



AccessAbility Advantage
Making Business Accessible

CPA Ontario is saddened by the loss of Toronto's City TV reporter, Tara Weber, as she has accepted a new position in Calgary. Tara was a pleasure to work with, and supported CPA Ontario in its mission. We will miss her, and wish her all the best for a continued successful career in Calgary.

To quote Joe Warmington of the Toronto Sun in his September 6th article regarding Tara's departure, "Toronto for me won't be the same without Tara Weber wheeling around and chasing stories." One of Tara's reasons for leaving Toronto was because she found the city to be very inaccessible, which she felt hindered her work in her professional career, as well as in her personal life.

CPA Ontario is a strong and active advocate of accessibility for people with disabilities. Without accessibility, people cannot live independently, be self-reliant or be full community participants. Take a moment to think about this. Are businesses in your area accessible to everyone? What about your favourite restaurant,



local corner store, or shop? Are the doorways easy to get into, are there stairs or elevators to amenities, is every customer served with dignity? Accessibility to businesses is an issue that needs to be resolved, and there is a solution. If you know of a business where you live where accessibility could be improved, please share this very important information with them. It will help you, and it will help them.

It starts with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which is the first legislation in the world that puts the onus on businesses to make their places of work barrier-free for customers and employees with disabilities. The first AODA standard, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, mandates that by January 1, 2012, every business in Ontario that provides goods or services to the public, and has at least one employee will have to comply. Other standards to follow will be announced in stages include built environment, employment, information and communication and transportation.



Making Ontario Accessible... **ONE BUSINESS AT A TIME**

But how do businesses know what to do to improve accessibility and comply with the Act? There is a new joint venture that shows busi-

nesses how they can not only be accessible to people with disabilities, but also improve their bottom line.

nesses," said Frances Jewett, AccessAbility Advantage's Business Development Manager. "It will be a significant challenge for most organizations to comply and that's why we are here to help."

"We have long been champions for barrier-free access and universal design, and our breadth of skills



nesses how they can not only be accessible to people with disabilities, but also improve their bottom line.

Ontario March of Dimes and Quadrangle Architects Limited have formed **AccessAbility Advantage** to assist Ontario businesses comply with the new *Accessibility Standards* in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). With more than 50 years combined experience as recognized leaders in accessibility, the company brings together the strengths of both organizations to deliver a one-stop shop, to help businesses make Ontario more accessible for people with disabilities.

"Of the 360,000 businesses in Ontario, some are making progress in implementing changes, but many don't even know where to begin and are struggling to understand the complexities of these new regula-

and experience enable us to offer support across the five standard areas as they are introduced," said Susan Ruptash, Principal and Accessibility Specialist Quadrangle Architects Limited. "By planning today, and with a little help, most organizations will have a successful implementation under the new legislation."

Smart business owners and operators know that every dollar and every positive customer interaction counts toward a better bottom line and more profitable outcomes. One factor in adding to this success can come with ensuring their businesses and customer service practices are accessible to people with disabilities whose collective purchasing power adds up to an estimated \$25 billion in Canada each year.

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HERE ARE A FEW FACTS:

What does AccessAbility Advantage offer businesses?

AccessAbility Advantage's streamlined approach is an effective and efficient process to maintaining compliance. The company facilitates a discovery meeting, and recommends a clear, customized action plan that can be implemented in stages within a company's budget to ensure they comply with the regulations on deadline. AccessAbility Advantage has already helped many clients across a broad spectrum of industries, including retail, healthcare and financial. Some clients include Ontario Realty Corporation, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, The TDL Group (Tim Hortons), the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, and the Canadian Food Industry Council.

What will it cost a business to comply?

Aside from the potential cost of lost opportunity if a business is not able to properly serve a person with a disability, it can also be very costly for businesses if they do not comply. The government will apply fines of up to \$50,000 per day or part day for Directors and Officers, and fines of up to \$100,000 per day or part day for the corporation.

"A phone call to us costs nothing and we can then help a business assess what steps are needed," said Frances. "These might include such things as undertaking accessibility assessments, consulting support, and training."

Why make changes?

It's the right thing to do. In addition, it makes good business sense to be accessible to people with disabilities; it boosts company's bottom line, image in the community and relationships with employees. The return on investment is well worth considering.

- According to research published by The Martin Prosperity Institute (affiliated with the Rotman School of Management), the impact of AODA on the Ontario economy over the next five years could result in an annual increase in revenues for retail and tourism alone in the range of \$3.9 billion to \$11.1 billion.
- Currently approximately 1.85 million people in Ontario (one in seven) have a disability, and this will continue to increase as the population ages.
- Companies that offer inclusivity open doors to a Canadian consumer market worth \$25 billion, a figure that more than doubles when you factor in the influence these individuals have on the spending decisions of friends and families. That is the purchasing decision of an additional 12 to 15 million Canadians every year.

So if you know of businesses that would be interested in this information, please let them know. It will help them, and it will help make Ontario accessible for everyone with a disability.

For more information on **AccessAbility Advantage**, please visit:

www.AccessAbilityAdvantage.ca 

EAT YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHY HEART

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CURRIED QUINOA

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1 ½ tablespoons coconut oil
- ½ cup diced onions
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger root
- ½ fresh green chili, minced, or 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 ¾ cups water
- ½ cup fresh or frozen green peas
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Place quinoa in fine-mesh strainer and rinse with cold water. Drain well.
2. In a heavy saucepan, warm the oil and sauté the onions on medium high heat for 4-5 minutes. Add the ginger, chili, or cayenne, and the quinoa. Cook for a minute, stirring constantly. Stir in the turmeric, coriander, cinnamon, and salt and cook for another minute, stirring.
3. Add the water and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat, and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Stir in the peas, cover, and cook for 4 or 5 minutes, until the peas are tender and the water has been absorbed.
5. Before serving, fluff with a fork and add the cilantro, if you wish.

* Recipe provided by Moosewood Restaurant New Classics Cookbook 



Picture of the Johnson family being presented with a CPA Ontario plaque to show our sincere gratitude for their 15 years of support in which they helped raise more than \$120,000. Centre: Heather Hollingshead, Mike Johnson, and the Johnson family's Steve (kneeling). Left: Tim, Mary, and Dave. Right: Elizabeth and Andrew.

CPA Ontario's 15th Annual Orillia Golf Tournament

By **Heather Hollingshead**, Regional Services Coordinator, Barrie Region

The 15th Annual Orillia Golf for CPA Ontario hosted by Kelsey's/Montana's was held at Lake St. George Golf and Country Club raising \$22,797. Thank you to Tim Johnson and his family, owners of Kelsey's and Montana's in Orillia, for hosting this golf tournament, and their on-going support of CPA Ontario's Barrie office. The golfers, many who have been coming each year since the tournament started in 1995, had a great round of golf, enjoyed wonderful company and a terrific steak dinner.

