

ABLE2- Ability. Benevolence. Liberty. Empowered.

[00:00:00] Hello, dear parents, sisters, and brothers. In this segment, we will meet Mr. Thony Jean-Baptiste, Director of Programs at the organization ABLE2. Hello, Mr. Jean-Baptiste. Hello. Thank you very much for being here with us to explain the services offered by your organization. Could you start by explaining the vision and mission of ABLE2?

Ok, so naturally, it's the name, it's an English name. It's called "ABLE2". So, it should also be noted that it hasn't been long since we changed our name. Before, it was "Citizen Advocacy" or "Parrainage Civique d'Ottawa". And at the beginning of the pandemic, we changed our name just to reflect all the programs we offer to the community.

So that's when we chose the name ABLE2. And our vision as an organization is to work towards establishing an inclusive community where everyone is seen, everyone feels valued, and everyone feels important, including people living with disabilities. So that's what I could say is our vision.

Great, so uh... And uh, could you explain to us what various services are offered by your organization?

Well, naturally, we have several services that we also offer for the benefit of the community. Naturally, one of the programs we have is called the Matching Program. And it's a program that started since our foundation in 1974. So, what we do through this program is that we take a person living with disabilities and then match this person with a volunteer in the community to create a relationship in this person's life because what we also realize is that people living with disabilities often have people in their lives, but they are mostly people who are paid to be with them.

Naturally, I'm not denigrating those who are paid because professionals also need to live, but it makes a big difference when it's someone who voluntarily chooses to spend time with a person living with disabilities. And that's what we do through the Matching Program, where we bring together a person living with a disability with a community volunteer who will become like friends; they will go out, attend movies, attend games whether it's hockey games or soccer games, spend time together, go to Tim Hortons, all the activities we do with friends; so it's very important.

Thank you.

We also offer this possibility to people living with disabilities to have someone to spend time with them. But again, there are other programs as well. We have a program that is

mainly focused on people living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). So for this program, what we do is provide training whether it's for professionals or people involved in the justice system so they understand that someone living with FASD may have difficulty understanding sometimes the consequences of their actions.

And sometimes when we go to prisons, we find that there are quite a few people who have this kind of problem and yet don't even understand why they are there in prison; so that's why we work whether it's with police officers, lawyers, or anyone involved in the justice system just so they understand that these people deserve a different approach because sometimes they have difficulty understanding consequences. So that's what this program does.

We also provide training for families and these people as well and give them tools. Some are in school; so, we accompany them and work with teachers so they can understand exactly their daily difficulties.

There is also another program we have called Funding Brokerage Program because the ministry has made available to all people living with intellectual disabilities funding of at least \$5,000 per year. So what we do is help these people benefit from these programs so they can do activities using this funding because managing this funding even when the ministry provides this money requires spending it first and then sending receipts back to the ministry; often families already facing many financial difficulties don't really have means to spend money from their own funds; so we help them use this money so their children or relatives living with intellectual disabilities can do activities and benefit from this funding.

We also have another program called Reach Legal Referral Services because legal services are very expensive for everyone especially for someone living with disabilities; so, this person may have difficulty affording legal services; so what we do is have volunteers. nearly 300 volunteers. including paralegals lawyers, university students studying law available for people living with disabilities providing one, two, three, or four hours per year of legal referral services.

And from that point on these people can benefit from this service. We also have another program called APSW which stands for Adult Protective Services Worker Program; it's an adult protection program for people living with disabilities helping those who want to move out, tired of living with their parents because being an adult means wanting independence at some point but for someone always protected by family moving out can be very difficult; so through this program we provide necessary information resources helping them move

out if they decide so knowing existing community resources who they can contact enabling them move out.

So overall those are all programs we have at ABLE2. I don't know if you have any other questions but I...

Yes, well you have many many services I learned a lot if families listening now think oh, I'd like ABLE2 services how should they proceed accessing them? Is there a process? Are there forms? Are there costs associated with your services?

Well naturally it's easy for families wanting services for their relatives just call us generally all our programs are free, funded by ministry, city Ottawa, United Way/Centraide except Funding Brokerage Program which requires a 10% fee on expenses during fiscal year. But all other programs are free. Anyone wanting our services just call us at 613-761-9522 or contact us online at info@able2.org.

Thank you for this information I'm sure parents will find you contactable if they want process on their side.

Another question, do you have advice for parents preparing postsecondary transition for their child with disability into adulthood? What would it be?

Well naturally it's very difficult especially when children reach this stage so my advice first ensure children are registered with service coordination ensuring services available. Second, depending on the child's disability there are many community services, so, start looking for matching services supporting child's specific difficulties because support exists in community. An inclusive community for everyone means that parents have the tools. To ensure children develop and continue their studies, whether college Algonquin College English, La Cité Collégiale French, some children want university studies, just accompany them. It is important to know existing community services and to not live in isolation but seek services helping children to thrive and develop like everyone else in community that's what I could say.

Excellent advice, thank you very much taking time meeting us today sharing information with our families. Thank you again, wish you excellent day. The pleasure is mine.