



Telehop Communications Inc. supports the Toronto District School Board's Practice Firm for the Unemployed including Persons with Disabilities

Telehop Communications Inc., a CRTC-licensed provider of a complete range of value-priced telecommunication services to residential and business customers, is the corporate sponsor of the Employment Accessibility Exchange's (EAE), a new state-of-the-art Financial Services Practice Firm for the unemployed, including Persons with Disabilities.

According to the 2001 *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey: A Profile of Disability in Canada (PALS)*[♦], one out of every seven Canadians adults (14.6%) aged 15 years and over, or 3.4 million people, reported some level of disability. In Ontario alone, 14%, of the population aged 15 years and over are reported to have some level of disability. This percentage varies between 10 and 14 percent in different CMA's across the GTA.

The Toronto District School Board's Contracted Services and Partnership Development Department (CSPD) operates the EAE, through funding contributions from the Province of Ontario and the Federal Government through the Employment Ontario Network.

Telehop, a TSX Venture Exchange listed company (HOP), has supported many programs, events, and organizations in the past, and strongly believes in giving back to the community. Through this initiative, Telehop will be supporting the Practice Firm by providing a number of contributions, including up-to-date information on their business practices, and providing meaningful work assignments, expert advice and guidance to the Practice Firm and its participants.

The Employment Accessibility Exchange is a Practice Firm that models and simulates the job functions, business operations and transactions of a Canadian Financial Services business. Prior to starting with the Practice Firm, all participants must be referred by an Employment Assessment Counselor with a 'Return to Work Action Plan' tailored to each participant's career goals. The participant is then invited to attend a formal interview at the EAE. Once accepted, unemployed individuals, including Persons with Disabilities are provided with an opportunity to improve their job search skills and a platform to gain practical hands-on work experience in a virtual setting. To further assist participants find full-time employment and gain confidence with their job search, a Job Developer is on hand at the Scarborough facility to provide guidance on all aspects of the job search process. The EAE also offers job search resources and on-site workshops to help them improve their interview skills, resume and cover letter writing, networking and cold calling. EAE can accommodate Persons with Disabilities as it is wheelchair accessible, and has other facilities such as TTY access, ergonomic chairs, hydraulic tables and adaptive computerized software.

The response from job seekers, as well as employers and community partners has been very positive. Community partners and employers realize that the major barriers facing the unemployed can be overcome through this intervention. Newcomers with considerable work experience from their home countries can apply their skills and knowledge to gain Canadian experience while working at a Practice firm. The unemployed can be productive during their job search and are able to add current work experience and references to their resumes. Persons with Disabilities can gain additional work experience, access to adaptive technologies, and

[♦] The 2001 *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS)* provides the most up-to-date and reliable information on people with disabilities living in Canada. It excludes those living in institutions and on Indian reserves. The provincial level is the only one for which data is available.



exposure to equal opportunity employers. The Practice Firm is also a great avenue for individuals who have not been in the work force for some time, and who therefore need a smooth transition back into the work force. To quote EAE's community partners, "Finally, a program that really makes sense and is actually filling the gap!"

Ruth Bartholomeusz, President and COO of Telehop stated: "We are delighted to be able to participate in the establishment of the EAE Financial Services Practice Firm, and in the opportunity to assist new immigrants, the disabled, and the unemployed in attaining much-needed work experience, training, and more importantly, self confidence! We at Telehop strongly believe that we not only have to build our business, but we also have to give back to our community and we feel that the EAE Practice Firm initiative is an innovative solution to a chronic problem that most work-seekers and new immigrants face."

For EAE's information session schedule, please call (416) 396-5654. EAE is located at 3478 Lawrence Avenue East, Unit C002, Scarborough, Ontario, M1H 1A9. www.work4disabled.ca
For more information on Telehop's products and services check our websites;- www.telehop.com.

More investor information on Telehop (HOP-TSX Venture) may be obtained at <http://www.sedar.com/> or by calling Patrick V. Farrell at (416) 494 4490 ext 399, or 1-866-530-7988 or e-mail pfarrell@telehop.com