

CELEBRATING PROGRESSIVE EMPLOYERS & CAPABLE EMPLOYEES



Left to right: Trevor, together with John Neufeld (owner, Accurate Lawn & Garden)
Photo: Lisa Waldner

By Sylvia Jansen

When the owners of Accurate Lawn & Garden Equipment hire new staff, they want people who are self-starters, team players

and who are capable of getting the job done. John Neufeld, owner, has a small team of capable people who assemble, maintain and repair equipment

ACCURATE LAWN & GARDEN

and machinery. Among these employees is Trevor, who came to the company through a supported employment agency, Premier Personnel.

Premier Personnel works to support people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in finding success in regular workplaces. But what Trevor's employer sees is a successful employee, not someone with a disability. Trevor was trained in power mechanics at Dakota Collegiate, but needed some help finding a job and getting started on the right foot. He started as a part-time employee with Accurate. Since then, Trevor has moved into full-time mechanic work.

For Accurate Lawn & Garden, high standards are important: equipment like snow blowers

and power tools need to be well serviced to be safe. Moreover, it is a busy place: the owner, John, says "New people need to learn quickly, and fit in well. Trevor did that - every day he was learning more, and within a week he was fitting in." John says they celebrate Trevor's presence as a mechanic, and as a part of the team. His colleagues also know he has both an interest and an aptitude for this work. When any questions arise, regular follow-ups by the people at Premier Personnel help both employer and employee. It is the sort of arrangement that encourages creative problem solving and breaks stereotypes.

Every employer wants capable people who fit in, do well, and who want to excel. Accurate

Lawn & Garden has such a person in Trevor.

Connecting Employers and People

People with disabilities can succeed in their workplaces, and can help their workplaces succeed. Supported employment agencies connect capable people with intellectual or developmental disabilities with the right employer, and with the right kind of work. These agencies help find good matches between people and employers, help with training, and provide ongoing support both to employee and employer—all without cost to the employer. Trevor's support agency is **Premier Personnel, 949-1474, www.premierpersonnel.ca**.