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Local Employer recognized with CLBC Widening Our World Award

February 7th, 2014

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Community Living British Columbia today recognized Peter and Stephanie Chung for their exceptional contribution in creating employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities by presenting them with a provincial Widening Our World (WOW) Award. CLBC presents WOW Awards each year to recognize people who are building more inclusive lives for adults with developmental disabilities in BC.

Peter and Stephanie own and operate Joe's Table Café, an intentionally inclusive work environment where five out of nine staff are individuals with differing abilities. Peter and Stephanie were nominated by one of their employees who has seen first hand the passion and commitment they have towards ensuring that individuals who have developmental disabilities are given the opportunity to lead a full life and are fully included in and contributing to their community. Joe's Table employees are given a meaningful job, with real responsibility and equal pay with the hope that they will grow alongside the organization, developing into leaders within the social enterprise.

Over the past month, CLBC is has honoured two other WOW Awards to community inclusion leaders across the province:

- Victoria Self advocate Sheenagh Morrison was recognized with a WOW Award for work to promote awareness of people with diverse abilities
- Prince George employer Jay Maybin was recognized for providing inclusive job opportunities for local people with diverse abilities

As part of Community Living Month celebrations in October 2013, CLBC invited self advocates, families, community members, service providers and Community Council volunteers to nominate outstanding British Columbians. Nominations were reviewed regionally and then by a provincial committee of self advocates and CLBC staff to determine four top candidates. One more award will be presented later this month.

Since 2009, CLBC has presented WOW Awards to recognize British Columbians who are creating opportunities and building awareness for a vision of full citizenship for people with developmental disabilities, one where they lead good lives, have rich relationships, choices in how they live and employment opportunities.

To learn more about CLBC or past WOW Award winners, visit www.communitylivingbc.ca

Quotes:

Doug Woollard, CLBC interim CEO

"I want to congratulate this year's WOW Awards winners and all of the nominees for 2013.

It is clear from the nominations received that there is a wealth of innovative ideas, activities and initiatives being spearheaded by community champions across the province. These efforts not only raise awareness about inclusion, but help everyone see that through our individual acceptance of diversity, our communities become richer and more vibrant places to live.”

Jenna Christianson-Barker, nominator – Director of Operations, Joe’s Table Society

“Through Peter and Stephanie, Joe’s Table has directly influenced not only the people they hire, but the overall community. They have shown that real change comes with action and not just words. By providing tangible jobs for individuals with disabilities, Peter and Stephanie are breaking down the barriers to employment not only for their employees, but changing mainstream employers perspective on hiring as well.”

Profile: Peter and Stephanie Chung (Burnaby), Employers and Family Members

- After losing their son who was diagnosed with autism, Joseph, Peter and Stephanie Chung wanted to use their love for their son and his special abilities to empower individuals facing similar challenges to lead a full life, fully included in and contributing to their community.
- Joe’s Table Cafe, which opened in June 2013, is an intentionally inclusive work environment. Five out of nine staff are individuals with differing abilities.
- Further, Joe’s Table Society is seeking to expand their impact beyond direct employment, working with like minded organizations to create a work experience training program.
- While there is currently only one Joe’s Table Cafe, there are plans to open a flagship downtown Vancouver early 2014, as well as several other locations in the near future.
- The Society is poised for real growth in a sustainable way, as a social enterprise the cafe is fully self sustaining and offering a real, tangible, delicious product to customers.
- Peter and Stephanie see Joe’s Table as a way to emulate real change in how mainstream employers approach employment of individuals with disabilities.

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