



CNIB
COME TO WORK



Boosting Participation in the World of Work

CNIB Foundation - Come to Work

We're changing the employment reality for those with sight loss

- Only **28%**¹ of working-age adults with sight loss are employed full time, compared to the national employment rate of **65.5%**²
- **Those with sight loss are almost twice as likely to be employed if they have a post-secondary degree**, compared with peers who only completed high school
- **The household income for working-age Canadians with sight loss is two-thirds the national average** of the general population
- **\$15.3** billion is the estimated annual cost to the national economy of un-and under-employed Canadians with sight loss

¹International Levels of Employment Survey (ILES), 2018, CNIB

²International Levels of Employment Study (ILES), 2018, CNIB. Presented at 11th Annual Accessibility Conference, May 2019, University of Guelph

In Canada, the number of working age adults with sight loss who are employed full time is half that of the general population.³ Many of those individuals with sight loss who are employed, are struggling to make ends meet.

Nearly 1.5 million Canadians live with some form of sight loss, representing a significant talent pool for employers in diverse fields including science, law, engineering, creative arts, technology and broadcasting, amongst many others.

The Canadian economy benefits when all skilled, well-qualified Canadians are employed and contributing. Employers report that candidates who are blind or partially sighted, while educated, often need to develop pre-employment skills.

Due to misconceptions, a lack of understanding and the stigma associated with sight loss, those with sight loss tend to be excluded from the social, emotional, physical, educational and employment opportunities that are afforded to those with sight. Often, this leads to social isolation, lower graduation rates, lower employment rates and serious health issues, including clinical depression.

“My bold dream is that anyone who wants to work is able to work...equality must be achieved!”

- Chris Judge, individual with sight loss

Through Come to Work, the CNIB Foundation is committed to addressing these disconcerting statistics. We are connecting job seekers who are blind or partially sighted with employers who want to discover the full potential of Canada's talent.

³OECD Labour Force Statistics, 2018

People with sight loss want, expect and deserve more

Recently, we conducted research with more than 4,000 Canadians impacted by blindness to ask what they want from the CNIB Foundation in the future. Here's what the vast majority told us:

**“WE WANT TO WORK.
WE NEED TECHNOLOGY.
WE DESERVE EQUALITY AND RESPECT.”**

We recently launched:

- A new name, “The CNIB Foundation”... offering innovative quality of life programs that address the needs of Canadians with sight loss;
- New, relevant, enhanced programs for the people we serve, from technology, to career and employment and our national Guide Dog program;
- A whole new look that's designed to be as high contrast and accessible as possible to those living with sight loss. Visit cnib.ca for more information.

The CNIB Foundation

For 100 years, CNIB has played a vital role in transforming lives and society as a whole. Now, as we launch into our second century of operation, we're going to be even bolder in tackling the issues before us. It's time to take all we've done and learned, and create the bright future Canadians impacted by blindness want, expect and deserve. It's time to change what it is to be blind.



Our strategic ambitions

Ambition #1

Boost participation in the world of work

A job is so much more than just a paycheque: it's a means to self-reliance, a source of identity and pride and a gateway to a brighter future.

We will change the employment landscape for those living with sight loss through our Come to Work and Venture Zone programs that offer relevant training and paid internships.

Ambition #2

Unleash the power of technology

Technology levels the playing field for people who are blind or have sight loss - but only when it's accessible, available and affordable.

Cutting-edge technology will help people build skills to capitalize on their potential through our Accessible Technology programs such as Phone It Forward (www.phoneitforward.ca).

Ambition #3

Drive achievement and equality

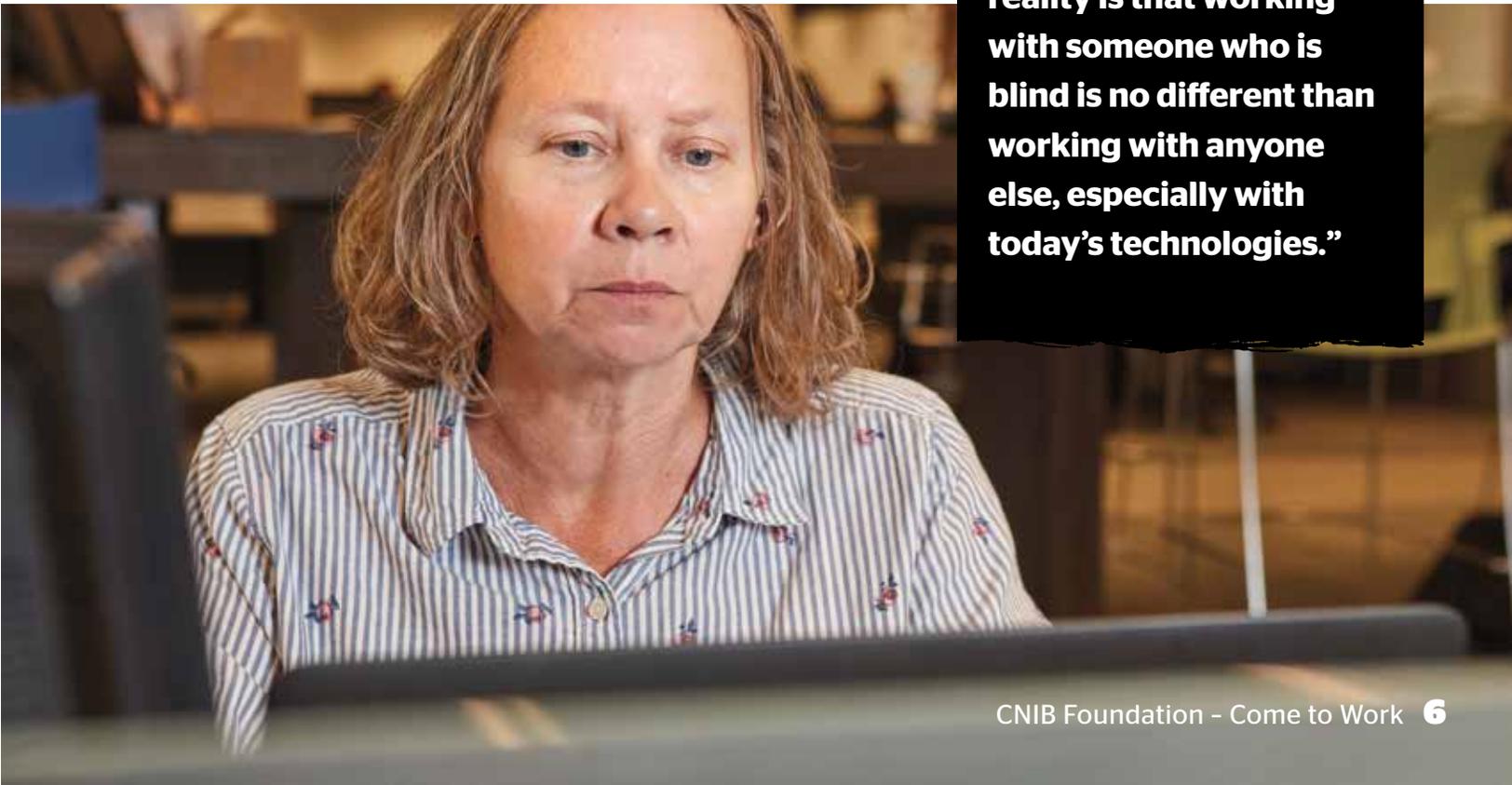
Life is a beautiful, wonderful, crazy thing and life with blindness should be no different.

By emboldening people with sight loss to lead independent, active lives, we'll smash the stigma and barriers that stand in their way through our Accessibility and, Accommodations and Advocacy programs.

Bringing our ambitions to life

To create powerful change for Canadians, we're incorporating our Work, Technology and Advocacy efforts into all of our programs and partnerships across Canada, but we need your help to do it. Employers tell us that they want and need to be more informed about resources to help them hire people who are blind or partially sighted. Unfortunately, far too many employers don't know how technology levels the playing field for people with sight loss. Outdated misconceptions still persist about abilities and accommodation needs.

“Employers need to look past their misconceptions,” says Steven Ricci, Manager, Commercial Accessibility at Frontier Accessibility, a CNIB enterprise. “The reality is that working with someone who is blind is no different than working with anyone else, especially with today’s technologies.”



Opening doors to employment through technology



CNIB is fighting to connect people of all ages with the cutting-edge technology they need and want and helping them build the skills to capitalize on its potential.

“Having a smartphone is such an important part of my working life, especially because of my sight loss. My phone has become a vital tool for navigating streets and buildings, reading, emailing and doing so many things I do on a daily basis.” - Victoria Nolan, individual with sight loss

A recent Maclean’s article highlights the opportunity that’s in front of us right now. “Today, leading-edge technologies exist to enable people with sight loss to overcome their unique sight loss challenges and excel in their fields, including artificial intelligence, wearable devices to enhance sight or act as vision replacement, wayfinding devices such as beacons and integrated GPS, smart devices activated through speech, and accessible apps on smartphones.”⁴

However, for those employers who have never worked with someone with sight loss, it can be confusing because each person’s needs are different. Studies show that two-thirds of Canadians don’t know what type of workplace accommodation is required, and more than half don’t know where to find the information needed to do so.

We have stepped up to meet this need, providing technologies, paired with hands-on support and training from experts with sight loss - simplifying the process of creating inclusive workspaces. We’re eliminating financial barriers to technology with new financing and grant programs, advocating to expand and modernize government funding programs for assistive devices and developing innovative apps, tools and training that put the latest tech knowledge at people’s fingertips. For example, CNIB’s new **Phone It Forward program** provides donated smartphones to people with sight loss who need them. Visit **PhoneltForward.ca** to learn more.

⁴Personal Health News.ca, Education and Advocacy, 2019, “See the Opportunity with Assistive Technology”

Creating inclusive workplaces

Building a bolder, brighter future in the world of work



Come to Work is changing the employment landscape! More people are learning that those who are blind or partially sighted can perform successfully in the world of work along with their sighted peers.

We are taking major steps to support those on their employment journey. We work with employers as they create inclusive workplaces. Not only do we provide education about working with someone who is blind, but we have an amazing talent pool that we can reach out to when companies are looking to hire.

With years of experience serving Canadians who are blind or partially sighted, CNIB is a leader in the area of employment for those living with sight loss. We smash barriers and ensure Canadians have the support they need to live connected, rewarding and independent lives - **but only with your support.**

Our Come to Work program helps job seekers with sight loss develop pre-employment skills, so they can thrive in the workplace. Program participants feel energized, connected and motivated to capitalize on their potential for a brighter future. We need to broaden our impact, so everyone who can benefit from this program has an opportunity to do so.

Building a brighter future across Canada

In several communities across Canada, the CNIB Foundation is supporting people with sight loss with exciting initiatives that will **“Boost Participation in the World of Work.”**

These initiatives include:

Employment Bootcamp – Bootcamps in Saskatchewan and Quebec focus on technology, interview skills, social media presence, self-advocacy as well as mock interviews with employers. We help participants become more self-confident, sharing strategies that will help them get hired and talk about their sight loss. Each bootcamp has 20 participants and the numbers continue to grow!

Employer Advisory Group – an active group of HR Managers and Diversity Managers who are helping our employment bootcamp participants seek out employment opportunities. In Saskatchewan, members of this advisory group work for the government, Crown agencies and the private sector.

“As a partially sighted person, the possibility of unemployment can be a daunting reality. But, CNIB is really taking steps to change this. For me, this means my future will be a better one,”

- Paige Andreas, CNIB intern and Employment Bootcamp participant, Saskatchewan.

We have also launched the Come to Work program and similar career support programs in Quebec and across Canada. In the next year, we plan to double the number of people in our talent pool, so we can ensure more people have an opportunity to find meaningful work. We will work with several new provincial partners, host employment bootcamps and hire program interns. We also offer public education sessions to organizations and businesses.

Looking ahead, we’re updating Come to Work to ensure the program has consistent principles across the country. We want to harness the power of Virtual Reality, Mixed Reality and Augmented Reality to facilitate skill development and remote learning. This will help us expand our reach and support Canadians in rural communities.

We're also widening our scope to small and medium-sized business. In many cases, these employers need skilled talent, but they're unaware of the technology, including smartphone apps, that makes living with sight loss easier. With your support, the future is looking brighter - for employers and employees!



Opening doors to talent with sight loss

The CNIB Foundation's Come to Work program connects job seekers who are blind or partially sighted with employers who want to discover the full potential of Canada's talent. **To boost participation in the world of work, we are providing:**

- **Job-readiness and tech training**

The CNIB Foundation partners with Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada to ensure job seekers who are blind or partially sighted have pre-employment skills, including orientation and mobility (e.g. how to travel independently to and from work), independent living (e.g. how to dress for success) and technology training (e.g. how to use screen readers, voiceover, smart-phone apps, etc.).

We also work with conventional employment agencies to provide resources to those living with sight loss for job searching, resume writing and interviewing skills that will help them land - and keep - the job they want.

- **Full-time, part-time and contract work, paid internships and 'returnships'**

Interns work for organizations, including the CNIB Foundation for six months. It provides them with an opportunity to hone their skills in areas such as customer service, writing, administration, technology, finance, program support and project management.

We also introduce employers to a progressive talent pool of Canadians who are blind or partially sighted and provide job

seekers with work experience. Through this program, candidates have opportunities for full-time, part-time and contract work, as well as paid internships, and "returnships" (return-to-work opportunities for those who've had to adjust to losing their sight).

- **Mentorships**

We are piloting an online program that connects individuals through mentorship matches. There are times when individuals can benefit from the advice, guidance and support of a mentor. There are also times when individuals can share their expertise and experiences to guide mentees in the right direction to foster professional development.

- **Changing company culture**

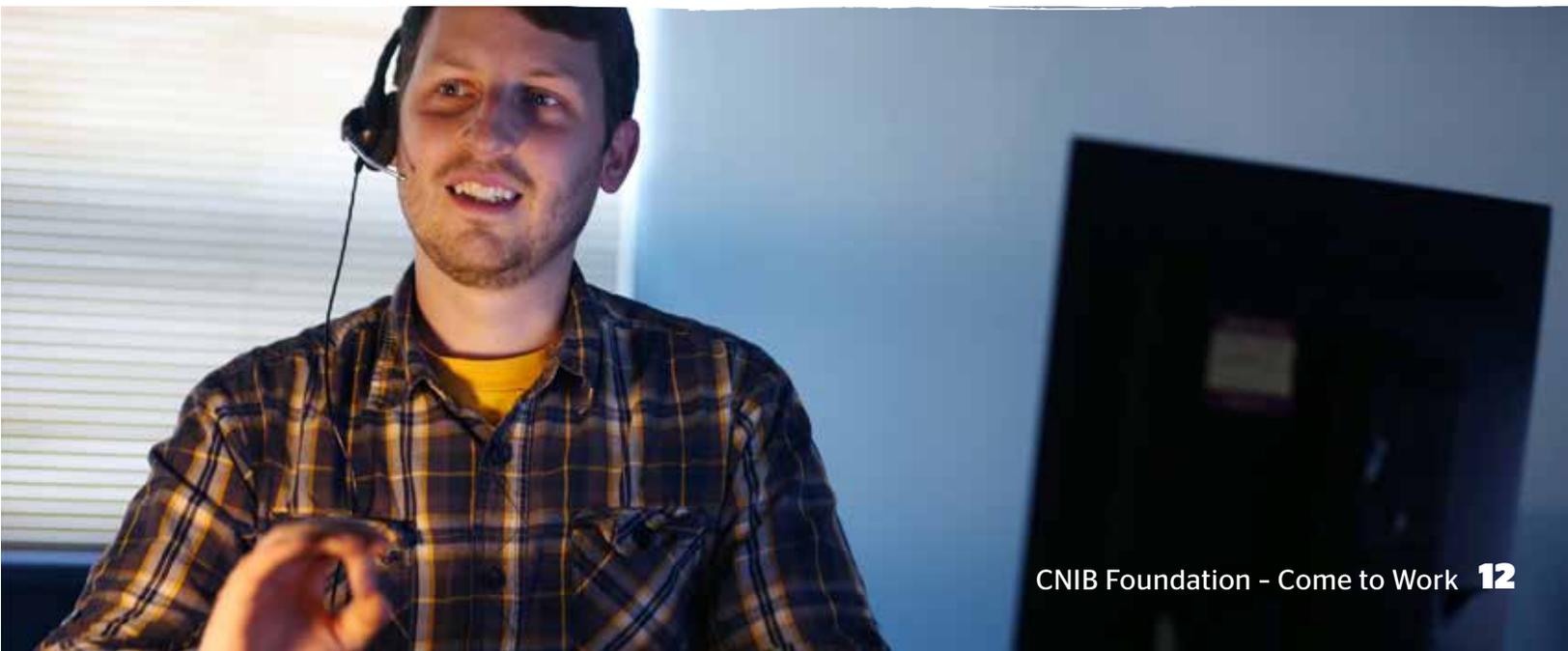
Come to Work partners are committed to engaging talent with different perspectives to create a culture of collaboration and innovation in all workplaces.

Come to Work partners in success

The CNIB Foundation works with employers to secure paid internships that will transform the challenges into stories of achievement and success. We partner with employers as we shatter many of the misconceptions that are held about those who are blind or partially sighted. We provide information about the benefits of hiring someone with sight loss and connect them with members of our talent pool.

The CNIB Foundation lends its expertise with pan-disability and integrated pre-employment services to help them deliver interactive workshops on topics like resume writing and job development. We also collaborate with professional associations such as the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) to incorporate evidence-based best practices to leverage their experience to support those who need it most.

Through active partnerships, we help other organizations make their programs and services accessible, focusing on issues that affect job seekers who are blind or partially sighted.



Partner spotlight: **Deloitte Canada**

As an official partner with our Come to Work program, Deloitte Canada is securing internships for our talent pool members. When we connected with the Manager of Inclusion at Deloitte, we learn a lot about inclusion in the workplace:

What have you learned about employing someone with sight loss?

We have identified gaps within our organization through accommodations, internal processes and infrastructure. We consider this to be a huge benefit as we continue to learn and grow as an inclusive employer. We have just offered a full-time opportunity to one of our interns!

What has this experience been like for you and your team?

Working alongside someone who is partially sighted has given us a fresh perspective to our firm. We have been learning what it means to be a truly inclusive organization, and our intern has helped us do this.

What were the challenges or growing pains that you had to overcome?

We identified accessible technology to be challenging, especially within our accommodation process. This is something we just haven't been exposed to and we realized very quickly that our internal processes needed to change. We have not had employees with sight loss within our office previously, so we worked closely with our business operations team to find solutions for our interns to navigate our building.

How is participating in this program changing your perception or actions regarding hiring candidates with sight loss in the future?

It has really shifted our thinking and helped our entire organization realize the benefits of hiring

someone with vision loss. This program has helped us realize that hiring people with disabilities can be seen as complicated - when it is not at all! We now realize our areas of improvement for accessibility through the Come to Work program, and it will greatly benefit all for the next candidate we hire.

Why should other organizations consider participating in the program?

We enjoy working with the CNIB Foundation through the Come to Work program and truly believe it will greatly benefit other organizations to hire more people who are blind or partially sighted. It's a great opportunity to share best practices and collaborate with other companies on how to be an inclusive employer and showcase abilities rather than disabilities. The CNIB Foundation has provided us with extensive support through awareness training and ongoing touch points which has helped us through this process. Carole Mendonca, Manager, Inclusion, Deloitte Canada

We are currently working with close to 40 national partners within the Come to Work program. If you are interested in becoming an Employer Partner, joining the talent pool or volunteering as a Come to Work mentor, please contact the Come to Work program at career.support@cnib.ca

“In order to be a truly inclusive employer, you need to hire people with disabilities and have a strong focus on talent and abilities. These employees create a more inclusive environment and provide a perspective that others would not have. We want to hire top talent, and whether that requires a simple accommodation or a little extra support, we can all make it happen.” - Manager of Inclusion, Deloitte Canada

Internships and Co-op Opportunities

Participants report that despite their solid education background, employers have not hired them because they don't have the required work experience, and they can't get work experience because employers are reluctant to hire them! It has been an ongoing cycle for far too long. Our internships provide candidates with practical work experience and transferrable skills that can be highlighted on resumes and job applications.

Six-month, paid internships are organized in two streams: one for recent graduates, and another for job seekers with experience who are trying to re-enter the job market - they're called 're-turnships'.

As an employer, the CNIB Foundation will lead by example by offering internships and partnering with other organizations to build a larger roster of short-term opportunities that will provide work experience.

We partner with national, provincial and local employers, to provide internships in a variety of fields, including financial institutions, telecommunications companies and employment agencies. We also work with program partners to highlight the significant value that our participants bring to the workplace.



CNIB Venture Zone

For entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs



Entrepreneurship and self-employment are a growing part of our work culture. Many people with sight loss run their own businesses or work as freelancers or consultants. The CNIB Foundation is supporting and encouraging more and more professionals to do just that!

- **One in six** working-age Canadians with sight loss are self-employed - double the Canadian average
- **78%** of self-employed participants have a post-secondary background
- **Seven out of ten** who are self-employed own their own business - the majority of them are working a second job

These stats speak to how hard working, educated and skilled the cohort is when in pursuit of meaningful employment. In our 2018 International Levels of Employment Study (ILES), we discovered that successful entrepreneurs with sight loss have experiences to share with others who might be interested in this career path.

The CNIB Foundation's entrepreneurship program, "Venture Zone", is the first of its kind in Canada. This innovative program provides the resources and inspiration for participants to succeed. Our vision is: a world where passionate entrepreneurs with sight loss transform ideas into successful businesses - without barriers.

Venture Zone Mission

- Foster innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit among people living with sight loss
- Cultivate passion and grow talent
- Equip entrepreneurs with skills, knowledge and tools for success
- Nurture successful relationships and create opportunities
- Tell stories of success and achievement

Venture Zone Projects



1. The Venture Zone Game

The Venture Zone Game is a fun, accessible business simulation game that teaches you how to run a business risk-free. You get to name your company, pick your product and price point, and learn all about production, marketing, branding, sales, hiring staff and more. There's a guided tutorial and help-screen series to walk you through and explain the various business terms. You can download the Venture Zone Game on the Apple app store. To learn more, visit Venture Zone webpage at cnib.ca.

2. Entrepreneurship Courses

We partnered with the Chang School at Ryerson University, offering free business courses to CNIB program participants so they could build a foundation of knowledge before becoming serious entrepreneurs.

“The Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Strategy course helped me to believe in my products. It taught me strategies such as the structure of profit versus loss. Above all, it taught me to stick with things when I am under pressure. When people see you put your best foot forward despite your challenges, they respond in kind to support you as an entrepreneur.” -Neena Avery-Saloya, a talented woman with sight loss who recently launched her own Etsy shop

3. E-commerce

We're busy developing a multiple vendor online marketplace, currently called CNIB Market, where program participants can sell their creative products to the public. These products include paintings, sculpture, photography and crafts such as candles, clothing, fashion accessories and jewelry. CNIB will handle the technical side of the platform, so the artists can focus on being creative. Participants can

choose their own price to sell and fulfil their orders or have CNIB use its existing infrastructure to fulfil orders.

The CNIB Venture Zone team envisions a world where our talented participants can create successful opportunities and supplement or support their income. Therefore, we plan to split the proceeds with entrepreneurs. CNIB's portion will be reinvested into the program to support others who are pursuing their entrepreneurial passions.

4. CNIB Foundation Venture Zone meetups are regular entrepreneurship networking events that feature panel discussions with industry experts, interactive activities and provide networking opportunities. Participants learn about the challenges and joys of being self-employed. They also have a chance to meet local entrepreneurs and professionals to share tips and problem-solving techniques, brainstorm ideas and get advice.



“As an individual who is both new to vision loss and to entrepreneurship, CNIB’s Venture Zone has been pivotal to the success of my social enterprise, Sustainability Through an Inclusive Lens (STIL). The resources, mentorship and ongoing communication provided by the Venture Zone continues to provide me with the support and confidence that I need to make a structural and sustainable difference in the lives of those with vision loss, and in the lives of those of all abilities.” Hillary Scanlon, Founder & CEO, Sustainability Through an Inclusive Lens

Your Impact: Changing the life of someone who is blind



Meet George Quarcoo, 24, who's an athlete, is employed and has sight loss. In 2014, he broke the Para-Canadian record in the T12 category for the 100m and 200m sprint. He also represented Canada at the Pan Am Games in 2015 and the World Para Athletics Championships in 2017 and represented Canada at the Commonwealth Games in Australia. What's next?

George plans to train for the Para Pan Am Games and International Paralympic Committee World Championships. At 13, he registered with CNIB when he arrived in Canada from Ghana. "Before I sought services for my vision loss, I was isolated," says George. "The CNIB programs allow people to socialize with others with vision loss. It boosted my confidence to be with all of them." As a teenager,

he took part in CNIB social events, cooking classes and mobility lessons, and he travelled the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) independently.

George entered our Come to Work program in 2018. George encourages others to have an open mind. "Vision impairment is a barrier, but it should not limit what you want to do," says George. He is the great fit for his current job as a youth group support coordinator with CNIB.

He says the CNIB programs are life changing. "Our community tends to hesitate to socialize and ask for help and support we need," he says. "The staff at CNIB put in a lot of work to encourage participants to meet others and have a full life outside of their families. They make a big difference." George is also a professional DJ in his spare time.

George is an enthusiastic "Come to Work" program participant and his job search story is featured on an "Employable Me" Canada episode. Employable Me is a television documentary series that features jobseekers determined to show that having disability or a neurological condition shouldn't make them unemployable.

Our Best-In-Class Programs

The CNIB Foundation is committed to delivering relevant and evidence-based programs for all Canadians with sight loss. Through an extensive and inclusive process of program development and delivery, we aim to make the greatest possible impact in the lives of those we serve.

The CNIB Foundation's Come to Work program is offered free of charge to all who need and want it, but the process of implementing, delivering and improving our programs is resource intensive.

Our ongoing program development work involves:

Consultation and Planning - We review research, collaborate with experts and, consult those we serve to gain a robust understanding of the barriers and challenges faced by people with sight loss, the needs they have, **and the programs they want.**

Program Development - We work with in-house experts, volunteer advisors and other leaders in the sight loss field to improve our programs, responding to participant needs and reflecting on international best practices.

Program Implementation - We recruit and train dynamic, qualified staff and volunteer leaders to roll out programs in locations across Canada. As our new programs are launched and piloted, we seek to optimize all aspects of delivery and marketing to improve the participant experience.

Impact Reporting and Program Expansion - We constantly monitor program effectiveness through surveys and informal interviews to **ensure participants have the best possible outcomes and are reaching their own goals.**

We use the data we gather to evolve and expand our activities. While we identify strengths that can be replicated in other parts of Canada, we also identify emerging needs for program improvement.

Measuring Our Success

It's vital that our Come to Work program leads to proven, positive outcomes in the lives of those we serve.

The CNIB Foundation is committed to measuring and maximizing the impact of each of our programs. Using evaluation tools to measure program outcomes, **we target and measure the impact of the Come to Work program in these areas:**

- **Enhanced job-readiness of participants.** To what extent has participating in the skills training program enhanced the self-advocacy, hands-on job search skills and job-readiness of participants?
- **Attainment of career and employment goals** as they pertain to the participant's personal career path. This could include obtaining or retaining employment.
- **Participant confidence in acquired skills** after participating in each program section.
- **Evidence of increased employer awareness** and understanding of recognized diversity and inclusion policies as well as standard accommodation practices.
- **Successful creation of internship and returnship opportunities** amongst various employers and successful completion of internships/returnships.

Help us reach our ambitious goals!

The CNIB Foundation aims to change what it is to be blind in its second century to create a brighter future for Canadians with sight loss. A future that sees us inspiring change by working in partnership with those we serve, our supporters and all levels of government to ensure every Canadian can fully participate in life, regardless of sight loss. **But we can't do it alone.**

It's critical that we work together to ensure these programs are successful. We can only accomplish this with your support. Please consider making a donation to support the CNIB Foundation's Come to Work program.

Your gift will change the lives of those who are blind or partially sighted, so they can achieve their personal and professional goals and help us break down the barriers that have stood in their way for far too long.

Join us today!

Support Us

Phone: 1-800-563-2642

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Local contact information

About the CNIB Foundation

The CNIB Foundation is a non-profit organization driven to change what it is to be blind today. We deliver innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empower people impacted by blindness to live their dreams and tear down barriers to inclusion. Our work is powered by a network of volunteers, donors and partners from coast to coast to coast.

Charitable registration #:
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