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Ability Online Support Network Newsletter

Fall 2006

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Message from Ability Online

Whether you're back at school or back at work, or even searching for a new job, "fall" is usually the time to get back on track, and this year, Ability Online can help in more ways than ever!

Visit www.abilityonline.org to meet our "Blog Squad" and post homework questions for our online tutors, find that perfect job with help from our friendly HR consultants, or simply to meet lots of new people online!

Wishing everyone a safe and fun Hallowe'en!

The Ability Online Team

Featured Community Partner - Mentor College

ACCEPTANCE + SKILL = SUCCESS

Last year, [Mentor College](#) opened its heart to Ability Online, embracing the concept of our Homework Help program. Scott Cowle of the Guidance Department quickly recognized the "win-win" opportunity for their students to become e-tutors. Not only do they help our members, but they earn their community service hours required for graduation.

Last year, three students from Mentor became "English Help", "Math Help" and "Science Help" tutors, providing supportive answers to a variety of homework questions. Our English tutor, Yvonne, even took things one step further by initiating an essay review proof-reading service. Yvonne also received special recognition for her volunteer work, having been selected as "Verve Girl on the Verge", show-cased in Verve Girl magazine (available in schools across the province). Way to go Yvonne!

This year, we continue our partnership with Mentor College, armed with new information from our members and special education consultants we connected with over the summer. Look out homework - here we come!

Program News - The "Blog Squad" is coming!

Member Profile - Donald Barrie



"It sure feels good to be working again!"

Long-time Ability Online member and host of our Employment Tips conference, Don Barrie, celebrates a successful first week in his new role as a Data Processing Clerk for the Toronto Rehab foundation!

After being laid off from his previous job, Don tells us: "The first great challenge for me was trying to figure out what kind of job I wanted that would enable me to apply skills and talents that are part of my work history. The second challenge was keeping a positive attitude and a healthy confidence level, because I wasn't happy with how my previous employment ended. The third great challenge was learning how to

When specialized information is required, we need to turn to the experts for guidance! In the case of our Homework Help Program, the experts are our members, so we're putting a special group of our members in the driver's seat to help guide us as we continue to develop our Homework Help Program.

Through a serendipitous meeting at the Therapeutic Recreation conference in Niagara last summer, we connected with a special education teacher from Sir Ernest MacMillan Senior Public School in Scarborough. Mr. Borges kindly offered to "share" his students with us for the 2006/07 school year. Building on monthly visits, these students will be able to take on a leadership role and help us fine-tune our Homework Program. They will put our program to the test, and at the end of the year we will have an expanded program to offer to all students needing homework help.

Tune in regularly to see how this workshop progresses by reading the "day in the life of a student" blog, which will be updated by our Sir Ernest MacMillan "Blog Squad" beginning in November. The class will share their school experiences with other members and lead the way in breaking through some of the barriers that come with learning challenges - what better experts could we ask for?

Recent News - Hello Hong Kong!



A warm thanks to the 6 delegates from Hong Kong who visited the Ability Online office on October 19 as part of their study visit to Canada - Ron Cheung, Grace Wong, Christy Chiu, Ada Cheung, Celina Wong, and Vesta Pao. Our visitors were from The Spastics Association of Hong Kong, The Heep Hong Society, and Caritas Rehabilitation Service, all members of the Hong Kong Council of Social Services association. We are always happy to learn more about practices in other parts of the world and to share the possibilities of Ability Online!

The visitors presented the ABOL staff with the traditional gift of a pennant,

market myself without sounding desperate. A fourth challenge was being able to handle rejection in a mature way. I'm a person who doesn't like to take no for an answer."

Don's ability to persevere, support from his family and friends, and his efforts to maintain a network of professional contacts helped him overcome these challenges. He also credits Ability Online for providing him with coaching support: "Myron was very effective in coaching me on how to present myself better in both appearance and speech (e.g. responding to nuances with the right choice of words and body language). He also had me participate in a few mock interviews."

Don believes, "The whole Job Readiness initiative is going to help many people with disabilities because it covers all the bases of doing a successful and proactive job search. What I particularly like, is having Human Resource professionals volunteer their time to answering questions that wouldn't otherwise be asked by people with disabilities going through the job-hunting process. These volunteers are experts, and having them here provides Job Readiness with an interactive component."

Ultimately, a successful job search starts with understanding yourself. Don knew that he wanted to work in the non-profit sector in a position that offered professional growth and that allowed him to use and build on his computer skills. All of this makes his new job as a Data Processing Clerk at the Toronto Rehab Foundation a great fit!

From everyone at Ability Online - congratulations, Don!

To take advantage of Ability Online's Job Readiness program, simply register to become a member of Ability Online and click on "Job

which we have proudly hung in our office.

Program News - A whole New Website

You may have noticed that the face of Ability Online is changing! We would like to thank the following partners who are responsible for helping us launch the first phase of our new website, making it possible for people to learn more about Ability Online and improving the accessibility of our site:

- [iPimate](#)
- [Navantis](#)
- [Microsoft Canada](#)
- [Clearview Design](#)
- [Designpics](#)

We're all working behind the scenes to continue with exciting changes as we overhaul the inside of Ability Online.

If you haven't seen our new look, visit us at www.abilityonline.org

Hallowe'en BOO-lathon

Once again, we're grateful to our friends at the George Brown College Sport and Event Marketing program for donating the proceeds of their Hallowe'en Boo-lathon to Ability Online! Tallies aren't in yet, but we're sure they scared up a goodly sum! Thanks also to Allstream and Bowlerama West, who sponsored the event.

Readiness" on the member home page.

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