

# Disabled youth get job savvy

**Finding a job can be a difficult task for youth today.**

Most employers want experience, but unfortunately the only way to get experience is to get a job; in turn the only way you can get a job is if you have experience.

Now imagine having to deal with this not only as a youth with no experience, but as a disabled youth with no experience.

However, there are organizations that can help. The YWCA, (Young Women's Christian Association) offers a job readiness program for disabled youth. The program, called

YOUTH A.R.E. (able, ready, employed) is designed to help youth become able and ready to be employed in the competitive world of work.

Raji Rajendran, an assistant at the YWCA, says the turnout for the program has been good, and that youth are benefiting greatly, from the new skills being taught to them. "They have to be with us for four months. The first month we do an assessment of their life skills, their computer-skills and we see what level they are at," says Rajendran. "We then place them in a place that best suits their

skills: We then send them put in the workplace for three months unpaid work experience, and then we are able to find them paid jobs." Rajendran is one of the "many people who help disabled youth, at the YWCA.

## Skill development

Job developers, as well as, volunteers, help train disabled youth in office and communication skills, in order to help the youths sustain paid employment once their training is over. Rajendran believes the program is working. "Government agencies and corporate companies,;

as well as non-profit organizations, look forward to the people we are able to send from our program," said Rajendran.

"We also have job coaches and job developers who go around and recruit jobs for trainees. They also make sure these places are accessible for people with disabilities."

The YOUTH A.R.E. program is running at the YWCA of Greater Toronto until Feb. 16, with the possibility of more dates to come.

• For more information, visit [www.ywacanada.ca](http://www.ywacanada.ca).

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