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Hurst encourages businesses to hire those with disabilities

Posted By Ron Giofu/The Amherstburg Echo

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AMHERSTBURG – Amherstburg is joining the "Do the Right Thing" challenge and is encouraging local businesses to hire those with a disability.

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley initiated the challenge earlier this year to mayors across the province and several in Essex County have taken him up on it. Mayor Wayne Hurst met with representatives from Community Living Essex County (CLEC) Friday morning.

Hurst said he was proud to do his part to encourage area businesses to hire those with disabilities and to create awareness of the situation.

"I would encourage businesses in our community to step up to the plate and do what they can," said Hurst.

Two people that Community Living Essex County supports, Kate Chant and Cheryl Major, were on hand as well and gave resumes to Hurst with the hope of gaining entry into the workforce.

Tony DeSantis, community relations manager with CLEC, said they have people they support seeking both full-time and part-time opportunities. They are leaving their doors open to all opportunities, he said.

"We've had some good success. We've had some employers call us which is exactly what we want to do," said DeSantis.

DeSantis called it a "win-win" for employers and employees.

"We've got a lot of success stories we can draw on," said DeSantis.

DeSantis added they have a strong relationship with communities across the county which enables them to make such requests.

"We're a part of the community," he said.



Mayor Wayne Hurst endorsed Community Living Essex County's attempt to have more people with disabilities hired within the local workforce. Hurst met with CLEC representatives Friday morning including Cheryl Major (left) and Kate Chant (right).

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Michelle Jones-Rousseau, a support worker with CLEC's Channel Resource Centre in Amherstburg, hopes to get 5-10 minutes of an employer's time just to see how a CLEC-supported person could fit the employer's needs. Jones-Rousseau said she currently has six people looking for part-time work.

"Most people we support are ready, willing and able," she said.

Statistics Canada reports there are almost 1.8 million working age people in Ontario who have a disability. They face an unemployment rate of 49 percent.

Any employer interested in giving an opportunity to someone with a disability can call Jones-Rousseau at 519-736-5077 or e-mail michelle@communitylivingessex.org.