
THE CHELSEA HOTEL, TORONTO TAKES ACCESSIBLE TOURISM TO THE NEXT LEVEL New Innovative Accessibility Program Launch

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TORONTO – [The Chelsea Hotel](#), Toronto, is pleased to be the first hotel to adopt *Closing the Gap*, an accessibility program designed to enhance the hospitality experience for persons with disabilities. The Chelsea will offer a Guest Accessibility Package to hotel guests, providing them with a wealth of information to make the most of their stay, including information about the hotel, its amenities and surroundings in a way that speaks to persons with disabilities. Designed by [Accessibility Professionals of Ontario \(APO\)](#), a full-service accessibility consulting firm, the Chelsea is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to the same information as all guests – consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

“Helping people in our communities is not just a nice thing to do, it is an expression of what it means to be a Chelsea Hotel employee,” says Ron Pellerine, general manager, Chelsea Hotel, Toronto. “Our commitment to *Closing the Gap* is a natural extension of our Chelsea CARES program, which helps Toronto’s hospital community provide complimentary hotel rooms to families in need and includes a five year sponsorship of SickKids Foundation.”

By offering the Guest Accessibility Package upon check in at the Chelsea Hotel, the visitor experience is enhanced by minimizing any potential accessibility barriers due to a lack of communication and information. The typical package includes everything from emergency evacuation procedures and information about accessible entrances and exits as well as where to find hotel amenities, activities and local attractions. The information can be made available in a variety of formats including print, braille and electronic text (via USB drive or with a web browser or mobile device). Other highlights include a list of assistive devices available at the hotel, restaurant and room service menus, telephone directories, local accessible transit options, directions for orientation and instructions for operating equipment such as televisions, telephones and fitness machines. In response to the increasing need for Autism awareness, the Chelsea Hotel, APO and Kerry’s Place Autism Services have collaborated to develop the first Guests with Autism Comfort Package, which includes social scripts to help with the

understanding of the hotel and its amenities. Due to the sensory issues that affect some individuals with Autism, “Fidget Kits” are included in the package.

“Independence is a major cornerstone of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and it is our hope that the *Closing the Gap* program will allow people with disabilities to travel and access goods and services independently and with dignity,” says Colin McCarthy, founder and lead consultant, Accessibility Professionals Ontario.

AODA began legislation in 2005 that required all private sector organizations to meet their obligations under the Accessible Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2012. The second part of the legislation, the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation, addresses a variety of areas including accessible communication, transportation and involves a series of compliance deadlines that began in 2014. The *Closing the GAP* program is a simple way to bridge the ideals of accessible communications with advanced accessible customer service.

“The Chelsea Hotel has demonstrated a strong commitment to service excellence for all guests, including people with disabilities. Their leadership team recognizes the impact that true accessibility can have on the industry and their business. Being the first hotel in Ontario to provide this package to their guests is a prime example of the steps they are taking to assert themselves as leaders in accessible hospitality in Toronto,” says McCarthy.

For more information about the hotel’s meaningful steps to support guests with disabilities, please visit www.chelseatoronto.com or call 1-800-CHELSEA (243-5732). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

About the Chelsea Hotel, Toronto

As Canada's largest hotel with 1,590 guest rooms, the Chelsea Hotel, Toronto, is centrally located and just steps from the city's best shopping districts, world-class theatres, vibrant nightlife and exciting attractions. A full-service urban resort, the Chelsea Hotel has room types to suit everyone and the hotel offers four restaurants and lounges, separate adult and family recreation areas and pools – including the "Corkscrew" - downtown Toronto's only indoor waterslide. As a premier family destination, the hotel offers a full range of services including the Family Fun Zone with Camp Chelsea, Kid Centre and Club 33 Teen Lounge. The Chelsea Hotel, Toronto is an independent property as part of the [Langham Hospitality Group's](#) international portfolio of hotels and resorts. For more information about the Chelsea Hotel, Toronto, please log on to www.chelseatoronto.com . Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Accessibility Professionals of Ontario

Accessibility Professionals of Ontario is a full service accessibility consulting firm with a team entirely made up of people with disabilities. The lived experiences of breaking down barriers combine with a dynamic set of skills to make this team very effective in teaching businesses how embracing accessibility can have a hugely positive impact for their customers, their reputation and their bottom line. Since 2009, company founder Colin McCarthy and his staff have been helping Ontario’s businesses navigate the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, by customizing accessibility programs to fit the specific needs of each client. Through learning and development strategies, communication and marketing plans and detailed improvement maps for infrastructure and service levels, Accessibility Professionals of Ontario provides organizations with a distinct competitive advantage, and the confidence to grow their business with accessibility. For more information about Accessibility Professionals of Ontario and their services, or to simply ask a question about accessibility or the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, please call (647) 477-8745, email info@accesspros.ca or visit www.accesspros.ca.