
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
Dec. 4, 2012

Community Living BC

Local employers recognized in annual CLBC WOW Awards

VANCOUVER – Five exceptional local employers are being recognized for embracing inclusion and helping adults with developmental disabilities have a greater sense of community and belonging in their workplace through Community Living BC (CLBC's) fourth annual Widening Our World (WOW) Awards.

The theme for the awards this year is employment. Five employers from different regions of the province were chosen from over 100 nominees – a WOW Awards record. Local celebrations in the winners' communities are planned throughout the province from Dec. 4 to 13.

The winners are:

- Interior – Sean Watson, Safeway (100 Mile House)
- Lower Mainland – Chris Kamachi, Digital Toys (Surrey)
- North – Jeff Hockman, Safeway (Terrace)
- Sunshine Coast – Marc Dowling, Rocky Mountain Pizza + Bakery (Powell River)
- Vancouver Island – Peter Richmond, 49th Parallel Grocery (Ladysmith)

Nominations of inclusive employers or co-workers were submitted by self-advocates throughout Community Living Month in October. Five regional panels of community and family members, community council members, CLBC staff, service providers and self-advocates selected the 2012 award winners.

CLBC views meaningful employment as a big part of inclusion and promoting good lives in welcoming communities. Employment leads to numerous quality of life outcomes, including financial well-being, relationships and belonging.

CLBC is committed to working with the B.C. government to deliver on all 12 recommendations in the [Improving Services to People with Development Disabilities](#) plan, which includes increasing employment planning and supports. CLBC's recognition of employers who are creating more inclusive workplaces complements this ongoing work.

Quotes:

Doug Woollard, CLBC interim CEO -

"I want to congratulate this year's WOW Awards winners and all of the other employers who were nominated. Their efforts to promote meaningful employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities helps raise community awareness about the importance of inclusion through employment in communities throughout the province."

Minister of Social Development Moira Stilwell, M.D. –

“I am proud to congratulate all of the recipients and nominees of this year’s WOW Awards. It’s wonderful to see so many employers providing rewarding jobs and experiences to individuals with developmental disabilities, and they deserve recognition for their leadership in ‘widening our world’ by embracing diversity in their workplace.”

Learn More:

- To learn more about Community Living BC, visit: www.communitylivingbc.ca.
- For updates about the progress government is making on the 12 recommendations, visit: www.sd.gov.bc.ca/pwd/isst.html.
- Watch this video message from Social Development Minister Moira Stilwell for International Day of Persons With Disabilities: <http://ow.ly/fMyPT>.

A backgrounder follows, including information about the award winners and self-advocates who nominated them.

BACKGROUND

Profiles of 2012 CLBC WOW Awards winners and nominators

Every year since 2009, Community Living BC (CLBC) has presented the Widening Our World (WOW) Awards to recognize British Columbians who are making exceptional contributions to the vision of full citizenship. where people with developmental disabilities lead good lives, have rich relationships, choices in how they live and employment opportunities.

This year, the awards were launched during Community Living Month in October and focused on community leaders supporting inclusive employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities.

A record number of nominations were received from self-advocates throughout the province (over 100). Five employers from various regions were selected by five panels of family members, community council representatives, CLBC staff, service providers and self-advocates.

Interior – Sean Watson, Safeway (100 Mile House) - Brett Tassel is the self-advocate who nominated his boss, Sean Watson, at Safeway in 100 Mile House. Brett has worked at Safeway for over five years and says Sean listens to his ideas and finds ways for him to be successful. Sean says being recognized for a WOW Award is very rewarding. “It’s not just one person, it’s the whole team – we all work together and we all want to get the work done and have a good time. Brett is a hard working, smart and fun guy and I’m proud to be able to work with him and be a part of his life.”

Lower Mainland – Chris Kamachi, Digital Toys (Surrey) - Nevada Smith is the self-advocate who nominated his boss, Chris Kamachi. Chris owns Digital Toys in Surrey, where Nevada has worked for seven months. Chris has helped Nevada to be more hands on in the computer industry by taking him to meet vendors and showing him all sides of the business, so Nevada can learn more about the company. Nevada says, “I love my job so much that sometimes I get to work too early because I can’t wait to be there.”

North – Jeff Hockman, Safeway (Terrace) - Greg Garbutt is the self-advocate who nominated Jeff Hockman from Safeway in Terrace. This is the Terrace Safeway's second WOW Award. The store was also recognized in 2011. Greg has worked at Safeway for over four years and says, "Jeff has been a great role model for me and he also shows an interest in me outside of my work. He comes to my birthday parties and has taken me to the movies. Jeff never makes me feel like I have special needs and treats me like he treats everyone else at work."

Sunshine Coast – Marc Dowling, Rocky Mountain Pizza + Bakery (Powell River) - Angela is the self-advocate who nominated Marc Dowling, owner of Rocky Mountain Pizza + Bakery in Powell River. Angela has worked there for 17 years and says, "Marc is a very understanding person, always makes me feel comfortable and is open and honest when he talks to me and other people I work with. Marc listens to my ideas and helps me to learn new things."

Vancouver Island – Peter Richmond, 49th Parallel Grocery (Ladysmith) - Amy McMillan is the self-advocate who nominated her boss, Peter Richmond, at 49th Parallel Grocery in Ladysmith. Amy has worked at 49th Parallel for six years and says, "Peter is a great guy and fun to work with. He is always nice to me, is funny and helps me to learn how to do new and different things at work. That's Peter, you can't do without him."

Media Contact: Community Living BC
604 833-8444