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September 30, 2024

RE: Chair's Report- Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee: September 30, 2024

- **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October):**

As we observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month this October, I want to take a moment to honor the diverse talents, resilience, and contributions of individuals with disabilities in our workforce. This month serves as an essential reminder of the ongoing need for inclusivity and equitable access to employment opportunities for all. Recognizing the value of diverse abilities is not just about creating jobs; it's about fostering respect, dignity, and ensuring that every individual can fully participate in the economic life of our community.

Throughout this month, I encourage everyone to engage with and learn from those with disabilities. Whether it's understanding the unique challenges they face in the workplace or celebrating the remarkable achievements within our diverse workforce, let's use this time to build stronger connections and foster a society where every person is valued and empowered.

Together, we can create an environment where inclusivity is the norm, and everyone has the opportunity to thrive in their careers and beyond.

- **Down Syndrome Awareness Month (October):**

October is also Down Syndrome Awareness Month. I'd like to take a moment to shine a light on the vibrant lives and unique contributions of individuals with Down syndrome. This month invites us to deepen our understanding and embrace the diverse experiences within our community. Acknowledging the rights and abilities of those with Down syndrome is more than just raising awareness; it's about cultivating a culture of respect, dignity, and inclusion.

Let's use this month as an opportunity to engage with individuals with Down syndrome and their families. By learning about the challenges, they may face and celebrating their remarkable achievements, we can foster stronger connections and advocate for a more inclusive society.

As we transition from National Disability Employment Awareness Month into Down Syndrome Awareness Month, let's carry forward the momentum of inclusion. Together, we can create a community where everyone's unique gifts are recognized and valued, ensuring that all individuals can thrive.





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- **World Sight Day (October 10, 2024)**

On this important day dedicated to raising awareness about blindness and visual impairment, I want to take a moment to recognize the efforts made to enhance accessibility and inclusion for individuals living with vision challenges, while also emphasizing the need for continued support and action.

World Sight Day serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of equitable access to vision care, education, and technology. In our community, we have made significant strides in advocating for the rights of those with visual impairments by implementing accessible designs, enhancing digital accessibility, and promoting inclusive environments. However, our work is far from over.

- **Invisible Disabilities Week (October 17-23, 2024)**

As we observe Invisible Disabilities Week, let's take a moment to recognize the experiences and contributions of those living with disabilities that aren't immediately visible. This week encourages us to broaden our understanding of what it means to live with a disability, reminding us that challenges aren't always obvious. Individuals with conditions such as chronic pain, mental health disorders, or neurological differences often face barriers that go unnoticed, yet their strength and resilience are remarkable.

Invisible Disabilities Week is an opportunity for us to deepen our empathy, listen to the stories of those affected, and foster a more inclusive environment. By acknowledging the struggles and achievements of individuals with invisible disabilities, we can advocate for greater awareness and support within our community. Let's work together to create a space where all individuals, regardless of their visible or invisible challenges, are valued and empowered to thrive.

