A story to be shared

Michael is a public speaker and activist, who in 2018 wrote and self-published *Can't Read, Can't Write, Here's My Book* using speech-to-text technology. In 2020 he released a children's book that he co-authored with Heather Gale titled, *I Belong: Can I Play?*

At a young age, Michael was diagnosed with autism and an intellectual disability. Never one to shy away from obstacles, Michael has made his authorial debut, sharing experiences from his life to help audiences understand accepting and belonging. His story demonstrates the empowerment that comes from being comfortable in your own skin, knowing your strengths, valuing relationships, and giving back to your community.

Michael looks for opportunities to inspire and educate people on diversity and inclusion. What Michael has learned being part of this conversation is that diversity is a reality, we need to embrace and celebrate differences. On the other hand, inclusion is a choice, we have a responsibility to make sure everyone in our world belongs. Through his brave story, witty personality, and positive outlook on life, Michael is an inspiration to many. He speaks to schools (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary), educators, organizations, parents, communities, etc. both in-person and virtually.

Michael gives back by donating partial proceeds of his book sales to Special Olympics Canada and Community Living, two organizations doing great work in these areas.

Contact Michael for speaking opportunities at:
michael.jacques1@gmail.com

Things you should know about Michael:

- Young leader and public speaker receiving international recognition on the Queen's Commonwealth Trust website.
- Wrote his first book by dictating to his iPad and has sold over 20,000 copies. Book available in English & French.
- Wrote a children's book with Heather Gale titled, I Belong: Can I Play? Available in English & French and has sold over 1,000 copies.
- Elected Vice President for the Board of Directors with Community Living Ontario.
- Special Olympic athlete, competing in baseball and basketball.
- Appointed to the Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education.
- Chosen as Fonthill's 2019 Citizen of the Year.
- Works at Sobeys Grocery Store in Fonthill.