



## National AccessAbility Week: May 25 – May 31, 2025

### Background for Proclamation:

The Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee (NAAC) is once again seeking County Council's endorsement and support to proclaim the week of May 25 - 31, 2025, as National AccessAbility Week in Northumberland County.

A national accessibility awareness week was first established following Paralympian Rick Hanson's Man in Motion World Tour in 1987. "Access" means more than just removing physical barriers; it means changing attitudes and supporting all people.

Under the Accessible Canada Act, 2019, National AccessAbility Week is now legislated for federal entities. This means that it must take place every year, starting on the last Sunday in May for federal organizations. Municipalities can also recognize this week, as they have been doing for many years, prior to the introduction of the Accessible Canada Act.

National AccessAbility Week is an opportunity to promote accessibility and inclusion across communities and workplaces, and a time to celebrate the contributions of Canadians with disabilities. It's an opportunity to raise awareness and change culture by promoting inclusion and accessibility, celebrating progress and being inspired to further break down barriers.

### Northumberland County's Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

The County of Northumberland is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, visit and invest in our community.

### Planned Activities/Actions:

For the week of May 25-31, 2025, the Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee (NAAC) has approved the theme of "**Challenge your perspective: Rethinking accessibility**".

In consultation with Communications, The NAAC has approved the following awareness activities.

1. The NAAC honoured the recipient(s) of this year's **Helping Hands Award**. The NAAC established a "Helping Hands" certificate in 2017 to recognize County staff

members who have embraced accessibility and have gone above and beyond mere compliance with accessibility legislation. The NAAC presented the Helping Hands Award certificates by video conference prior to National AccessAbility Week on April 10, 2025.

The following 3 County staff were nominated for, and received, a 2025 Helping Hands Award:

**Keagan Philion, Communications and Digital Media Intern,  
Communications and Information Technology**

- For excellence in Information and Communications demonstrated by the development of accessible information such as accessible video content and graphics and co-leading the development of multiple accessibility-focused campaigns including International Day of Person with Disabilities and National AccessAbility Week in collaboration with the Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Coordinator.

**Karrie Martin, Human Resources Coordinator, Corporate Services**

- For excellence in Customer Service demonstrated by her clear and concise communication and adapting her communication to ensure that individuals of all abilities have a clear understanding of the County's processes.
- For excellence in Information and Communications demonstrated by ensuring all print and digital job postings are in an accessible format and revising the HR orientation presentation to improve accessibility.
- For excellence in Employment demonstrated by creating a barrier free environment for all new recruits through the recruitment and on-boarding stages; offering accommodations as needed adapting to requests from job candidates throughout the hiring process ensuring that all individuals regardless of their abilities are treated with fairness, dignity and respect; creating accessible job offers of employment; and including agencies that support people with disabilities looking for work when distributing job postings externally.

**Giselle Lech, Superintendent of Quality Assurance and Training,  
Northumberland Paramedics (and Ivy Joules, Therapy Dog)**

- For excellence in Customer Service demonstrated by her commitment to training and caring for therapy dog, Ivy Joules; and her dedication to supporting the mental and emotional wellbeing of Community Paramedicine-LTC clients, Paramedics responding to difficult calls, allied agencies, various County departments and schools through her visits with Ivy.

2. A County website banner will link to the Accessibility webpage.

3. The County will place a **newspaper ad** in 1 local newspaper. The ad will highlight National AccessAbility Week and share a personal story from someone with a disability. It will encourage readers to think about the effects of inequality, supported by key statistics.
4. The **electronic sign outside the Courthouse building** at 860 William Street (Cobourg) will notify the community of National AccessAbility Week and the theme for the week.
5. The County's **social media** will highlight stories and experiences of people with disabilities that encourage readers to think about the effects of inequality, supported by key statistics
6. Jostle, the County's **internal website**, will raise awareness regarding the NAAW and include some of the stories and statistics shared on social media to encourage staff to challenge their perspective and rethink accessibility. Jostle postings will also feature the 2025 Helping Hands Award recipient(s) and their accomplishments.

To conclude, County Council's proclamation of National AccessAbility Week in Northumberland County would provide needed exposure and support and would reaffirm the County's commitment to creating an accessible Northumberland County.