

Toyota's ToyotAbility Business Partnering Group Pushes Mobility Forward in North America

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Structure is essential when bringing people together as a group.

With more than 100 company-wide employee resource groups striving to help leverage diversity, promote inclusion and build a sense of community, Toyota's network of Business Partnering Groups (BPGs) is no exception. Cohesion is imperative.

In recent years, as several of the BPGs have grown, Toyota has made the decision to create a North American Advisory Council (NAAC) for its largest BPGs to ensure alignment and consistency with the company's goals and objectives as well as to support the many affinity groups across North America.

ToyotAbility is the most recent BPG to receive its own council. This growing group of 760+ members embraces employees and families with physical, invisible, temporary and permanent disabilities and those with neurodiversity. It aims to be a resource that supports Toyota's commitment to advancing inclusivity and mobility for all.

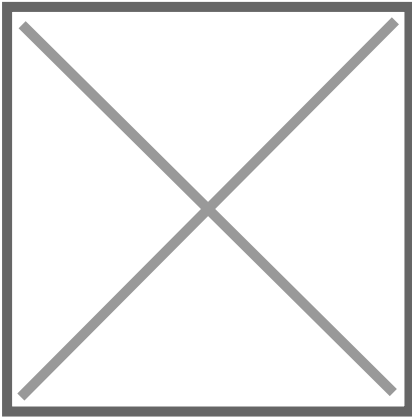


Like the other large BPGs, ToyotAbility has been assigned its own group of NAAC leaders comprised of a team of representatives from diverse business units across the BPG. The NAAC leaders serve as diversity and inclusion advisors and help guide local BPGs to have a greater impact on the workplace, workforce, local communities and market.

“Having NAAC leadership for ToyotAbility is a huge accomplishment and will only continue to drive ToyotAbility’s mission in a bigger, broader way,” says Amanda Walter, chair of the ToyotAbility chapter located in Plano, Texas and senior analyst for Toyota Financial Services. “The NAAC is comprised of subject

matter experts and key business stakeholders who can help drive change. They will support the ToyotAbility BPG to ensure alignment, working towards the same mission – Mobility and Respect for All. With the NAAC leadership, ToyotAbility won't only be eight individual chapters, but a collective group of like-minded allies for the disability community.”

Why ToyotAbility Matters



Amanda Walter, chair of
ToyotAbility in Plano, Texas, and
David Walter

Walter knows firsthand the challenges faced by those with a disability. Her husband, David Walter, also a Toyota team member, uses a wheelchair due to muscular dystrophy.

“I first got connected with ToyotAbility because of my husband and challenges that we’ve faced as a family in public,” says Walter. “Obviously you understand more once you’re exposed to those things. You see certain behavior and think ‘I wish we could do better.’ So that’s really what started my passion for this.”

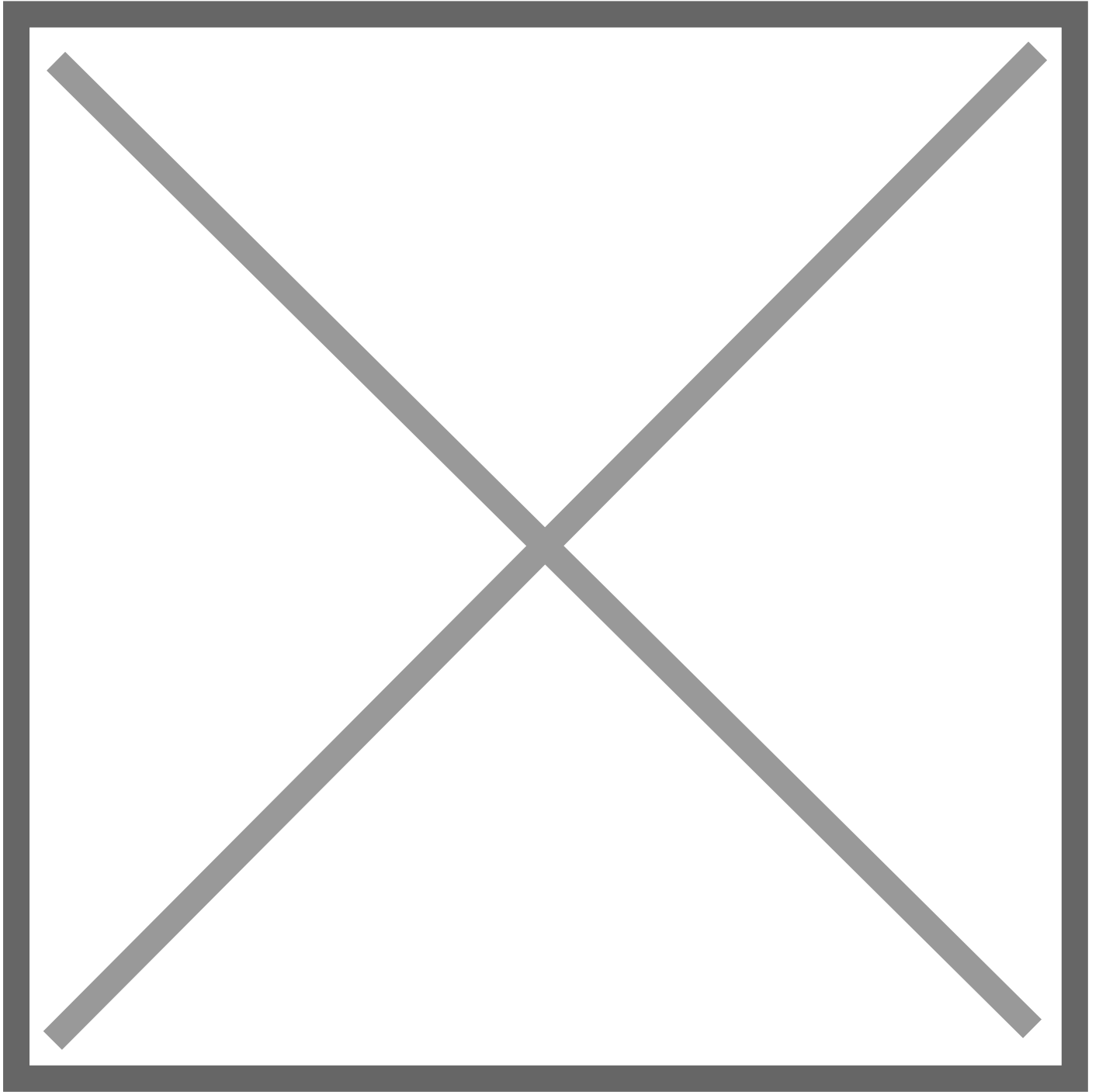
Walter, a mom to 4-year-old twins, joined ToyotAbility at Toyota HQ in Plano about four years ago when she moved to Texas from Kentucky. She was the group’s events chair for over a year but took over the role of chair last April.

“We provide resources to team members on what’s available within the company but also in the community,” she says. “We work with a lot of community partners that focus on this space as well. We’re an advocate and want to help the company be an employer of choice for people with disabilities.”

Working Together to Drive Mobility for All

ToyotAbility promotes action through its work with Autism Speaks, the National Organization on Disability, Texas Ramp Project (TRP) and many other nonprofits. For example, ToyotAbility and TRP volunteers have helped build 79 miles of wheelchair ramps for veterans.

ToyotAbility is also responsible for driving and supporting the company’s disability awareness and etiquette trainings as well as serving as a focus group for the company when it comes to considering the perspective of those with disabilities in product design and marketing.



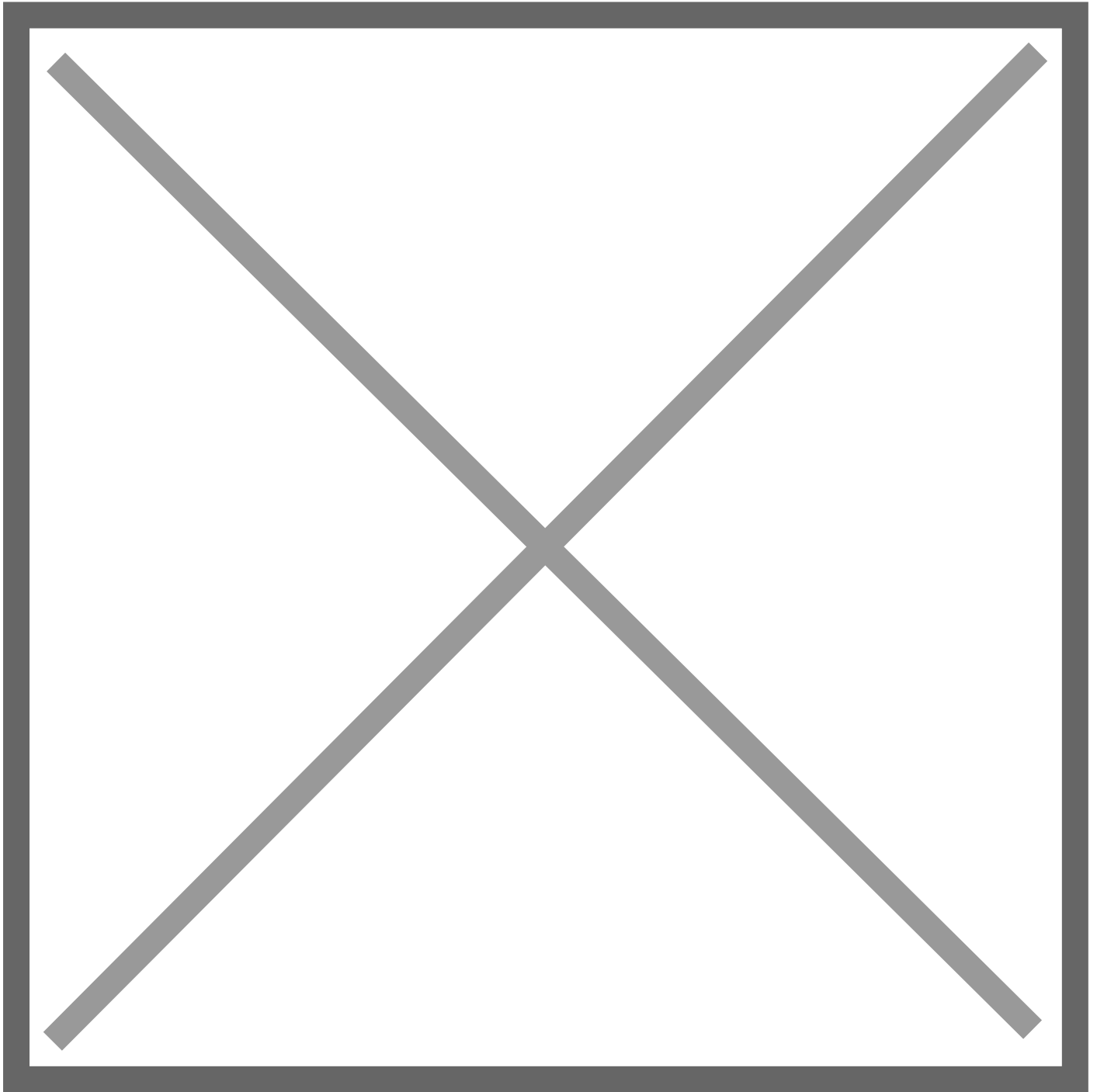
Zach Brown, TMMI employee

David Walter, senior analyst in Advanced Planning Logistics & Projects, first joined ToyotAbility to become more engaged and to challenge himself in his pursuit for personal and professional growth. Being a part of ToyotAbility has empowered him to contribute and add value to the company outside of his core job function. He's also had the opportunity to build relationships and create opportunities for himself that would not have happened otherwise.

“It’s been extremely rewarding, and I am grateful for my time with ToyotAbility and the work the team is doing to promote mobility awareness within the disability community,” says David Walter.

Fueling Growth and Development

Amanda Walter says she’s excited about the potential of ToyotAbility, including how much it’s grown in the U.S. and Canada.



“This year for the ToyotAbility HQ Chapter, we went back to the basics,” she says. “We clarified roles and responsibilities, created processes and really increased our number of events and activities. We’ve started engaging with other BPGs more and have seen an uptick in engagement from ToyotAbility team members. Because of all the hard work of dedicated team members and their passion to raise awareness and understanding of the disability community, this has led to an increase in the number of ToyotAbility chapters and ultimately the creation of a NAAC for ToyotAbility.”