

A-WAY EXPRESSIONS

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CUSTOMERS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF A-WAY EXPRESS

A-WAY EXPRESS COURIER • 2168 Danforth Ave. Toronto M4C 1K3 • Tel: 416-424-2266 • Fax: 416-424-4528 • www.awaycourier.ca • SPRING 2014

Employing people with mental health challenges since 1987

NEW PERSONNEL – NEW PLANS



OLIVER HOWEY

because we use public transit and therefore sustainable and green practises.

Oliver brings to the role a personal and family background in mental health issues and recovery. From severe depression through familial institutionalization he has broad experience with many aspects of the system and process. Oliver also has vast experience in NFP (not-for-profit) organizations in the employment services field, working and affecting thousands of participants over a decade of effort. Oliver also understands business development and partnerships and is excited to use those skills and abilities to analyse, plan, grow and sustain A-Way. His mandate is very specific to do this work in conjunction and collaboration with all the players inside and outside our organization. As a result of his efforts we will see a clearer operation with achievable roles and goals for all. We will also have a better sense of the potential of our market and a renewed process to grow and sustain the business as we diversify.

His plan includes using inside and outside resources to gather data, establish the best practices and create a doable strategy. Then to conduct a series of activities to

Since the inclusion of email to our day-to-day business practises it is no surprise that our courier business needs to take a hard look at the future. That is what we are doing with the guidance of Oliver Howey who has recently joined A-Way Express as Business Director. We are in a strong position to do well since the awareness of mental health issues are very much in the media, and

refurbish where needed, fix old issues, find new sources of revenue and build a strong network of partners to take A-Way forward, with a plan and resources on hand.

Oliver is asking for your support – not just in pointing out the flaws or gaps but with ideas and solutions. He needs you to think about A-Way from your perspective and offer guidance. He knows we all want to see A-Way succeed and grow so he has his door and mind open to take in your experience, ideas, enthusiasm and energy. He wants to make this an even better place to work, learn, thrive and survive.

You can reach Oliver in the office at extension 232 or by email at oliver@awaycourier.ca and he welcomes all your support, information and ideas. We are on the move to a better condition - get on the bus with us.



Kathleen is an Employment Support Specialist who's been hired for a pilot project until October. Her role is to establish a trial placement and mentorship program at A-Way, as well as an alumni club for previous A-Way staff. This will allow them to reconnect with current staff and share their experiences about work outside A-Way. Recently ads looking for mentors were placed on Charity Village and in the CAMH newsletter.



KATHLEEN GARCES

So far there are two paid work placements successfully underway. Houselink has generously provided the exciting opportunities: one as a Community Cook at their Broadview location and the other in Administrative Support for their two Bloor Street locations.

Congratulations to Enoch Soong (Community Cook) and Douglas McLeod (Administrative Support) on their placements! We are still waiting to hear the status about two other placements within a financial institution.

Kathleen has also been collaborating with Woodgreen Employment Services to organize three upcoming workshops relating to gaining employment. Best wishes Kathleen and congratulations on the connections you've made so far.



PROGRESS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Social Enterprise Toronto held its first conference in January at the Learning Enrichment Foundation. Members are working toward affecting inclusion in Canadian procurement policies. Goals are being set with the guidance of Social Enterprise organizers from around the world that have progressed further than we have here in Canada.



ELSEWHERE IN THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY

PARC FUNDRAISER A GREAT SUCCESS!



MP Peggy Nash, MPP Cheri DiNovo and PARC Director Victor Willis were all there to honour the memory of Edmond Yu and raise funds for more supportive housing like Edmond Place.

Last Thursday night the rain was coming down so hard I was nervous about the turnout for PARC's fundraiser. It was the second annual Blues for Edmond concert to honour the life of Edmond Yu who died on a streetcar 17 years ago to the day, February 20th 1997, at the hands of Toronto Police. You may not remember his name but you would remember the name of Sammy Yatim who died much the same way. Seventeen years have passed and nothing appears to have changed.

Three years ago Edmond Place was opened to provide supportive housing for people living with mental health challenges. It had been a rooming house in disrepair but after burning down it was reclaimed and rebuilt. Edmond Yu had lived there but was evicted a few months before he died. In its new form it was appropriately named in his honour. He might have survived with a home and the support it would now supply for others. These basics are what gives a survivor a chance for growth and recovery. This fundraiser was in support of these goals.

Victor Willis knows well the quality of life issues that make a difference. He's the Director of PARC - Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre and it's located next to Edmond Place on Queen West. There they serve meals to anyone in need and the opportunity to join in on an activity or find someone to talk to. Wednesday morning there's a music jam at PARC and some of those players got on stage to play at the fundraiser. They were good! Then KC Roberts and his blues/funk band The Live Revolution took us all to the dance floor. The whole evening was a blast.

When leaving I watched MPP Cheri DiNovo dash across the icy sidewalk and through the cold rain to get home. I had to applaud her for coming. But like MP Peggy Nash you can count on them to support a community endeavour that is really important. The effort changes lives. And keeps a bright light on important issues that require action.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

ARTHUR GUILLERMO

Arthur has been working in the Marketing office at A-Way for more than 2 years, and really enjoys his job. He feels a sense of pride when telling people that he works in sales. There are two reasons for this: he knows how hard a job it is to do well, and he knows what personal challenges he has overcome in order to succeed in sales.

When Arthur came to Canada from the Phillipines he was an adolescent. His family of eight landed in Newfoundland in a place called Grand Falls with a population of 20,000. He enjoyed the friendly spirit there but he found the pace of speech too fast to follow and the slang challenging. Since work was hard for his father to find they moved to Toronto after 6 months. But this transition was hard on Arthur. He was just starting high school and he began to experience anxiety that he has lived with since. Eventually he was put on medication to manage it.

When Arthur was in his mid-twenties he developed a condition called hyperacusis. He was told this was a rare side effect of taking medication for anxiety. Hyperacusis manifests as a heightened sensitivity to sound, particularly higher-pitched tones. This exacerbated the ongoing anxiety he was being treated for, and to make matters worse in his early thirties the hypersensitivity became an issue for his eyes as well. He had been working in electronic repair after graduating from Seneca College but became unable to work at all.

Individually these conditions would isolate a person in the extreme, because both cause severe pain. You and I can transform the solid barrage of city noise and light into a backdrop to be ignored, but Arthur cannot. And living in a city is much harsher than we consciously realize.

Those years hold dark and lonely memories for him. It took awhile to be properly diagnosed and there is no treatment that will cure either condition. He would often be misunderstood, as going out meant wearing a hood and sunglasses for protection. When you're already feeling badly about yourself being mistaken for someone to be feared does not add to your self-confidence. He was housebound for four years.

Arthur found that reading books, including the bible,

gave him comfort but in fact that was all he could do. He was unable to watch tv, listen to radio, do laundry or shopping or go out at all. If he looked at a bright light for even ½ second he would relapse for two weeks with eye pain. At family gatherings he would have to excuse himself to a quiet room. Even socializing with family was impossible.

When he realized there were no solutions coming from medicine he knew he had to focus on helping himself. Now he eats the best food he can afford and works hard at taking care of himself. He marvels at the difference a healthy diet makes to his health, and laughs at the fact that he used to drink coke every day. Now he not only manages his anxiety and social phobia without medication but he takes on things that challenge them... like sales for example. Who would expect to see a social phobic making a living that way? But Arthur challenges himself, sets goals and works hard. It's admirable.



Last year Arthur cycled from Toronto to Niagara Falls, twice. In fact he cycled 5,000 km in six months in 2013! Cycling is a big part of his life now with the help of ear plugs, sunglasses and of course weather permitting. Plus in 2012 he received a certificate from George Brown College for Basic Counselling Skills. He found that people were confiding in him for issues normally shared with a therapist. This certificate could be a springboard for him to work in peer support. He feels that sharing his knowledge and his familiarity with resources might help someone. This is his "Plan B".

Now with the help of an herbalist he has renewed enthusiasm for his prognosis and life in general. The improvement in his health is that encouraging. He's taking a new formula every 8 weeks and although it's expensive it is working.

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ARTHUR GUILLERMO *continued from previous page.*

Arthur has what it takes to succeed here. It's a pleasure to see how happy he is with each new account that is opened. And he is motivated to earn his success, putting in the time and effort to learn new ways of doing things. He's proud of his strength because it was earned the hard way. And he is very positive about A-Way for providing an opportunity for people with mental health issues to work, develop skills and to be strong.

If you know someone who uses couriers and would be interested in using A-Way, make Arthur's day and have them give him a call.

by Maureen O'Donnell



"My voice-recognition app says I sound insecure and should seek professional help."

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

What is laid down, ordered, factual
is never enough to embrace the whole truth:
life always spills over the rim of every cup.
-Boris Pasternak, poet and novelist (1890-1960))



Willy enjoying a crisp winter day in Kew Park

INTRODUCING A-WAY'S NEWEST CUSTOMERS

Urban Arts urbanartstoronto.org Engaging youth in community development through the arts
United Church of Canada www.united-church.ca
Happy Creations www.happycreations.ca Full service production company
Cynthia Karlton Personal Account One of the Founders of A-Way
Renew Canada renewcanada.net A national, bi-monthly business magazine that profiles infrastructure in Canada
Jenny Green Cooperative Homes Inc Housing Co-op
St. Clare's Multifith www.stclares.ca Provide residence for people who were previously homeless or living in a shelter
Ramp Communications www.ramped.ca Create unique, strategic and effective marketing campaigns
St. Christopher House stchrishouse.org Work with diverse individuals, families and groups to promote personal and social health
U for Change www.uforchange.org Works with new Canadian and low-income youth living in and around St. James Town
Linwood Property Management Corporation www.linwood.ca Residential, commercial and recreational properties throughout Ontario
Triple Properties www.tripleproperties.com Property management
Toronto Furnished Apartments www.torontofurnishedapartments.com Provides fully furnished corporate accommodations or rentals for travellers
UB Media Inc. ubmedia.ca Outdoor Advertising Placement
Toronto Drop-In Network www.tdin.ca Coalition of 49+ drop-in centers working with people who are homeless, marginally housed or socially isolated in Toronto
Elevate Your Presence www.elevatepresence.com Personal coaching or consulting services
Janet Au Personal Account
Planned Parenthood www.ppt.on.ca A community based, pro choice agency committed to promoting healthy sexuality and informed decision-making.
Kerzner Entertainment Entertainment Production, Ed the Sock Seiler, Mayumi Personal Account
YYZ www.yyzartistsoutlet.org Give artists space and support to take risks and create freely.
Our Place Community of Hope www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com Assists people experiencing mental health issues in recovery and building skills and supports for independent living
Homes First Foundation www.homesfirst.on.ca Improves the lives of those who are homeless and have a mental illness
Local 75 Housing Co-op
Dr. Susan Huxtable Dental Office www.dr.susanhuxtable.com Dentist
Canadian Institute of Diversity & Inclusion www.cidi-icdi.ca Help employers and individuals in the areas of diversity and inclusion.
The Dragon Academy www.dragonacademy.org Offers experience-centered, challenging and well-rounded education for a diverse community through discussion and museum based learning.
CAMH - General Psychiatry Unit www.camh.ca Psychiatric facility
I.C.A. Associates ica-associates.ca A facilitation and training organization providing skills to thousands of people.
Closing Costs www.closingcosts.ca Helps you calculate and understand your closing costs, and compare the best quotes from home inspectors and real estate lawyers in Canada.
MMB Research mmbresearch.com Engineering firm with expertise in wireless, embedded, and Smart Energy technologies.
Ruby Watchco www.rubywatchco.ca Restaurant that serves comfort food, using only local, seasonal ingredients
St. Michael's Hospital Pediatric Unit www.stmichaelshospital.ca pediatric hospital



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