

Canadian Chamber of Commerce earns Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™

OTTAWA – September 19, 2018 – Today, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce announced that its new, purpose-built Ottawa headquarters has been certified by the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program.

“As the voice of Canadian business, the Chamber has a responsibility to lead the way in improving accessibility to the places where we work. We believe in the bottom line benefits of accessibility, diversity and inclusion, and we walk the talk. We are also encouraging chambers and boards of trade across Canada to be early adopters of this Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program and to be leaders in helping build a more accessible Canada,” said the Honourable Perrin Beatty, President and CEO.

The program measures the level of meaningful access beyond building code, and is based upon the holistic user experience of people with varying disabilities affecting their mobility, vision, and hearing.

Brad McCannell, VP of Access and Inclusion at the Rick Hansen Foundation, said: “I want to congratulate the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for this great achievement, and I hope their leadership inspires others to incorporate best practices and the holistic view that a Universal Design approach can bring to their facilities. The accessibility movement is building momentum. With an aging population, a growing number of people with disabilities and federal accessibility legislation imminent, businesses need to understand that improving accessibility and supporting people with disabilities is not only a charitable and a human rights issue but human resource and basic customer service issue.”

The certification program also presents an opportunity to get out ahead of the looming demographic shift and impending federal accessibility legislation, with a view to doing for accessibility what LEED did for energy efficiency.

“The Chamber is the great convener between Canadian business and Government, and we are very often host critical meetings where many voices can come to the table and speak freely. The Chamber is also an employer of choice, and we needed to make sure that everyone, guests and employees, feel welcomed and comfortable. With that ideal in mind, we set out to make the overall experience as barrier-free as possible, for as many needs as possible. The Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification speaks directly to that goal,” said Jackie King, Chief Operating Officer.

Some of the accessible features of the Chamber’s new headquarters include:

- Contrasting colours between wall and floor surfaces for people with low vision.
- Lowered counters in the staff lounge and main reception area to allow for wheelchair access.
- Room signage posted on the latch side of doors that includes high contrasting colours and braille.
- White noise throughout the office to assist those with hearing challenges.
- Adjustable desks at all work stations to accommodate for various heights.
- Light switches and electrical outlets that are mounted at a universal height.

- Entrance doors that have a wall paddle to open and are made of clear glass to allow people to see if anyone is on the other side.

The headquarters were also built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design® (LEED) specifications, a rating system that is recognized as the international mark of excellence for green building in over 160 countries. Green buildings create a healthier indoor environment for occupants through better indoor air quality, less harmful products, and more natural daylight. They also reduce waste, conserve energy, decrease water consumption, and drive innovation. All of this can positively affect your bottom line and boost productivity.

-30-

For more on the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program, please visit: www.rickhansen.com/RHFAC

For more information/interview requests:

Phil Taylor
Senior Director, Strategic Communications and Public Affairs
ptaylor@chamber.ca (preferred and fastest response time)
613.238.4000 (2231)

Nora Eastwood
Yulu Public Relations (on behalf of the Rick Hansen Foundation)
nora@yulupr.com
778-751-4542