

**READY
WILLING
& ABLE**

**PRÊTS
DISPONIBLES
& CAPABLES**

Safety First!

Breaking Down Myths with Bluewave Energy



Think that employees with a disability pose a bigger safety risk in the workplace than their colleagues without a disability? Think again. Research of inclusive employers has consistently found that employees with a disability typically rate average or above average on safety. And through Ready, Willing and Able employers are moving beyond the research, with real life experience that's breaking down this myth; employers like Bluewave Energy.

Bluewave Energy is a division of Parkland Fuel Corporation, the largest independent fuel distributor in Canada. Mike McGregor, Branch Manager for Sudbury with Bluewave Energy had heard from others about the value of inclusive hiring, and with the company continuing to grow and expand, he was keen to explore how his team could tap into the talents of an inclusive workforce. Through his experience in hiring inclusively, Mike can confirm that employees with an intellectual disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder are not only productive, but safety-conscious.

Mike explained that the entire team was very supportive “right from the get go”. With the enthusiasm and commitment of his boss and the HR team, Mike hired Patrick, a young man with an intellectual disability to work as a Summer Student from May to August 2016. Patrick was hired through Ready, Willing and Able (RWA), a national initiative designed to increase the labour force participation of people with an intellectual disability or ASD and supported on the job by March of Dimes Sudbury. According to Mike, being a part of this wraparound support network was key in building their confidence and capacity to hire inclusively.

As a Summer Student, Patrick worked with teams in both Sudbury and North Bay in landscaping, cleaning and maintenance. As safety is a number one priority at Bluewave Energy, Mike and his team were initially concerned that on the job safety may be a challenge in hiring someone with an intellectual disability. To support Patrick in learning the role, the team at Bluewave Energy brought the lead on their Health, Safety and Environment Committee to Sudbury to provide Patrick with one-on-one WHIMIS training. Mike explains that this added support in bringing Patrick on board was key to his success on the job and throughout Patrick's summer contract, “there were zero issues from a safety standpoint”. Furthermore, Mike explains that not only was Patrick productive, keen to work, and on time every day, but the entire team gained a lot from working alongside Patrick.

Mike's advice to other businesses who are considering hiring inclusively? “Take that leap of faith. There's a lot of support out there. You'll get productivity and it is very rewarding to the entire team.”



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safety standpoint.”**

**- Mike McGregor, Branch Manager
Bluewave Energy, Sudbury**

Funded by the Government of Canada and active in 20 communities across the country, RWA is a national partnership of the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance (CASDA) and their member organizations.

**To find out how you could become an
inclusive champion, contact:
rwa@communitylivingontario.ca**