

**For Immediate Release**

## **Rick Hansen Foundation invites the public to ‘The Power of Inclusive Decision Making’ in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3**

**Panelists include Dr. Mahadeo Sukhai, the world’s first congenitally blind geneticist as well as representatives from Human in Motion Robotics Inc., KPMG and Canadian Tire**

**November 26, 2024, Traditional territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation / Richmond, BC** – In recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities this coming Tuesday December 3rd, the Rick Hansen Foundation is pleased to host a FREE virtual panel titled [‘The Power of Inclusive Decision Making’](#) featuring five esteemed advocates and allies with varying lived experience as well as expertise in disability inclusion.

A workforce that adopts a Nothing without Us approach brings diverse skills, unique perspectives, and reduces unconscious bias and ableism, resulting in more robust products and services. *The Power of Inclusive Decision Making* will explore the critical importance of including the lived experience and diverse perspectives of individuals with varying disabilities within organizational decision making, and how disability representation within all levels of an organization is essential to creating a more inclusive and belonging culture.

“On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and every day, we are honored to continue to facilitate dialogue on ways to become a truly accessible and inclusive society,” said Doramy Ehling, CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation. “One in four people in Canada with a disability continue to face numerous barriers on a daily basis, and it’s critical that we demonstrate leadership by including and empowering diverse voices in decisions that affect us all.”

**Date:** Tuesday December 3rd, 2024

**Time:** 9am-10am PT / 10am-11am MT / 12pm-1pm ET

**Register:** [Book your free registration here.](#)

The event will include live ASL interpretation and open captioning.

### **About the Panelists:**

**Chloë Angus – Panel Moderator**

**Director of Lived Experience · [Human In Motion Robotics Inc.](#)**

Chloë Angus is a dedicated advocate and innovator, merging her creative vision with a deep commitment to social impact. Based in British Columbia, her respect for Indigenous cultures inspires her work, which centers on collaboration and cultural inclusivity. As a founding member and Director of Lived Experience at Human In Motion Robotics Inc., Chloë draws from her personal journey with spinal cord injury (SCI) to champion assistive technology, particularly exoskeletons that enhance

mobility and independence for people with SCI. Her efforts reflect an unwavering dedication to ensuring the voices and needs of those affected remain at the forefront, inspiring resilience, empathy, and transformative change.

### **Lisa Park**

#### **Director Strategy & Operations and Accessibility Consultant - [KPMG](#)**

Informed by over 20+ years of personal lived experience, Lisa is passionate about educating, raising awareness and advocating both internally within KPMG and externally to make accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities the norm, not the exception. Lisa is driven by the saying “nothing about us, without us” to ensure the voices of persons with disabilities are at the center of any change designed to enable them to thrive and achieve their full potential. She is a two-time KPMG Canada Impact Award recipient for her volunteer and advocacy work around disability inclusion who has also been featured in various media outlets where she shared her perspective on disability inclusion and the importance of promoting accessibility. She is a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (or RHFAC) Professional, the founder of KPMG’s employee resource group, the Disability Inclusion Network, and was a key contributor to KPMG’s inaugural Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

### **Abhishek Sarathy**

#### **Associate Vice-President of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging - [Canadian Tire Corporation](#)**

Born in the Middle East with south Indian heritage, Abhishek recognizes his responsibility as an immigrant settler in, what is currently known as, Toronto. Since 2022, Abhishek has been co-leading Canadian Tire Corporation’s journey to cultivate a culture where belonging thrives and makes life in Canada better.

In 2020, he was a founding member of the Equity Secretariat at Trillium Health Partners, where he co-facilitated the organization’s pathway to become an antiracist hospital. Prior to this, Abhishek led marketing, communications, product development and operations teams for 10 years at Sun Life Canada, which supported employees at Canada’s largest workplaces to achieve their financial, physical and mental health goals.

Abhishek co-created employee resource groups to embed racial inclusion and workplace philanthropy in Sun Life’s culture. Abhishek is an inaugural Board Member for the Catalysts’ Circle, and the former Board Chair for the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. He is a 2019 Civic Action DiverseCity Fellow and 2022 Governor General’s Canadian Leadership Conference alumnus. Abhishek is a binge watcher, rookie curler, French fry aficionado, and never not thinking about travel.

### **Dr. Mahadeo Sukhai**

#### **Blind Geneticist and renowned accessibility expert of postsecondary education and employment for people with disabilities**

Dr. Mahadeo Sukhai is the world’s first congenitally blind geneticist. Mahadeo has more than 20 years’ experience as an accessibility and inclusion professional, and as a researcher within this space, as well as more than 25 years’ experience as a scientist, researcher and educator in the

medical sciences and healthcare related disciplines.

Dr. Sukhai is a leading expert on accessibility of postsecondary education and employment for persons with disabilities. Dr. Sukhai is one of the originators of the discipline of and discourse on accessibility and inclusion in the sciences and in healthcare. He is the Chair of the Employment Technical Committee for Accessibility Standards Canada, tasked with developing accessible employment standards; as well as, the External Co-Chair of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Expert Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Systemic Ableism. Mahadeo also serves on the Boards for Health Data Research Network Canada and the Institute of Neurodiversity Canada, and is a member of the steering committee for Disability and Work in Canada.

### **Jon Turco**

**Associate Manager, Loyalty Products, Partnerships** - [Canadian Tire](#)

Everyone has a story. Mine involves navigating life with a physical disability and advocating for inclusivity. I am a husband, father, caregiver, and fur-dad of two dogs. I work in the Loyalty department at Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC) as the business and digital owner of the partnerships' portfolio. To summarize what my role is, I try to discover and implement strategies to generate the best Triangle membership (our loyalty program) experience for our customers. To complete this, we must question the status quo for progression.

I recognized a gap in support for individuals with disabilities at Canadian Tire Corporation, and as a result, we founded EN-ABLE, an Employee Resource Group (ERG). EN-ABLE's purpose fosters awareness, education, belonging, and communication among those with invisible or physical disabilities. Creating this group was instinctive; if you see a gap, you fill it to be inclusive by design. Even at a young age, I knew things needed to be more inclusive. The will to act is necessary to make progress.

**-30-**

### **About the Rick Hansen Foundation**

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen's Man In Motion World Tour. For over 35 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Visit [www.RickHansen.com](http://www.RickHansen.com) to learn more.

### **RHF Media Contact:**

Cynnamon Schreinert, Hartley PR

[Cynnamon@hartleypr.com](mailto:Cynnamon@hartleypr.com)

(604) 802-2733