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The Independence

Alabama APSE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPECIAL EDITION

The Renaissance Hotel in downtown Montgomery was the site of the first ever super conference on disability hosted by Alabama APSE and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities. Just under 300 people attended this year’s event. The three-day event included keynote speakers, a large variety of breakout sessions, self-advocate track, awards banquet and silent auction. Based on the results of conference evaluations, the event was a hit. Look for conference highlights throughout this newsletter.

The Commissioners of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services provided the closing comments during this year’s APSE awards presentations. John Houston, Department of Mental Health, and Cary Boswell, Department of Rehabilitation Services, are both proponents of employment for all. Both agencies continue to look for innovative ways to serve individuals with more significant disabilities. Of the 300 registered participants, almost one-third came from the two agencies. In addition to attending the awards ceremony, the Commissioners, along with their wives, attended the annual AL-APSE networking dinner along with staff from the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities. The AL-APSE Board agreed that this dinner generated some of the best dialogue ever. In tough budget times, the Board came away feeling that the two agencies are in great hands.
The Full Life Ahead Foundation planned and conducted a self-advocate track at this year’s conference. Almost 100 self-advocates and family members attended the conference. The self-advocate track offered a variety of training sessions. Some of these session topics included identifying the “meaning of a full life”, healthy relationships, mock interviews for employment, dreams and goals and others. Pictured left are participants and leaders who presented during the closing session their hopes and dreams and their definition of a “full life”. Thanks to the Full Life Ahead Foundation for planning and hosting this event. For more information about Full Life Ahead visit www.fulllifeahead.org or contact the office at 205-439-6534 or 866-700-2026.

Victoria Maxwell wowed the crowd while presenting her one woman show “Funny You Don’t Look Crazy”. This high energy, irreverent one woman show is the second installment of her bipolar escapades, capturing the world of work before, during and after bipolar disorder, anxiety and psychosis. This true life story entertained and educated, exploded stigmas and revealed glimpses of one face of psychiatric illness and the journey back to work. The audience walked away with an expanded vision of what is possible rather than what’s improbable.

Victoria arrived early and took part in many conference events. This was her first visit down south and she made sure that she ate some grits, barbeque and southern style vegetables. In addition, she toured the Hank Williams Museum and the Rosa Parks Museum. According to Victoria, her husband is a huge Hank Williams fan.

Garrett Cattaneo and David Swanson (pictured left) enjoyed a night out at the Biscuits game during this year’s conference. A large group of conference attendees enjoyed the game and the Boxcar Buffet. The group braved the hot temperature to attend the event and cheered the Biscuits on to victory.

This was the second year that an optional Biscuits game was available for conference attendees. The stadium capacity is 7000 and is built into the old train terminal. This was a fun night for all.
2009 Award Winners

Kenneth Brown
Personal Achievement

Latricia Mitchell
President's Award

Dorothy Washington
Professional Award

Dr. Gary Edwards
Leadership Award

UCP

Personal Achievement Winner: Harold Powell
Chuck Sheehan Scholarship Winner: Joshua Lee
Large Employer: Winn Dixie Mobile

Winners Not Pictured
Howard Thompson (left)
Rite Way Services
Tim McGill (right)
Choosing Supported Employment
Certificate Based Job Coach Training

This training is designed for Counselors, Social Workers, Job Coaches and other rehabilitation professionals working in supported employment and other disability related fields.

TRAINERS: Howard Green
Vicki Brooke

November 4 – 6, 2009
Montgomery, Alabama

TRAINING SITE: AIDT Training Center

for more information
visit www.al-apse.org
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