

Community Employment Partnership

Inclusion, Diversity and Work Changes Lives



Belonging Matters is a not-for-profit, education and advisory service that was established in 2003 by people with disabilities and their families. The main purpose of Belonging Matters is to assist people with a disability to belong and contribute to the social and economic fabric of the community. Belonging Matters has been recognised as a leader through a National Disability Award in Social Inclusion and through its various partnerships with the University of Melbourne and the National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations.

Belonging Matters is running a pilot project, fully funded by the Department of Social Services that will work together with business communities and networks to develop jobs for people with intellectual disabilities and Autism. As Rotary has a strong history of community service and Rotarians have vast business networks, it provides an ideal partner to change the poor employment outcomes for people with a disability. A partnership with Rotary also provides a foundation of shared values and ethics as exemplified by Rotary's Four-Way Test.

Why is the Community Employment Partnership important?

Employment is important for all people – it gives us a sense of purpose, financial security, improved wellbeing, relationships and friends. “What do you want to be when you grow up?” is a question all parents ask their children.

Yet, people with intellectual disability are one of most under-employed groups in Australia, often locked into segregated settings or a permanent cycle of training. Just 16% are employed in the open job market, and only 5% report their main income as paid employment. Alarming, 45% of people with intellectual disability are currently living below the poverty line. This leads to social isolation and fewer opportunities to develop work skills, resulting in a lifelong dependence on social welfare.

Belonging Matters is working to reverse these statistics.

Benefits of employing people with an intellectual disability and Autism

Everyone Benefits!

People with intellectual disability and Autism want to work and have the same opportunities as other citizens.

Like everyone else, they have strengths, interests, and abilities to contribute positively to the workplace.

Employees with intellectual disability and Autism are hard-working, dedicated and often require less support than employers anticipate.

Research has shown there is very little difference in productivity or contribution from hiring people with a disability. Yet the difference in workplace culture can be hugely beneficial. Comparison studies have shown that people with a disability:

- have fewer accidents at work,
- create a positive workplace culture,
- have fewer days off and less sick leave,
- increase customer and staff loyalty,
- have lower hiring costs.

(Graffan, J., Smith, K., Shinkfield, A., Polzin, U, 2002).



In addition, workplaces that represent diversity in the community are more likely to attract a diverse range of customers. A diverse team and inclusive workplace culture can also increase innovation, solutions to problems and inspires creativity.

This collaboration is based on the very successful Inclusion Alberta and Rotary Partnership which was established in 2000. This collaboration has created over 600 jobs for people with intellectual disability and Autism. Canadian Rotarian, Wendy McDonald, received a Service Above Self award in 2020 for her ongoing work in the partnership.



**WATCH
VIDEO**

Inclusion Alberta's Rotary Employment Partnership

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdrIm-F_I8I

How the Employment Project Works

It starts with a conversation....

Belonging Matters want to work with Rotary to develop employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and Autism, using a customised employment process. The primary role of Rotarians is to tap into their vast business networks and introduce Belonging Matters to business contacts who would be willing to have a conversation about employing a person with intellectual disability or Autism. As people's interests and skills are diverse, we would love to talk to all types of businesses.

Belonging Matters will make a time to discuss potential opportunities with individual business contacts. If interested, Belonging Matters will work with prospective employers to develop employment opportunities. Belonging Matters will then coordinate a 'match' with prospective employers and employees, and provide the necessary ongoing support to ensure success.

A steering committee will be established which will involve members of Belonging Matters and Rotary to guide and direct the partnership. Belonging Matters will provide information, presentations and updates to Rotary clubs, districts and committees on a regular basis and promote success on social media.

How can your club help?



Invite us to speak
at your club



Talk to other Rotarians
about the Partnership



Introduce Belonging
Matters to business

If you would like to hear more about the Belonging Matters' Community Employment Partnership



3/178 Boronia Road
Boronia Vic 3155



(03) 9739 8333



0432 189 323



cep@belongingmatters.org

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.