



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention news/assignment editors

New safety program aims to protect disabled workers

Toronto (November 18, 2005) – On Monday, November 21, the Opportunities 2005 conference will host the launch of SafeAbility – a workplace health and safety training program for persons with disabilities. Media are invited to attend.

Date: Monday, November 21, 2005
Time: 5:00 PM (reception), 5:30 PM (launch)
Location: Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel Suites and Conference Centre
Address: 600 Highway 7 East, Richmond Hill, Ontario

In Toronto alone, there are more than 117,000 people with disabilities seeking employment each year, but they are receiving little or no health and safety training before they enter the workplace. The SafeAbility program – developed by Link Up Employment Services of Toronto and Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) – aims to change this.

Ontario has a community of employment agencies and service providers that assist persons encountering employment barriers by providing them with the skills and abilities they need to enter the workforce. Link Up and the WSIB developed the SafeAbility program in partnership with some of these agencies and providers.

SafeAbility will give all employment agencies and service providers access to state-of-the-art health and safety training materials – including training modules, lesson plans, overheads, reference sheets and posters. They can use these materials to build health and safety training into the basic training programs they provide.

SafeAbility will help to make sure disabled people have the health and safety knowledge that will protect them when they enter the workforce. Agencies and providers can learn more about the SafeAbility program on the web at www.SafeAbility.ca, or by contacting the SafeAbility offices at 416-413-9366 (toll-free 1-877-B-SAFE-04) or e-mail info@safeability.ca.

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“We aim to provide the best employment services for all persons with disabilities, so we are very excited to be able to offer this program to the disabled community,” says Bob Santos, Executive Director of Link Up. “It’s a great resource – providing materials that can be adapted to suit the individual needs of specific employment agencies and clients.”

Link Up Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities is a charitable not-for-profit employment services agency with a head office in the heart of Toronto, and branch offices in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Opportunities Conference 2005 is the 7th Annual Career Development Conference organized by the Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP). It is being held from November 21 to 23 at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel Suites and Conference Centre, 600 Highway 7 East, Richmond Hill, Ontario.

Ontario’s Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) plays a key role in the province’s occupational health and safety system. The WSIB administers no-fault workplace insurance for employers and their workers and is committed to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses. The WSIB provides disability benefits, monitors the quality of healthcare, and assists in early and safe return to work for workers who are injured on the job or contract an occupational disease.

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