



Canadian  
Down Syndrome  
Society

Société  
canadienne de la  
trisomie 21

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Response to Families demanding to keep sheltered workshops alive.**

Calgary, Alta. - The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) promotes the opportunity to be a fully participating Canadian Citizen, which also includes the opportunity to work in the community in an integrated setting. CDSS agrees with Ontario in eliminating the opportunity for people with disabilities to work for less than minimum wage.

In the CBC article 'Renfrew parents demand return of minimum wage exemption for people with disabilities' it is stated that local business are saying "they just don't have the time or the money to help them". The Canadian Down Syndrome Society disagrees and believes that the inclusion of people with disabilities in the work force has a positive financial impact on our economy, generating income that is ultimately returned in the form of tax revenues. "Many individuals with intellectual disabilities are either unemployed or underemployed, despite their demonstrated ability, desire, and willingness to engage in meaningful work in the community." Says Laura LaChance CDSS Board Chair. Our country is becoming more diverse and Canadians with disabilities should be included in diversifying the workforce. This can be achieved through established supported employment practices.

Improving employment outcomes for Canadians with disabilities at the national, provincial, and local level requires a holistic approach that communicates a clear message, incorporates policy change, funding, capacity development, interagency partnerships, outcome measurement and service innovation. It is vital that people with disabilities, and all people have the proper supports with clearly articulated goals and progress tracks, with this people with disabilities can become contributors to the economy. Laura LaChance emphasizes that "The Canadian Down Syndrome Society believes that all Canadians including those with intellectual disabilities should have the opportunity for jobs alongside other citizens based upon their preferences, interests, and demonstrated strengths and earn wages and benefits that meet labour standards."

CDSS believes in supporting individuals in gaining access to programs and supports that would allow them to participate in the labour force as a valued and fully paid member of a team and would invite businesses to contact CDSS to learn more about these opportunities.

***About Canadian Down Syndrome Society:*** *The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is a vital resource linking individuals, parents and professionals through advocacy, education, and providing information. CDSS is proud to be the voice of Canadians with Down syndrome and their families. CDSS wants all Canadians to 'See the Ability'. Visit [www.cdss.ca](http://www.cdss.ca) for more information.*

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**Media Contacts:**

Kirk Crowther  
National Executive Director  
Phone: (403) 270-8500 ext. 204  
[kirk@cdss.ca](mailto:kirk@cdss.ca)

**cdss.ca**

**See The Ability**

**info@cdss.ca** | **1-800-883-5608** Suite 103 – 2003 14 Street NW • Calgary, AB T2M 3N4

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