



# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025



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MLA David Sheperd (back row, second from right) with EmployAbilities staff (current and former), clients and supporters at the Edmonton 50th celebration.

### Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect on 2024, it was like riding a rollercoaster. There were many highs and lows throughout the year. The highs of 2024 included celebrating EmployAbilities 50th anniversary. It was great to travel to many of the communities where EmployAbilities has programs to celebrate fifty years. We had over 1,000 people attend our open houses and barbeques in the rain, in a wind storm, and in the 30° heat. Thank you to the staff for their diligent work in organizing and coordinating these events. The low points of the year included the passing away of two of our staff members and the grant programs coming to an end for Steps to Employment, 45+ Works and GroundWORKS. I look forward to 2025 and continued success for EmployAbilities.

*JASON LOEWER*

## 50th anniversary celebrations



### Cold Lake - May 31



98 attendees



130+ hot dogs served

### Bonnyville - June 14



104 attendees



125+ hot dogs served

### Vegreville - July 19



216 attendees



150+ burgers,  
100+ hot dogs served

### Lac la Biche - August 2



350+ attendees



240+ burgers,  
180+ hot dogs served

### St. Paul - August 29



231 attendees



100+ burgers,  
180+ hot dogs served

### Edmonton - September 18



275+ attendees

Thank you supporters!



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The Jungle Flowers 

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## 2024 Inclusive Employer Awards

Celebrating Champions of Inclusive and Diverse Hiring



October 16  
7:30-9:30am



13 nominees



3 categories  
5 winners

### Iris M. Saunders Award of Excellence

Sheila Pena, owner and operator of **Ricky's All-Day Grill** on Jasper Avenue, has provided exceptional mentorship to individuals with disabilities and barriers to employment. She has personally guided and supported numerous clients in their career development, offering valuable insights, encouragement, and hands-on training to help them excel in the hospitality industry.



### Business of Distinction Awards



Over the past three years **Edge Equipment** has hired five clients from the Learn 2 Earn program, one client from Re-Start Your Career, and implemented innovative practices to help employees with disabilities, including offering training programs and additional resources like English classes to help employees succeed in their roles.



**The Canadian Brewhouse Group of Companies** have empowered EmployAbilities Job Developers to work directly with store managers on accommodations, interviews, and scheduling, and have streamlined the application and interview process for clients with disabilities and barriers.



**Creative Door of Edmonton** has shaped the careers of EmployAbilities participants and positively impacted the community by fostering an environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive through mentoring, practicums, speed interviews, and mock interviews.

### Ambassador Award

**Chantelle Painter** was selected in recognition of her unwavering commitment to increase awareness of people with disabilities as a valuable source of skilled labour. In addition to hiring many clients with disabilities as HR Manager, her participation in speed interviews has provided countless opportunities for those with disabilities to showcase their skills and secure meaningful employment.



### Thank you sponsors!





## International Day of Persons with Disabilities

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated every year on December 3. The day is about promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities at every level of society, and to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life. Lakeland Employment Services and EmployAbilities North (pictured left) were pleased to take part in IDPD activities to recognize this important event.

## EAGP wins Inclusive Community Award

EmployAbilities Grande Prairie was thrilled to be presented with the 2024 Inclusive Community Award by the Accessibility Advisory Committee of Grande Prairie at the City of Grande Prairie's International Day of Persons with Disabilities event on December 3. Thank you!

## EmployAbilities wins RISE Award

We were so honoured to receive a RISE Award from the Newcomer Centre in the Equity in Action category on October 30!



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