

\$55,700 OTF Funds New Bilingual Legal Support for the Champlain Region

Ottawa - On Wednesday, Reach Canada* Equality and Justice for People with Disabilities (Reach), welcomed members of the community to its Annual Celebrity Auction and marked the launch of its new pilot project, *Form-Filling Clinics for People with Disabilities*. OTF Grant Review Team member, Norma Lamont, was on hand to congratulate Reach and hear more about how increased accessibility to legal services is already making a difference in the community.

“The work Reach Canada will be doing to support those who are most vulnerable have access to legal services is to be commended,” said John Fraser, MPP for Ottawa South I am pleased that they are receiving this grant to bring a positive impact on the lives of those with diverse disabilities.”

“This is such a great initiative that will benefit a lot of individuals living with disabilities,” said Nathalie Des Rosiers, MPP for Ottawa – Vanier. “These bilingual clinics are a great step forward towards inclusive accessibility to governmental and legal services.”

There are many people with disabilities in the community who will benefit from this accessible, available and bilingual service being delivered both within Ottawa and in various parts of the City. Through this initiative, Reach will support its clients by reviewing and completing documents such as ODSP forms, Employment notices, Insurance claims, and landlord/tenant forms such as rental agreements and eviction notices. Reach's legal referral service is operated by a team of volunteers who connect clients with lawyers or mediators. And thanks to the \$55,700 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Reach's clients will be able to access support with form filling at no cost.

“The impact of this Ontario Trillium Foundation grant cannot be underestimated,” said Joanne Silkauskas, Executive Director of Reach. “Reach has been given a wonderful opportunity to develop a new and innovative pilot project in which we can hold face-to-face form filling clinics within and outside the Ottawa community for people who struggle with comprehending and completing legal forms such as notices pertaining to housing related matters, insurance claims, employment and pensions”.

Over the course of the next year with this Sees grant, Reach is committed to hosting bilingual clinics in areas outside its immediate jurisdiction of Ottawa with the added impact of growing and supplementing our community of lawyers who provide pro bono services to people with disabilities. For more details about Reach and its Clinics, please visit our website at www.reach.ca

An agency of the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is one of Canada's largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. www.otf.ca

-30-

For more informatio, please contact:

Joanne Silkauskas, Executive Director
Reach Canada
613.236.6636
joannesilkauskas@reach.ca