



Local Businesses Help People with Disabilities RISE to the Challenge of Finding Supportive Workplaces

September 10th, 2015 | Guelph, Ontario | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: For those with disabilities, finding places of employment that can provide them with the skills and support they need to succeed at maintaining satisfying employment can be a challenge. 2nd Chance Employment Counselling works with local businesses through RISE (Resource Independence Support Employment), a 14 week supported employment program for adults with self-identified disabilities.

The goal of the RISE Program is to find a good fit between an individual and an employer and to create meaningful work experiences for all. The RISE Program works with members of the community that have a self-identified disability, by providing job readiness skills including resume creation, interview skills, and life skills. The Program finds unpaid placements as well as paid employment for its clients, and provides dedicated staff and job coaches for on-the-job support.

Smitten Apparel has been proud to play its part in the RISE Program. Owner Holly Mastrogiacomo has hosted a number of employees, providing mentorship for everyone who comes to Smitten Apparel through the program. Her role is to help build experience,

confidence, and skills; a goal that can often be difficult to achieve for people with self-identified disabilities. In addition, when Program participants are preparing for interviews with other potential employers, Mastrogiamomo conducts mock interviews to help boost the participants' confidence, and even offers clothing from her consignment store for the interviews.

"Holly is and has always been a very supportive employer. She is very much dedicated to her community and is able to see the potential in the people she has hired through our programs," explains Jenni Brooks, a counsellor with 2nd Chance Employment Services. "Holly is true mentor to her staff and encourages them to be the best they can be. She instills the confidence and skills they need to do the job and participate in their communities. We are very grateful to Holly for her generosity and community spirit."

-30-

About Smitten Apparel

Smitten Apparel offers a large collection of good quality new and consigned clothing and accessories. The collection includes casual, business and evening wear, as well as maternity and plus size selections. Their professional staff will help you select the perfect wardrobe – from shoes, jewelry, handbags, and winter coats, to that perfect outfit for work or an evening out on the town. They are conveniently located in the Grange/Victoria Plaza in Guelph, with plenty of free parking right outside the store. Learn more about Smitten Apparel at <http://smittenapparel.ca/>

About 2nd Chance

2nd Chance Employment Services opened its doors over 30 years ago. Since 1985, 2nd Chance has provided a variety of employment programs and resources for people in Wellington County including one-to-one counselling and access to job search resources. They support people of all ages and areas of the county, helping clients find jobs or enter education or training to move towards their goals. More information on the RISE Program can be found on 2nd Chance's website at <http://www.2ndchance.ca/for-job-seekers/adult/rise-program>.

Contact

Holly Mastrogiacomo

259 Grange Road, Unit #11

Guelph, ON

Phone: (519) 763-0005 info@smittenapparel.ca

###