

THE INDEPENDENCE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>AL-APSE & ACDD 2013</i>	1
<i>Award Winners</i>	1
<i>Employment First</i>	2
<i>Project SEARCH Scholarships</i>	2
<i>SELN EF Training</i>	3
<i>AL-APSE 2014</i>	3
<i>APSE DEI</i>	4

Save The Date!!!

The 2014 AL-APSE Conference Date has been Set!!!!

JUNE 18 - 20, 2014
MOBILE, ALABAMA
RIVERVIEW PLAZA
HOTEL
UPDATES POSTED @
WWW.AL-APSE.ORG

**Other Sponsors
Pending**

Alabama APSE and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities hosted another successful conference in June at the Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery. More than 250 individuals attended the conference that included nationally renowned speakers and trainers. The headliner included **Dr. Richard Pimentel**, a disability rights activist who developed significant training materials aimed to help employers integrate persons with disabilities into the workplace, and was a strong advocate for the passage of the American with Disabilities Act. His life story is recounted in the film Music Within. He is today a senior partner of Milt Wright & Associates, Inc.



Ms. Serena Lowe, Senior Policy Adviser, Office of Disability Employment Policy at U.S. Department of Labor was the featured speaker at the conference breakfast held on the final day. Serena provided an overview of the national state of employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities and the current percentage of individuals working in Alabama. She is a dynamic advocate committed to high-impact public policy reform aimed at improving quality of life outcomes of citizens with disabilities and other at-risk populations, leading to their socioeconomic advancement and optimal independence. She is a 15-year Washingtonian specializing in government relations, with specific expertise in the areas of public policy development, strategic planning, project management, professional relations, advocacy & lobbying, grassroots & partnership development, and coalition building.



A long time friend of Alabama APSE and strong advocate for people with disabilities was recognized as this year's winner of the AL-APSE/Brenda McComb Leadership award. Mr. Jim Harris, III has been employed with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services for more than 30 years. He currently serves as Assistant Commissioner of the General VR program. A large number of support letters were received from his staff members with a very similar message of passion. "Mr. Harris is known for his compassion and commitment to consumers and their needs, making his best recommendations from the heart. He is also kind and cares about his staff, connecting with them and setting a true example of leadership for them to follow".

Other winners recognized at this years conference:

Personal Achievement Winners	Family of the Year	Small Employer
Sheila Hall	Doris & Ortho Arnold	Vivian Anderson
Regina Slayton	Professional of the Year	Large Employer
Stephen Meggs	Kelly Broyles	The Birmingham Zoo
SE Agency of the Year	AL-APSE President's Award	
The Arc of Jackson County	Kay Bennett, Baptist South	

Mr. Jim Reddoch, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health presented the plaques and was assisted by Associate Commissioner Courtney Tarver.

Employment

1ST

Moving Employment Forward in Alabama

Alabama APSE continues to support the development of Employment First policy. The *Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program* (EFSLMP) of the Office of Disability Employment Policy is supporting Alabama's efforts. The Alabama Department of Mental Health, under the leadership of Associate Commissioner Courtney Tarver formed an interagency committee of state agency representatives that include the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the Alabama Department of Education Career Tech, the Alabama Department of Post Secondary, and the Alabama Medicaid Agency participate on the EFSLMP. This group participated in the breakfast presentation at this year's conference that was led by Ms. Serena Lowe. For more information, visit www.employmentfirst-bama.org.



2013 Project Search Conference Attendees

Alabama APSE continues to utilize grant funding from the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities to support and expand **Project SEARCH** in our state. Currently, six school systems are offering this dynamic program to students in Mobile County, Baldwin County, Montgomery County, Shelby County, Birmingham City and Huntsville City. Approximately 70 students are learning marketable job skills at the following businesses: Mobile Infirmiry Hospital, Thomas Hospital (Fairhope), Montgomery Baptist South Hospital, Shelby Baptist Hospital, Birmingham Southern College and Huntsville Hospital. Each site includes a teacher and at least one full time job coach. A large delegation from Alabama was able to attend this year's national Project SEARCH conference in Cincinnati, Ohio in July. This conference really provides valuable information to all involved in Project SEARCH, including the teachers, the job coaches and those that administer and manage the programs. The program has been

operational since 1996 so there is a lot of experience and knowledge that is shared at this event.

Students that participated in the inaugural year of Alabama's Project SEARCH program are finding success with job placement. Project SEARCH graduates are working at Baptist South in Montgomery, Jackson Hospital in Montgomery, Shelby Baptist in Alabaster and other various employers in the Montgomery and Shelby County areas.

The winners of the AL-APSE Dinē Barclay Scholarship traveled to Indianapolis, Indiana in June to attend the national APSE conference. Recipients of the scholarship included Daniel and Elizabeth Ray and Vibhaas Basukala. This scholarship is awarded annually to an individual with a disability or their family member to attend the national conference. Thanks to excellent donations over the years and generous shoppers during the annual silent auction held at the state conference, the organization was able to send three winners this year. Alabama APSE looks forward to the next silent auction that will be held during the 2014 conference. If you an item that you would like to donate, please contact our auction chair Mrs. Judy Barclay at judybarclay@fulllifeahead.org. The 2014 conference will be held in Long Beach, California, July 1 - 3. The scholarship applications will be available in January. The winner will be notified in May.



LONG BEACH
CALIFORNIA



APSE 2014
JULY 1-3

Living the dream... building the future for Employment

Do you Know that our great state ranks at the bottom in regards to competitive employment for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. The Institute for Community Inclusion and the State Employment Leadership Network releases annual data that lists employment outcomes nationally. While the national average is around 25%, Alabama falls at around 5%. Efforts are underway to bring Alabama inline to meet and hopefully exceed this national average. The Department of Mental Health has several initiatives underway to direct these efforts. These include the development of a designated Employment Workgroup of individuals and family members, service providers, state agency leaders, education staff, etc. This group meets monthly and is currently working to redefine waiver services and rates that better support competitive employment and other services in the community.

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Recently the Department of Mental Health joined the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). This organization brings together state Developmental Disabilities agencies for sharing, educating and providing guidance on practices and policies around employment to its members. Surveys were distributed throughout the state to service providers, individuals and families regarding current employment options, knowledge, etc. Also the state agency completed a comprehensive survey. Information from the surveys along with the recent SELN visit will aid the completion of the strategic plan to move Alabama forward in advancing *Employment First!*

Employment First is a concept to facilitate the full inclusion of people with the most significant disabilities in the workplace and community. Under the Employment First approach, community-based, integrated employment is the first option for employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. Come learn more about the *Employment First Movement in Alabama!* The discussion will include the shift from day services to more community based services as well as a review of other initiatives of the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to improve employment outcomes.

Presenters: Associate Commissioner ADMH Courtney Tarver
 ADMH Employment Coordinator Byron White
 ADRS Supported Employment Coordinator Tina Dortch

For training site locations and to register click on links below!

For Montgomery, October 21 Training Click:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=eq8in9eab&oeidk=a07e87yfa8c1a55a458>

For Mobile, October 22 Training Click:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=eq8in9eab&oeidk=a07e87yhf3uf9906824>

For Birmingham, October 29 Training Click:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=eq8in9eab&oeidk=a07e880pmh28f92dc18>



Alabama APSE is pleased to announce that the next year's annual conference and training event will be held in Mobile at the Riverview Plaza Hotel. Alabama APSE has a long history with this hotel, with conferences dating back to the 1990's. While the conference has moved around the state, Mobile will always been one of the organization's favorite. Co-sponsors are currently being sought and the planning committee is looking for speakers. More information will be posted on the organization's website. Go ahead and make your plans to attend. The dates are June 18 - 20, Registration and hotel information will be available in January.

Join Alabama APSE

Alabama APSE (AL-APSE) has been a leading advocacy organization for community employment for individuals with disabilities since 1998. Our organization has over 100 members including people with disabilities, family members, employers, professionals in government and funding agencies, advocacy organizations, consultants, and managers and staff of employment service agencies. Membership is open to everyone.

AL-APSE is governed by a 14 member Board. The Board meets quarterly and meetings are often tied to regional training events. These regional meetings are designed to offer members and guests cutting edge information on appropriate disability topics, including housing, employment, transportation, transition, benefits planning, work incentives, etc.

The Board is actively seeking new members. Self-advocates, family members and employers are encouraged to apply. A listing of current board members and more information about the organization can be found at www.al-apse.org.

Why Join APSE?

APSE is the *only* national organization with an *exclusive focus* on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities. APSE has been a leader on Employment First, and continues to be, a strong, clear and consistent voice demanding that every individual with a disability have the same opportunities for employment as every other citizen. As a member, you become an integral part of a national organization connecting the disability and business communities.

Learn More About APSE:

For additional information **regarding membership**, webinars and upcoming events, visit www.apse.org.

416 Hungerford Drive, Suite 418

Rockville, MD 20850

P: 301.279.0060

F: 301.279.0075

www.apse.org

More than \$18.5 million in Disability Employment Initiative grants awarded by US Labor Department to eight states

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Labor today announced grants totaling \$18,597,758 to eight states to provide education, training and employment opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. The grants are part of the Disability Employment Initiative, a program jointly funded and administered by the department's Employment and Training Administration and Office of Disability Employment Policy.

"To thrive in the competitive international marketplace, employers need access to a diverse pool of qualified job seekers," said Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "These federal grants expand that pool and show our commitment to creating career pathways and employment opportunities that result in economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities."

This is the fourth round of the Disability Employment Initiative, which currently supports 23 projects. Three new states — **Alabama**, Connecticut and Idaho — are being awarded in this round, while the remaining five states — Alaska, Illinois, Maine, New York and Virginia — are receiving additional funding to expand and replicate the best practices they developed using DEI funds beginning as recipients in the first round of the program.