



## **CAIP Innovative Attitude Change Project Proposal - Advancing Access and Inclusion**

<b>Project Title:</b> The “I am awesome” awareness campaign
<b>Submitted by:</b> Michelle McClure, Ability Online
<b>Sector Targeted for Attitude Change:</b>  xYouth (preschool - Grade 12), xCommunity (geographic community or community of interest)
<b>Specific Audience To Be Reached:</b> Youth - elementary and high school students who do not have a disability (may also consider University students as well)
<b>Specific Attitude To Be Established:</b> Youth with disabilities have the potential to accomplish great things. We all are awesome in some way, and if we build on the positives, we build self esteem, confidence and mutual respect.
<b>Geographic Reach:</b> Across Canada



**Project Description Summary:** To create and launch an awareness campaign (building on the success of National Pink shirt campaigns against bullying) designed to change attitudes of youth without disabilities so that they see youth with disabilities in a more positive light - that they have the potential to do amazing things. In turn this will enhance acceptance, create a sense of belonging, and make ours a more inclusive society. Moreover we hope to decrease the rate of bullying of children with disabilities. Being different shouldn't be a bad thing, but something that defines each of us as being unique.

**Phase 1:**

#IamAWESOME social media campaign to be launched on December 3 2017 - International Day for Persons with Disabilities

**Message: Everyone is awesome in their own unique way, and people with disabilities are no different.**

This campaign is designed to create awareness to remove the stigma of having a disability- no matter the nature of it. We want to promote social inclusion and acceptance, and ultimately reduce bullying.

Create #IamAWESOME stickers to be handed out at our partner Universities, Colleges and elementary and high schools.

Examples:

Brock University

Guelph Humber University

Seneca College

Mohawk College

D'Arcy McGee Elementary School; St. Florence Elementary School

Mentor College (private school Kindergarten -grade 12)

Potential to also partner with the Rick Hanson Foundation.

**Phase 2:**

Running parallel with the social media campaign, we will hold an I AM Awesome contest on Ability Online - are their messages on social media and culminate with the "I Am Awesome" Pink shirt campaign including a school curriculum component for elementary (primary, junior, intermediate and high schools (senior) - providing teachers with the resources for presenting the importance of acceptance and social inclusion/antibullying.

Put entries into word cloud and use for promotional stuff for 2019 - add on campaign the impact of 2017/2018 campaign

Create posters to go around schools, with an e-version for websites.

Stickers with Ability Online url to be created and distributed to schools; Take orders for I Am Awesome Pink shirts to then be distributed before National Pink Shirt Day - February 28, 2017. Take school pictures to post online.

As part of the campaign, Invite any students to join Ability Online and interact with our members - great way to see first hand that you can be friends with people who have a disability/health challenge. It's what's inside that counts!

**Curriculum content to be created - -**

Inclusion

Antibullying

Conversation starters/activities



**Project Outcomes:** By sharing success stories, and involving students without disabilities in the campaign and in the Ability Online community (draws their attention to the issue of bullying and social isolation of young people with disabilities), these students will develop an appreciation for the potential of young people with disabilities to be as capable as anyone of accomplishing great things. We hope to shift attitudes away from focusing on a disability, to focusing on “Ability” which in turn will foster feelings of respect, and ultimately improve levels of acceptance/ inclusion.

**Project Lead and Partners:** Ability Online, other CAIP members, Rick Hanson Foundations, Schools identified above