



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Success Story

Rowan Goulden, pictured in the golf cart, spent her summer as an inclusion worker for the Town of Lockeport.

Inclusion role sparks Nova Scotia youth's passion for accessibility issues

ROWAN GOULDEN NEVER REALLY noticed accessibility issues before. But now the Nova Scotia teen sees them everywhere: from inaccessible public bathrooms to elderly people who need extra time crossing the street.

She says she started to notice these things after she was hired as an inclusion worker for the Town of Lockeport.



TOWN OF LOCKEPORT,
NOVA SCOTIA

Canada

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Rowan Goulden, Inclusion Worker

“I see the world almost completely differently,” says Rowan. “It just opened my eyes, and helped me see how much we can improve. Accessibility is everywhere – more than people realize.”

Rowan’s position with the Nova Scotia town was funded by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s Youth Employment Experience program. This program, funded by the Government of Canada, is designed to help parks and recreation organizations build capacity, while creating employment and skills building opportunities for youth in the sector.

Rowan says her role as an inclusion worker was a unique experience. She had the opportunity to plan and participate in programs that were accessible and inclusive to everyone, and worked with children participating in these programs. She also worked on minor repairs to physical spaces – such as washrooms and buildings’ steps – to improve the accessibility of these spaces.

Additionally, Rowan had a chance to take part in public outreach and bring attention to the issue of accessibility and inclusion to the wider community. One day in August, the town hosted a sustainability day where the community came out to learn about electric vehicles and sustainable transportation. At this event, Rowan set up a booth where she spoke to visitors about the town’s accessibility work in the community and surrounding areas.

“The general public got a little more information and knowledge – not only about what we’re doing, but what accessibility really means,” says Fran Scott, community

coordinator for the Town of Lockeport who worked closely with Rowan as her supervisor.

Fran adds that Rowan was a great addition to the recreation team, and was always welcoming to younger summer staff and to the children involved in summer programs.

“She set a very good example to younger staff people, and she brought a lot of enthusiasm which I was very pleased to see,” says Fran.

While Rowan had an impact on her co-workers and the children she worked with, Fran says her role was impactful on the community as a whole.

“It just helped us bring more of an inclusionary lens to things,” she says, adding that Rowan represented the community well when meeting with the town’s accessibility advisory committee. “The members of that committee were impressed with Rowan’s knowledge and willingness to step up and voice her concerns, or give them direction on things we should be looking at. I was proud of the way she handled herself.”

While she isn’t sure what she wants to do in the future, Rowan says the experience sparked her passion for accessibility issues – which Fran says opens many possibilities for employment.

“Inclusion and accessibility is an up-and-coming field, and I knew Rowan would get a lot out of this experience,” she says. 🍁