federal and provincial governments to participate in consultations to develop policies and programs.

This role provides us with an opportunity to advance our Vision –

“That all people who have a disability in Ontario have access to the labour force and the ability to achieve meaningful employment.”

As ODEN gains recognition across the province within the business community, staff are challenged to meet training requests from employers who have embraced the business case for hiring persons with disabilities. Both through staff training and linking member organizations with employers we strive to achieve our goals. It has also been a busy year in fulfilling the training requests from service providers as they seek to evolve and adapt. The staff have travelled thousands of kilometers this past year going to all parts of the province to provide services.

With the organizational growth and increasing requests for service the Board continues to work to develop infrastructure and respond to the various invitations for partnerships while maintaining its Mission to:

- Address barriers and challenges facing job seekers who have a disability
- Create a provincial voice and authority on employment and disability
- Develop Business Engagement strategies and marketing initiatives
- Improve the capacity and skills of those who work in the sector

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to extend our gratitude for the passion and commitment that the staff of ODEN display in their work. We are so fortunate to have a group with such dedication. I would also like to extend our appreciation for our network's membership support – without you we would not exist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Lewis". The script is fluid and cursive.

Nancy Lewis
Chair of the Board

messages

From the Executive Director



To say that 2017/18 was a busy year would be an understatement.

We concluded our 2016/17 year on July 31st thanks to some surplus resources left over from our Employment and Modernization Grant (EMG) with the support of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). During that period MCCSS also awarded Transfer Payment Agency status to ODEN with an annual operating budget.

I'm pleased to say that the Ministry has been very supportive of our work and through the budget process supported ODEN's expansion from four positions under the EMF grant to six full-time positions. We are grateful to MCCSS for their continued support.

At the same time, the Board, with membership approval, changed our fiscal year-end from July 31st to March 31st to better align with our funders and our membership. Therefore, as you read this report, keep in mind it only represents an eight-month period.

As I write this introduction it's hard to believe that ten years ago a group of dedicated and committed volunteers were sitting around a table imagining and talking about the creation of a Provincial Employment Network. In some ways, it seems ages ago and in other ways like it was yesterday. The time has flown by!

The commitment and dedication of these volunteers has pushed the Ontario Disability Employment Network to the forefront, recognized not only in Ontario, but in many other jurisdictions, as the driving force and authority on workplace inclusion for people who have a disability.

I hope you will join us at our Annual Conference, October 16 – 18 as we recognize all the volunteers, past and present, who have driven us to our success and to celebrate our 10th Anniversary.

As always thank you for your continued support, your trust and your belief in our work.

Sincerely,



Joe Dale
Executive Director

Employer Engagement

Our work with the business community has continued to grow and we now see many referrals coming to us from businesses we have worked with in the past. Hosting Employer Engagement sessions in partnership with our members and featuring our Business Champions has paid off and we're seeing benefits.

We have expanded our reach this year, firmly entering the manufacturing industry, linking major businesses to excellent employees at a time when finding labour has been difficult. For the job seeker, this has translated into secure, full-time paid employment positions. For the businesses, this results in stable, reliable, and hard-working employees ready to help them achieve their business goals.

In November 2017, Rockwool was referred to ODEN to address their labour challenges. An initial meeting was held with the Human Resource team to present the business case for hiring people who have a disability.

In February 2018, we presented a hiring strategy to the Senior Management Team and within a

few short months ODEN and Rockwool were able to identify areas of their business where they could start an inclusive hiring process.

After a review of service agencies and potential candidates in the Milton area, we recommended that Rockwool build capacity to recruit, on-board and support individuals who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. We then linked Rockwool with the Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf (BRCCD). This gave Rockwool access to a local candidate pool, eradicating their challenge of finding long-term employees.

BRCCD and ODEN identified the supports available through the BRCCD, the needs and skills gaps of their staff team/job coaches and potential candidates for Rockwool.

In March, the work began in earnest. This included a review of the accessibility requirements, job descriptions, recruitment and on-boarding processes, each with the objective of removing barriers and bias that would limit candidates who have disabilities. This also helped us to better understand the job demands and

Employer Engagement events are a great way to engage with local businesses and ODEN partners with member agencies to host Employer Engagement Breakfasts across the province.



workplace culture of Rockwool. Ultimately, we needed to ensure Rockwool's standards and business needs would be met. From there we provided awareness and sensitivity training for the entire employee base.

We are pleased to report that this project has resulted in 6 full-time, permanent positions that are fully integrated on the production floor. These employees operate a new production line – surpassing the expectations of the employer and enabling the business to roll out new product faster than anticipated. With this initiative we did not 'plug' people into a job but helped the business design the entire role from the ground up. It is a new product line, new schedule, and a new start up. We believe this has contributed to the success.

What is particularly noteworthy of this case

is that this business was highly motivated when they commenced the hiring process with ODEN. This and other similar business strategies is what makes impactful, sustainable, and meaningful change in the employment landscape for people who have a disability.

We also recognize that individual agencies often can't spend the amount of time that goes into working with businesses on this scale. By partnering with ODEN, the agency can focus on people and support. The outcomes are much greater – more people hired, greater efficiencies (1 job coach supporting 6 people in one location) better wages and better working conditions. At Rockwool, the wages and benefits that come with the position will allow the new hires to withdraw from ODSP and live a full, financially secure life in their community.

CNE Youth Employment Project – YEAR 2

Every year, the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) hires over 600 youth in the Greater Toronto Area for a fun and exciting summer job. In 2017, ODEN partnered with the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and 5 local agencies to support the CNE's goal of hiring 20% of its workforce from the disability community by 2022.

Improving on the 2017 success, ODEN enhanced the services provided to the CNE and added four new agencies to meet the increase in the CNE demand. Here are some highlights of the initiative for Summer 2018:

- ODEN delivered Disability Awareness and Sensitivity training to all supervisors and managers for the 2018 season
- The CNE rehired 19 of the 22 employees from the 2017 season
- An additional 33 people were hired through local agencies bringing the total to 52
- The CNE also hired a number of people who self-declared as having a disability through their traditional hiring process. This speaks to

the importance of building internal capacity within the business through training and support for managers, supervisors and recruiters.

- In partnership with the CNE, ODEN developed a mentorship initiative where returning employees without disabilities were matched to new employees who have a disability. This greatly enhances the social inclusion and



Canadian National Exhibition Youth Employment Project – Minister Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, Susan Picarello, ADM Accessibility Policy, Employment & Outreach Division at Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, Virgina Ludy - CEO, CNE, Agency partners and employees.

helps the CNE to accommodate workers with more significant disabilities.

- Our partners for the 2018 CNE Youth Employment Project include:
 - JVS Toronto
 - Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
 - Spinal Cord Injury Ontario
 - March of Dimes Canada
 - Youth Employment Services (YES)
- The CNE team has gone above and beyond to make their inclusive hiring strategy a success. They are well on their way to hitting their goal of having 20% of their workforce represented by people who have a disability. A huge leg up for all those youngsters, particularly those getting their first jobs ever.

These are just two examples of our business success over this past year. As we strive to move away from 'token' hires to more systemic change, we continue to create the supports

and connections businesses need to access the talent pool of job seekers who have a disability.

Our work with these companies ranges from business presentations, disability awareness and sensitivity training, work site assessments, consulting services and mentoring business leaders. These services result in greater capacity within the business – increased knowledge, creating inclusive hiring processes, enhanced accessibility, and more and better jobs for people who have a disability.

We are currently developing an employer toolkit which will be launched in 2018 and will be available as an on-line resource for employers.

We will continue to engage with these and other companies across the province, supporting them in meeting their business goals, and linking them to service agencies in their community who have qualified and enthusiastic job seekers.

While the number of meetings and consultations are too many to list, here is a sample of employers that ODEN had the pleasure of providing services to this past year:



A SHOPPERS DRUG MART COMPANY



Membership Services

The Centre for Excellence continues its work with employment agencies to ensure an effective and successful employment service delivery network throughout the province. This year we provided many training programs for agency staff including our one, two and three-day employment training programs. We delivered training to 6 agencies and 125 employees across the province. ODEN also provided employment training to Old National Bank and several service agencies in Indiana.

In addition, we partnered with the Ministry of Training for Colleges and Universities (MTCU) to deliver the Supported Employment training for the communities where the new Supported Employment Model was launched - Belleville, Cornwall and Timmins areas.

"Wonderful information. Very empowering for the future of the people we support."

Participant, 3-Day Employment Training

We continue to build our training programs and services, to meet the needs of our sector, our members, and ultimately, meet the goal of ensuring people who have a disability have full access to the labour market. We have embarked on



Christian Horizons Training, Ajax ON

several projects that will promote organizational health, innovative program development, and capacity building in the sector. The ODEN team has partnered with Community Living Sarnia-Lambton and was trained in facilitating the JobPath and SET (Summer Employment Transitions) programs in a train the trainer capacity.

With Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act we see the final closure of sheltered workshops in Ontario on the horizon, the first jurisdiction to do so in Canada. In response, we have been supporting several members to increase the capacity of their employment services and in transitioning to community-based alternatives for those who choose not to work. This year we also published **The Roadmap to Inclusion: A Guide to Change Management for Service Agencies** to assist with the transition process (available in French and English).

Demand for our facilitation and consulting services continues to grow as we provide strategic planning, service improvement,

"I really appreciate the business approach you use and the moving away from counselling/social work perspective. I hope our organization will be able to make this shift as smoothly as possible in the near future"

Participant, 3-Day Employment Training

ODEN RDC Conference 2017, North York, ON



1st World Conference on Supported Employment, Belfast, Ireland



and marketing expertise to employment service agencies across the province.

In October 2017, we launched our Service Quality initiative and established a working group with BBMD Consulting. This initiative will support ongoing efforts towards a more professional, effective and responsive service delivery system that will support more people getting competitively paid jobs. More information will be available at the 2018 ODEN Conference.

Always on the lookout for new and innovative solutions to removing barriers, we recognize that one of the major challenges is a lack of experience and access to learning real, transferable job skills for youth who have a disability. Early engagement in the labour force is one of the best indicators for success in adulthood.

E3 Community Services Training, Collingwood ON



Project Search, a model developed in Cincinnati, is a fresh new approach to a young person's final year of high school, where both classroom education and co-op placements are embedded in a large business. ODEN has been working in collaboration with University Health Network, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Halton Health Sciences, the Toronto and Halton School Boards, Community Living organizations, United Way of Greater Toronto, MCCSS; Ministry of Education; Accessibility Directorate of Ontario; and MTCU, to bring this model to Ontario. We are excited about this model and look forward to launching it in two locations for the 2019/20 school year.

Quality Assurance Working Group - April 2018, Toronto ON



"This was a very relevant, helpful experience for me. Being more social service minded, I lack business/sales knowledge - so this has filled a big gap for me"

Participant, 3-Day Employment Training

DEAM 2017

Disability Employment Awareness Month continues to grow each year and our 2nd annual campaign included some great new additions. We partnered with Human Resources Magazine on a five-part series featuring the Business Case for hiring people who have a disability and an advertising campaign was launched.



Engage Talent!

Boost profitability and enhance customer loyalty by reaching new markets.

16% of
Canadians have
a disability.

Those with disabilities, along
with their families, comprise of
53% of the marketplace.



 **78%** of
Canadians are more likely
to **buy a product or
service** from a business
that has a policy of
**hiring people with
disabilities.**

 Statistics show that
retention rates
are **72%** higher
among persons with
disabilities.

86% of employees
who have a disability
have average to
above average 
attendance records.

**OCTOBER IS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT
AWARENESS MONTH**



ENGAGE TALENT...
by sharing your own inclusive
employment stories on social
media using **#DEAM**

This year we are working on better and more opportunities for members to join in. Our campaign materials will provide opportunities for co-branding and promotions so that members can take our professionally developed materials and insert their agency contact information.



Congratulations also goes out to META Vocational Services
who was the winner of our DEAM Photo Contest.

Innovation Showcase Awards

We changed the format of our Innovator of the Year Award last year to include a 'pitch' session before a panel of judges, representing 50% of the vote with the other 50% coming from conference delegate votes.

The Innovator of the Year Award for 2017 went to: **In the Loop Media** from Community Living Oakville.



Business Champions Awards

The Business Champions League continues to grow each year with nominations coming from our member agencies. In October 2017, ODEN inducted two new business champions into the Business Champions League. Virginia Ludy from the Canadian National Exhibition and Andrew Bearss from Dow Honda in Ottawa joined the ranks of our dedicated Business Champions that provide assistance and help grow ODEN's mission.



Additional Highlights

Our membership has continued to grow over the past few years and we are excited to announce that we now have over 100 members! We will continue to work with our members across the province to increase membership and promote our mission of "increasing employment opportunities for people who have a disability".

Government Relations

We continue to work with our Government partners in planning and policy work that pertains to removing barriers and building a strong and effective employment service delivery network in Ontario.

ODEN was an active participant on the consulting team that designed and launched the Access Talent strategy. We continue to work on several initiatives that resulted from this strategy including the Supported Employment Model roll out and the Business Advisory Panel, supported by the Accessibility Directorate's Office.

ODEN is an active member of the Canadian Accessibility and Inclusion Project Council (CAIP). Along with thirty-one partner organizations, CAIP sponsored events across Canada, gathering information, feedback and advice to provide to the Federal Government as they craft the Federal Accessibility Act.

We continue to participate on the MTCU's Service Delivery Advisory Group (SDAG) and as a Steering Committee member of the Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation.

What the Future Holds

The landscape for employment services is changing rapidly both politically and in practice.

While it's too early to fully appreciate the direction of the new Ontario Government it's clear that 'belt-tightening' is on the agenda. That said, it's in everyone's best interest to get more people into the workforce and to reduce the dependency on social assistance.

It's unimaginable to think our goal of helping more people get jobs is different than the Government's. And, it's unlikely that this government will turn the clock back on the closure of Sheltered Workshops.

Government's goal of merging all employment services under one umbrella, whether that be from a policy, administrative authority and/or funding perspective is unlikely to change. How and when this will be achieved – that's the question.

ODEN will continue to advocate for a 'seat at the table' and to participate and influence the dialogue as this unfolds. While difficult, change can be very positive provided we ensure that people don't fall between the cracks or lose out as a result. The value of, and need for, specialized disability services will remain front of mind.

This past two years has seen many changes that impact service delivery models and practices. With the introduction of the Supported Employment Model through MTCU and the increases to minimum wage through Bill 148, employment agencies have had to adapt and change accordingly.

In many ways, these influencers can pave the way for many positive improvements for job seekers. The Supported Employment Model should open the door for agencies to provide employment supports for candidates who have more significant disabilities.

While we can't deny that Bill 148, the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, with the increase to the minimum wage has its challenges I believe there is an 'up-side' to consider. Indications from members suggest that people

working in the service sector have been hardest hit with some job losses or reduction of work hours due to the higher minimum wage. However, we have also seen significant growth in jobs gained in other business sectors – Manufacturing, Warehouse and Distribution, Health Sciences, IT, Office and Administration, etc.

Some members have reported that for every job lost in the service sector, they have found up to four new jobs in other areas/sectors. And, these jobs typically provide more hours of work per week and higher wages, often times with benefits. This mirrors ODEN's experience with Dare Foods, Rockwool and others.

While we've had to adjust our business engagement and job development strategies and our service delivery models, overall, the outcomes for job seekers with disabilities appear to be positive.

There must be change in order to see further progress for people who have a disability.

It was 2003 when the Community Involvement Council did their last employment study in Southwestern Ontario, tracking 2500 job seekers with a disability who were accessing employment services. The data showed that 66% were working in the service sector compared to 24.5% in the general population. If you had a developmental disability, that went up to 80%. People worked an average of 15 hours a week, earning barely more than minimum wage.

I would suggest not much has changed over these past 15 years. We need to move away from the "any job is good enough" approach. Otherwise we are doing a disservice to those whom we support.

Going forward, our overarching goals must be two-fold:

- to move beyond 'token' hires to strategies that encourage greater systemic change; and,
- to get beyond the service sector where greater job quality and job stability exist. This may well be the silver lining in Bill 148 and the Supported Employment model.

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– Jeannette Campbell

Business Services Manager – Sue Dafoe

Diversity & Inclusion Specialist – Ingrid Muschta

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