



# DIVERSITY WORKS!

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Happy Holidays!</i>	1-2
<i>Stress in the Workplace</i>	2
<i>Ask a Consultant</i>	3
<i>Canadian Mental Health Facts</i>	4
<i>Best Employer Practices for Dealing with Mental Illness in the Workplace</i>	4-5
<i>Gifts That Make A Difference: CNIB Annual Crocus Sale</i>	5
<i>Gifts That Make A Difference: Morag Webster-Lesarge</i>	6
<i>Gifts That Make A Difference: Youth Opportunities Unlimited</i>	6
<i>LD Speakers Bureau</i>	7
<i>Tina Warrington: Job Wanted</i>	7
<i>Religious Cultural Dates 2007/2008</i>	8
<i>Contact Information</i>	8

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS! FROM DIVERSITY @ WORK

Welcome to our Winter edition of Diversity Works! We have had a busy few months conducting workshops, providing pronunciation classes to foreign professionals and implementing ethnic marketing strategies for local businesses.

Our Pronunciation classes have been very well received by our students. Our small classroom environment, coupled with our experienced and motivated teacher, Leah Straatsma, has provided foreign professionals with the much needed skills and practice to increase their language proficiency in the workplace. We have had a diverse group from China, Colombia, Congo, Eritrea and Afghanistan. Stay tuned for future courses on Pronunciation, Grammar, Spelling, and Business Communications for English as a Second Language learners. Give us a call to inquire about our corporate rates. You will be surprised at how reasonable they are!

In our most recent workshop on October 10, 2007, **“Tapping into Emerging Markets: An Introduction into Ethnic Marketing**, Lee



Anderson and Associates, Zoo Group Media, The Lashbrook Group, The Investors Group, The City of London, Home Depot and Youth Opportunities Unlimited were some of the participants who discovered how to go about marketing their products and services as well as employment opportunities to the ethnic communities in London. Participants were able to meet some of the publishers of the periodicals. Thank you to all our ethnic media panellists and our seminar participants. Our seminar was highlighted in L'Action, the regional Franco-phone newspaper and our local TV Latino. To be on our list for a repeat of this workshop, e-mail us or give us a call at 519-659-4777.

Diversity @ Work in London would like to welcome Allan Greenslade to our team. Allan has over 35 years of experience in the human resources background and is a seasoned trainer. After retiring, Allan returned to work a few years later and now is working part-time as a Human Resources consultant for Angelo's Bakery in London. We look forward to putting his valuable experience to good use.

We are pleased to be invited to be a part of two initiatives in London. Evelina will be one of the speakers for the Speakers' Bureau for ATN. The speakers will discuss some of the challenges facing people with learning disabilities and how *(continued on page 2)*

*“This holiday season, why not help support a local female portraiture artist, youth employment programs or programs for individuals with vision loss?”*

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS (CONT'D FROM PG. 1)

employers can help them succeed in the workplace. See page 7 for more information. We have also accepted an invitation to be part of the Diversity Committee of the Human Resource Professional Association of London and District. We are looking forward to working with this motivated team of professionals!

Since the gift giving season is here, we have included some suggestions that help make a difference in our community and support people with barriers. Help support a local female portraiture artist, youth employment programs as well as programs for people with vision loss.

As outlined in our first issue, Diversity Works! wishes to

bring workplace diversity issues that are rarely discussed to the forefront, but affect us all in one shape or another. This month's issue focus is on Accommodating Mental Illness in the Workplace.

We would like to wish our readers Happy Holidays and best wishes for an inclusive workplace in the New Year!

## STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Stress. We hear about it a lot these days. Job stress. Family stress. Financial Stress. For a growing number of Canadians these stressors are wreaking havoc with their mental health. Coming to work can be the greatest stressor, contributing to their mental illness. But for others, a mental health pre-condition means that they have to try to work while dealing with the stigma and its debilitating effects.

The two preceding examples are ones that I witnessed in two separate workplaces. As an employer or employee, how would you handle each situation? See our section on best practices for accommodating employee mental illness in the workplace.

### EMPLOYER A

Peter would frequently come in at least 30 minutes late each day, sometimes up to two hours late. He looked tired and his clothing was often wrinkled. He was however, the lead researcher and was

very well liked by the president. He disclosed that in the last two years he had been hospitalized for depression and attempted suicide. He never had to worry about losing his job as it was quite secure. They held his job for several months, even though they were short staffed. At no time was he ridiculed. No staff complained that he was late. The staff had developed a sincere concern for him based on the respect that the owner and manager had afforded him. In fact, his co-workers were a constant source of ongoing support in his recovery. For his part, he would work later to make up for the time that was lost on his tardiness or he would work on the weekend. He needed a job and felt very appreciative that these accommodations had been made for him.

### EMPLOYER B

A longstanding employee, Sarah had suffered numerous traumas in a short period of time. Tragic deaths and

suicides of people close to her, left her immobilized to work for several months. During her leave, the organization had done very little to show that they valued her as an employee. Instead, comments were made about her performance and judgments were made about how long it was taking for her to return. It was no surprise that she left on an extended leave of absence, shortly after her second return to work. She had suffered another loss and definitely could not rely on a supportive group of co-workers and employers. Last I heard, this longstanding employee with many years of experience that loved her job was thinking of permanently leaving the company. She could no longer face working with people she deemed to be “cold and uncaring”. It is unclear how great the financial cost of losing this employee could be, given the expert knowledge she had acquired with over 15 years of service.



## ASK A CONSULTANT

### ASK THE DIVERSITY CONSULTANT

Dear Diversity Consultant:

Our staff committee is responsible for organizing the annual Christmas party and it is usually a lot of fun to plan. Unfortunately, this year we are a bit tense about offending some of the new people who started working here over the last year who do not celebrate Christmas. What should we do?

*Bah Hum Bug*

Dear Bah Hum Bug:

There is no reason why you shouldn't continue to have a year end celebration. After all, regardless of whether some of the staff celebrate Christmas, it is a good time of the year to acknowledge the accomplishments the team has made. I would try to keep the celebrations neutral and to try to leave out religious symbols out of the event. It is important to recognize that many non-Christian people also celebrate Christmas as a family end of year tradition with a Christmas tree, but without any religious significance. It is impossible to make the party entirely inclusive, however there are a lot of things you can do to be respectful to the staff who do not celebrate Christmas, without taking away the importance of the celebration for the other staff. Refrain from mixing different symbols together. For example, although it is well meaning to place a Star of David on a Christmas tree, it is disrespectful to do so. I have seen this on a Christmas tree in one of our local public institutions and was stunned. A culturally competent organization and employer sends

out informal greetings throughout the year in newsletters, e-mails and in person to individuals celebrating major religious events. This action demonstrates knowledge and respect for alternative celebrations. The links below offer some helpful advice.

Holiday Celebration Planning  
<http://career-advice.monster.com/business-etiquette/diversity-inclusion/Holiday-Party->

The December Dilemmas  
[http://www.progroupinc.com/site/page/pg4523-as49-pn\\_Tips\\_for\\_Handling\\_The\\_December\\_Dilemma.html](http://www.progroupinc.com/site/page/pg4523-as49-pn_Tips_for_Handling_The_December_Dilemma.html)  
<http://www.religioustolerance.org/>

### ASK THE ELOCUTION INSTRUCTOR

Dear Elocution Instructor,

I am taking some elocution classes at the moment – they are a great help and I am learning a lot. However, I find when I am at home I often forget everything that we have learned; I seem to understand it when I am taking part in the class but as soon as I get home – it's lost. This frustrates me a lot – is there anything I can do to maximise what I have learnt in the classes, especially when I get home?

Thanks,  
*Forgetful*

Dear Forgetful,

You are not alone! Many people suffer from “P'm-at-home-now” amnesia; a sudden and temporary loss of the tools and information you have learned and acquired



during your lessons. One reason for this is due to just that – during the lessons, your brain is constantly processing new information. In this respect, your brain works like a computer, processing new data. Sometimes, your “computer” can crash and lose some of its information, unless it has been “saved”.

One way to prevent this is to take notes – your “save” function. While it is common to do exercises in a workbook, you will find it helpful to jot down notes of the things you see, hear and observe during the lesson. The teacher will most often give you tips; you may practice them during class - but do you make note of them in your notebook afterwards? Such valuable tips do not often appear in your workbooks, so take full advantage.

One final tip: the mirror. Taking elocution or pronunciation lessons requires you to be aware of many things, such as your body and your mouth. Your teacher may require you to practice certain positions during your class which you can *feel*, but it is often difficult to *see* what you are doing. Therefore, practicing these things in front of a mirror will help you register them more effectively in your mind.

*“ ... there are a lot of things you can do to be respectful to the staff who do not celebrate Christmas, without taking away the importance of the celebration for the other staff. “*



## CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH FACTS

### DID YOU KNOW?

One out of 10 Canadians aged 15 and over, or about 2.7 million people, reported symptoms consistent with a mood or anxiety disorder, or alcohol or illicit drug dependence.

One in 20 met the criteria for a mood disorder. One in 20 met the criteria for an anxiety disorder, other panic disorders, agoraphobia, or social phobia.

One in 50 met the criteria

for moderate risk or problem gambling.

One in 30 met the criteria for substance dependence associated with either alcohol or drug abuse.

Source: [The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada, 2006](#).

The Conference Board of Canada found that workers who reported a high degree of stress balancing their work and family life missed 7.2 days of work each year, while those who reported very little stress

only missed an average of 3.6 days.

According to the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health, disability costs represent 12% of payroll costs, and mental health claims, particularly depression, are the fastest growing category of disability costs in Canada.

Source: <http://www.cmha.ca/bins/contentpage.asp?cid=2-1841-1844&lang=1>

*“Remember that a mental illness is considered to be a disability that requires accommodation in much the same way as a physical disability in the workplace.”*

## BEST EMPLOYER PRACTICES FOR DEALING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Remember that a mental illness is considered to be a disability that requires accommodation in much the same way as a physical disability in the workplace.

As an employer, ask yourself if what you expect from your employees is reasonable. Or are you expecting too much from them? Are your employees constantly forced to work over-time just to finish their work?

Avoid taking a hard-line approach with your employee. Often times there is a good reason why someone with a mental illness may be performing poorly. Punishing them could just make things worse. It is best that you do not try to be a counsellor,

but instead refer them to an Employee Assistance Counsellor. If your workplace does not have this service, contact your local Canadian Mental Health Association for information pamphlets and referral numbers that you can give the employee.

As an employer, ask yourself if your directions are clear. If you are unclear about what you want, you can cause undue stress for your employee(s) who is/are expected to carry out your directions.

Matching employees' skills to the right job is one way of preventing undue stress for everyone involved. Employees who are consistently working at a lower skill level or at a job that is too advanced for their skills will become dissatisfied and unhappy. Do regular

checks on your employees to ensure they are happy with their jobs and that they have the appropriate amount of responsibility they can handle on the job.

Build good relationships with your employees and support their everyday efforts and their achievements. Show an interest in their work and in their family.

Include training at all levels so that managers and fellow co-workers can sensitively handle workers who may be exhibiting signs of mental illness in the workplace. Many EAP programs as well as agencies serving clients with mental illness can provide workshops on how to deal with stress and anxiety.

*(continued on page 5)*

## BEST EMPLOYER PRACTICES

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 4)

Keep mental health at the forefront. Exchange and share information in your corporate policy manuals, newsletters and intranet. Awareness is a good prevention strategy and it also goes a long way with supporting co-workers with much needed support.

### RESOURCES

Do a quick assessment of your mental health by taking the "Check Up From the Neck Up"

<http://www.checkupfromtheneckup.ca/>  
The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada 2006  
[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/human-humain06/pdf/human\\_face\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/human-humain06/pdf/human_face_e.pdf)"

For the legal implications in the workplace see:  
Accommodating Mental Illness in the Workplace: Principles and Practice.  
Authored by: Janice B. Payne and Trevor E. Fenton, Nelligan O'Brien Payne LLP

[http://www.nelligan.ca/e/pdf/Mental\\_Illness\\_Workplace.pdf](http://www.nelligan.ca/e/pdf/Mental_Illness_Workplace.pdf)

Canadian Mental Health Association link to Mental Illness in the Workplace

[http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=2-1841-1843-1897](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=2-1841-1843-1897)

## GIFTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CNIB ANNUAL CROCUS SALE (CONT'D ON PG. 6)

For nineteen years, the CNIB Annual Crocus Sale has been adding beauty to the lives of Canadians. Each February, thousands of CNIB volunteers and staff spread the joy and promise of spring by selling crocus plants in more than 50 communities across the province. The first flower of spring, the crocus is a symbol of hope for all Canadians living with vision loss. Join us today and help CNIB in promoting vision health and enhancing independence for people living with vision loss.

Corporations Care is a popular feature of the CNIB Annual Crocus Sale, it gives businesses the opportunity to honor seniors in their community while supporting CNIB at the same time. Businesses purchase crocus plants for local senior residences and

CNIB volunteers deliver the plants with a card highlighting the corporate donation.

First time Corporations Care participant Linamar Corporation in Guelph purchased the plants because, "Being an active member of our community has always been a priority. We were thrilled to be able to purchase crocus plants and donate them to Riverside Glen nursing home. It was a pleasure to bring a little color and brightness into so many lives, especially after a long, cold winter."

Once a company purchases plants and identifies their chosen residence, CNIB relies on hundreds of dedicated volunteers who selflessly devote their time every February.

Brockville volunteer Doug Mather says, "Over the years

I've delivered crocus plants to a number of seniors and they are always delighted to receive this first harbinger of spring." Ken Norman and Stuart Smith of London agree. "Crocus day is the highlight of the week for some of the residents and there are always people waiting in the lobby for us when we arrive."

Proceeds from the Annual Crocus Sale help CNIB to provide local programs and services, information and support to people affected by vision loss. Visit [www.cnib.ca/crocus](http://www.cnib.ca/crocus) to find out how you can help spread joy and the promise of spring to those in your community. Join us today and help CNIB achieve our mission – to be the leader in promoting vision health and enhancing independence for people with vision loss. Contact: [annualcrocussale@cnib.ca](mailto:annualcrocussale@cnib.ca).



# GIFTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

(CONT'D FROM PG. 5)

## THE ARTIST MORAG WEBSTER-LESARGE



An early interest in drawing has evolved for Morag into a quest for expression in a variety of media including painting in oil, watercolours and pastel, as well as forays into the production of sculpture using various materials. Her formal training included a brief sojourn at the Hereford College of Art in England, Ontario College of Art, Sault College, as well as part time studies at Western, and numerous workshops. She loves to experiment with diverse mediums, exploring new ways of presenting traditional subjects which

reflect her unique vision of reality. She also uses the skills acquired as props builder with IATSI.

With more than twenty years experience, Morag has achieved a reputation as a skillful and original portrait painter in watercolour, oils and pastels and has undertaken a number of commissions. She has won awards and has work in private and corporate collections

across Ontario.

Morag can be found in a studio up stairs in the Covent Garden Market open Tuesdays through Saturdays 10:00am to 4:30pm. Her work can also be seen on line at [www.moragart.com](http://www.moragart.com) or you can reach her at 519-661-9525 or [info@moragart.com](mailto:info@moragart.com).



*“This holiday season, consider YOU Made It for your corporate and personal holiday gift giving needs.”*

## YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

This year, choose the gift that gives back to your community. YOU Made It is the enterprise services division of Youth Opportunities Unlimited. All of our quality products are hand made by local youth as a part of the skills development program. Proceeds from each sale support transition, career development, and enterprise services for youth. This holiday season, consider YOU Made It for your corporate and personal holiday gift giving needs. You'll be giving the gift of quality products that offer opportunity, experience, and hope to our local youth.

For more information, or to place an order contact:  
Enterprise Services Youth Opportunities Unlimited.  
Telephone 519-432-1112  
Email: [sales@you.on.ca](mailto:sales@you.on.ca)

## *The LD Speakers Bureau*

**Do you know what a learning disability (LD) is?  
Do you have someone working for you that  
you suspect might have an LD?**

**If you have questions and would like to become more  
informed about LDs please call us.**

**We have a team of presenters that will share their experiences of  
living with a learning disability with you and your staff. They will  
provide information on how to recognize and accommodate LDs  
to provide diversity in your workplace and allow your staff to  
perform to their full potential.**

ATN Access Inc.  
(519) 433-7950

[info@atn.on.ca](mailto:info@atn.on.ca)  
[www.atn.on.ca](http://www.atn.on.ca)



*The Speakers Bureau project is made possible  
by the London Community Foundation*

*“To find out more about  
learning disabilities  
(LDs), and the  
Speakers Bureau,  
contact ATN Access.”*

## TINA WARRINGTON: JOB WANTED

Hello, my name is Tina Warrington and I am a disabled individual looking for home-based employment that will allow me to work around the transportation barriers I face. I have extensive computer skills including Microsoft Word, Excel and web-based research. My eagerness to learn and desire for employment

fuel a quick adaptation to new software and enable me to multi-task in the office as I assist customers on the phone. Despite my mobility issues, I do not require the use of adaptive technology or software when using a computer. I am willing to go beyond what is required of me to achieve results. I look forward to discussing mutual

interests with any willing employer and can be reached directly via e-mail at:

[t\\_m\\_warrington@hotmail.com](mailto:t_m_warrington@hotmail.com) or indirectly through Evelina Silveira through this newsletter.

# RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DATES IN 2007/2008

*(Please contact us if you have any special dates you would like included)*

## December 2007

5-12	Chanukah (Judaism)	22	Yule (Wicca)
8	Sakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment	25	Christmas (Christianity)
20	Eid-ul-Adha (Islam)	26	Zarathost-nodisco (Zoroastrianism)
20	Maun Agiyaras (Jainism)		

## January 2008

5	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhism)	14	Makar Sankranti (Hinduism)
6	The Epiphany (Christianity)	14	New Year (Christianity)
7	Christmas (Christianity - Easter Church)	19 or 20	The Epiphany
13 or 16	Sakyamuni - Buddha's Enlightenment	19	Ashura (Islam)

## February 2008

1 or 2	Imboic (Wicca)	8	Maitreya Bodhi Sattva's Birthday (Buddhism)
6	Ash Wednesday	11	Vasant Panchami (Hinduism)
7	Vietnamese New Year	15	Nirvana Day (Buddhism)
8	Chinese New Year	21	Ram Thuong Nguon (Cai Dai)



Subscribe to the monthly news source on diversity in the workplace at:

<http://www.diversityintheworkplace.ca>



We welcome your comments/suggestions. Please contact us for further information:

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