

FLORIDA GRANTOR

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Fall 2011

- 2 *President's Letter*
- 3 *A Special Thank You*
- 3 *The Able Trust Annual Holiday Card Contest*
- 5 *Grantee Spotlight: Beacon College*
- 6 *Grant Awards for 1st Quarter 2012*
- 6 *Grantee Spotlight: Hope Clubhouse*
- 7 *Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)/Disability Mentoring Day (DMD)*
- 8 *Florida High School/High Tech: Promoting Quality High-tech Careers for Florida's Students with Disabilities*
- 9 *Broadening Horizons: Florida's Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP)*
- 10 *Renewed Faith for the Future: The 2011 Florida Youth Leadership Forum*
- 11 *Make a Donation to The Able Trust*
- 12 *Upcoming Events*
- 12 *Memorial Gifts*

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities successful opportunities for employment.

Celebrating 20 Years: Changing Lives. Changing Businesses. Changing Communities.

by Ray Ford, Jr.



(from left to right) Darden Restaurants Director of Diversity Outreach, Julio Suarez, was named Executive Champion at the 2011 Ability Celebration held at Disney's Contemporary Resort on September 17. President & CEO of The Able Trust, Dr. Susanne Homant, presented the award. Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole presented President & CEO Ed Crenshaw of Publix Super Markets with the Corporate Champion award.

Twenty years is a long time... or not so long depending on your point of view. To spend two decades doing something you love, it's not long at all.

On September 17, 2011, The Able Trust held its annual Ability Celebration at Disney's Contemporary Resort in Buena Vista, Florida. This year's theme, 20 Years: Changing Lives, Changing Businesses, Changing Communities, was more than fitting, considering the thousands of lives impacted by programs supported by The Able Trust. Nearly 150 gathered to show their support for The Able Trust and its mission.

It was a night of reflection and joy, emceed by Master of Ceremonies and Honorary Chair Jim Payne of WESH-2 TV Orlando. A random encounter volunteering for the Special Olympics years ago sparked Jim's interest in the cause of supporting Floridians with disabilities.

"It is my honor to be here tonight, and help celebrate the work of this great organization," he said during the opening moments of the event.

Other prominent personalities also graced the stage throughout the night. Former Speaker of the Florida House Allan Bense served as the keynote speaker for the evening, lauding The Able Trust and encouraging the staff and supporters to continue in their mission of creating job opportunities for Floridians with disabilities.

2011 Corporate Champion, Publix Super Markets, was represented by CEO Ed Crenshaw, who accepted the award for his company. A long-time supporter of diversity in all its forms, Publix was the perfect fit for this year's award. Many businesses talk

(continued on page 4)

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We'd love to hear from you! If you would like to share your disability-related story ideas, events, questions, comments, or are more interested in learning about The Able Trust, please call us at (850) 224-4493 or visit our website at www.abletrust.org.

A Message from the President



In mid-September I had the privilege of attending a presentation by noted economist and professor, John N. Doggett. Mr. Doggett, JD, MBA is a senior lecturer in Global Management, Entrepreneurship & Sustainable Energy at the University of Texas in Austin, and spoke to the Florida Chamber of Commerce about Florida's Economic Future. He talked about the countries in the world that are not economically suffering, that have been growing in spite of the recession in other parts of the world. Countries like China, India, and Brazil have maintained their respective technological progress, and never stopped to rest like other counties that took a booming economy for granted. Here are some of the statistics.

China's GDP grew at a 10.3% rate in 2010; India's growth rate was 10.4%; Brazil was 7.5%. During 2010, GDP in the US grew only 2.8%. With those growth rates, China could become the largest economy in the world, and India could be #2, both ahead of the US. These are productive countries, paying intense attention to technology and its role in the economic health of its citizens and businesses. For example, cell phone use in China grew from 15 million users in 1997, to 875 million users by the end of 2010, with 303,226 new cell phone users added per day. India went from 340,000 users in 1997 to 827 million by 2010, adding 633,333 new users per day. Brazil ships orange juice to other countries (including the US) using super tankers. China has 6 of the 15 tallest buildings in the world. All three of these countries have enjoyed growth in construction and have made extensive use of technology in the process.

The message to the US and to organizations like The Able Trust that embrace a mission of helping citizens to find successful employment is that jobs will be heavily in the technology sector, and if we want to compete globally for business (and jobs) as well as nationally, we need to equip those we serve, Floridians with disabilities, to compete at the level of technology that is present in competing countries. As an organization that serves people with disabilities, we are often dismayed by their lack of access to technology. Many of the students in our HSHT program do not have a computer at home, and those that do, often do not have DSL or even dial-up access to the internet. Thus a part of our efforts through our internal programs and in working with those programs we help to fund around the state will have to be dedicated to increasing the technological capabilities of Floridians with disabilities. That means training as well as equipment, and importantly the knowledge of how critical technological savvy is to a successful career.

Although I do believe we could lose some of our social and interaction skills in the process, being able to understand and manage the modern tools of success is basic to being as efficient, productive, and in demand as possible. We want all of those we serve to be all they can be, and our work, through Able Trust internal programs and through programs we help to fund, should have always have a technology component. And we'll continue to hone social skills in the process.

Kindest regards,

Susanne F. Homant, MBA, DPA

President & CEO

A Special Thank You



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole presents Representative Perry with the 2011 Representative of the Year Award at the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida. Executive Director William Kennedy and Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant were also in attendance.

The Able Trust recognizes Representative W. Keith Perry and the instrumental role he played in the passage of House Bill 811, a revision of previous provisions for distribution of specified funds that benefit The Able Trust.

Representative Perry earned Representative of the Year honors at the 2011 Ability Awards this past June. Here he accepts his award at the offices of the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida, which also received recognition as the 2011 Florida High School/High Tech site of the year. ■

THE ABLE TRUST

Holiday Card Contest

Assist The Able Trust in celebrating the December holidays and New Year by creating a greeting card front piece.

Open Call to Florida Artists!

1st Prize, \$150

2nd Prize, \$75

3rd Prize \$50

Contest Opens: Friday September 30, 2011

Entry Deadline: Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 5 PM

Format: Original Artwork on paper no larger than 8 ½ X 11 **OR** on a JPEG file between 750KB-1MB on disk. Artwork should be sent along with an "About The Artist" statement of 50 words or less. The Statement should provide a personal statement about the artist, the submitted piece of art, the holiday season, and disabilities. **Both submitted Artwork and Statement** should be labeled with the **Contact name**, complete **address**, **phone number** and **email** of Artist.

Attention: Original Artwork will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Not responsible for lost or damaged pieces. One Artwork Submission per Artist. Artists must currently maintain a Florida address. Artists with disabilities encouraged to apply. Artwork submitted in formats other than outlined above will not be considered.

Selected Artwork: Images of the top 3 Selected pieces will be retained for any use by The Able Trust for up to 2 years from the date of selection. Winners will be notified after November 14, 2011 of their selection.

Send To: The Able Trust; Holiday Card Contest; 3320 Thomasville Rd, Suite 200; Tallahassee, FL 32308. Arriving no later than 5 PM November 3, 2011.

Questions: 850-224-4493 or info@abletrust.org

- Abilities Foundation
- Abilities of Florida, Inc.
- Ability 1st
- Accessible Alternatives, Inc.
- ACT Corporation
- Action Disability Advocates, Inc.
- Advance Ability Solutions
- AFIRE of Pasco County, Inc.
- Against All Odds-Macular Degeneration Network
- Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc.
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Agency for Workforce Innovation
- Aids Community Project of Tampa Bay
- American Foundation for Visual Rehabilitation
- American Habilitation Services, Inc.
- American with Disabilities Working Group
- Ann Storck Center, Inc.
- Apalachee Center, Inc.
- ARC, Inc.
- ARC Alachua County
- ARC Florida
- ARC Gadsden
- ARC Gateway, Inc.
- ARC Glades Area
- ARC Jackson County
- ARC Madison-Jefferson
- ARC Marion, Inc.
- ARC Nassau
- ARC Nature Coast
- ARC of Alachua County
- ARC of Bradford County
- ARC of Broward
- ARC of Indian River County
- ARC of Martin County
- ARC of Okeechobee
- ARC of Palm Beach County
- ARC of Putnam County
- ARC Ridge Area
- ARC South Florida, Inc.
- ARC St. John's County, Inc.
- ARC St. Lucie County
- ARC Sumter County
- ARC Upper Pinellas
- ARC Volusia
- Archways Behavioral Healthcare
- Association for the Development of the Exceptional
- Axon Technologies, Inc.
- Bay Point Schools, Inc.
- Bayview Center for Mental Health, Inc.
- Behavioral Health Services
- Bethune-Cookman College
- Big Bend Workforce Center
- Blind Americans, Inc.
- Boley Centers for Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
- Brain & Spinal Cord Injury Program
- Brain Injury Association of Florida
- Brevard Achievement Center
- Brevard Community College
- Brevard Public Schools
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
- Bureau Chief for Medicaid Services
- CARC-Advocates for Citizens with Disabilities, Inc.
- Caring & Sharing CIL
- CCAR Services, Inc.
- CCDH, Inc.
- Celestial Therapeutic & Ornamental Gardens
- Center for Drug Free Living
- Center for Independence, Technology and Education
- Center for Independent Living of Broward
- Center for Independent Living of Central FL- Polk office
- Center for Independent Living of Central Florida
- Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida
- Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida
- Center for Independent Living of South Florida
- Center for Independent Living of Southwest Florida
- Center for Independent Living of the Keys
- Center for Positive Connections
- Center for Space Education
- Center for the Visually Impaired
- CHAC-Sarasota/Manatee Co. HSHT
- Charter School at National Deaf Academy
- Chipola Junior College
- Citrus Hearing Impaired Program Services, Inc.
- Coalition for Independent Living Options, Inc.
- Communication Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Community Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Community Haven for Adults and Children with Disabilities

Creech Engineers, Inc.
 DAAWG
 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Pasco/Hernando Co, Inc.
 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Volusia/Flagler
 Deaf & Hearing Connection for Tampa Bay, Inc.
 Deaf & Hearing Services of Lake & Sumter Counties
 Deaf Service Bureau of West Central Florida
 Deaf Service Center of Palm Beach County
 Deaf Service Center of Pasco/Hernando County
 Deaf Service Center of SW Florida, Inc.
 Deaf Service Center of the Treasure Coast, Inc.
 Dept. of Children & Families
 Dept. of Corrections
 Dept. of Education
 Dept. of Education-BISCS
 Dept. of Elder Affairs
 Dept. Elder Affairs Employment Programs Unit
 Dept. of Veterans Affairs
 Deputy of Juvenile Justice
 Developmental Services, Inc.
 Developmentally Disabled Residential Corp.
 Disability Rights Florida
 Division of Blind Services
 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
 Division of Workers Compensation
 Division of Workers' Office
 DOE/BICS
 DOT'S WRITE
 Easter Seal Society of Broward County, Inc.
 Easter Seals Miami-Dade
 Easter Seals of Broward County
 Easter Seals Society of Volusia & Flagler Counties, Inc.
 Echo Outreach Ministries
 Eckerd Academy/Eckerd Youth Alternatives
 Elder Care of Alachua County
 Emmanuel A.M.E. Zion Church, and Childcare Center
 Epilepsy Association of Central Florida, Inc.
 Epilepsy Foundation of NE Florida
 Epilepsy Foundation of South Florida
 Epilepsy Foundation of Southwest FL
 Escambia HS/HT
 FAAST
 Fellowship House
 FL Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged
 FL Crown Workforce Development Board
 FL DDC
 FL Dept. of Business and Professional Regulation
 Florida Aids Action Council
 Florida Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Inc.
 Florida Association for the Deaf and Blind, Inc.
 Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living
 Florida Capital County
 Florida Center for the Blind, Inc.
 Florida Coalition for the Homeless
 Florida Council for Community Health, Inc.
 Florida Council for Community Mental Health, Inc.
 Florida Crown Workforce Board, Inc.
 Florida Crown Workforce Career Center
 Florida Department of Education
 Florida Impact
 Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.
 Florida Institute of Rehabilitation Education (FIRE)
 Florida Keys Employment & Training Council
 Florida Lions Conklin Center for the Blind
 Florida Medicaid
 Florida Psychiatric Society
 Florida Rehabilitation Association
 Florida Society of Ophthalmology
 Florida Space Grant Consortium
 Florida's Voice on Mental Retardation
 Florida Department of Corrections
 Foundation for Orange Co. Public Schools, Inc.
 Friends of the Deaf Service Center, Inc.
 Glaxo Smith Kline
 Global Care Provider Services
 Good Hope Equestrian Training Center
 Goodwill CDC
 Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast
 Goodwill Foundation, Inc.
 Goodwill Heart of Florida
 Goodwill Industries of Broward
 Goodwill Industries of Central Florida
 Goodwill Industries of North Florida
 Goodwill Industries of South Florida, Inc.
 Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida
 Goodwill Industries Suncoast, Inc.
 Goodwill Industries-Manasota, Inc.
 Grove House Supportive Services, Inc.

(continued from page 1)



WESH-2 TV news anchor Jim Payne served as Honorary Chair and Master of Ceremonies.



Former Speaker of the Florida House Allan Bense challenged the audience to continue their support of the work of The Able Trust in his keynote address.

about diversity, but Publix is a company that has largely built its reputation on customer service, he said.

“Publix realizes the need to be able to serve a diverse customer base and have people working for us that resemble that base.”

Another Florida-based corporation, Darden Restaurants, echoes some of the same sentiments, resulting in Julio Suarez, Director of Diversity Outreach, receiving the 2011 Executive Champion award. Both award winners have been staunch supporters of initiatives such as Florida Disability Employment Awareness Month/Disability Mentoring Day (DEAM/DMD) and the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), recognizing the importance of accessing an untapped source of loyal, dedicated employees to keep their companies running.



Sarah Goldman captivated the crowd with her poise and personality as she shared her story of perseverance and triumph.

At the close of the night’s festivities, the audience was graced by the words of a young woman who, despite many challenges, has not lost her zeal for life nor her desire to help those in need. Sarah Goldman, a graduate of The Able Trust’s YLF program, inspired the crowd with her determination to teach children with disabilities that there are no limits to the levels of success they can achieve. A junior at the University of Central Florida, Sarah has served as a volunteer at YLF each year since being invited to attend as a delegate in 2007.

“It’s been a long road, and there are so many more successful miles to go! My future is wide open, thanks to The Able Trust for changing my life and helping me to succeed.” ■

Grantee Spotlight: Beacon College

by Guenevere Crum

Beacon College in Leesburg, FL, received a grant in the spring of 2011 to provide employment assistance for students and alumni of this ground-breaking higher education facility for students with learning disabilities. Funding from The Able Trust has created a Life Transition Coach that provides job placement, support and follow-up for graduating students, and additional support for alumni entrepreneurs.

An example of the college's impact on students can be found in Marissa, a senior majoring in Computer Information Systems who has achieved an outstanding 3.91 GPA. She recently began a Graphic Design internship at a magazine production enterprise



The career development and job placement services provided by Beacon College have impacted many lives like Marissa's.

in Lake County, which has provided her with valuable hands-on graphic design and digital media experience for her resume. Marissa has also taken on additional responsibilities at Beacon's computer lab as a monitor. The Life Transition Coach is supporting Marissa during her internship experience so that she can be successful in her new professional setting, adjusting to her work expectations and new co-workers. Support will continue after graduation when it is time to pull together all of her academic

achievements and real-life employment experiences, as Marissa searches for the right professional position in this ultra-competitive job market. Beacon College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and is the only four-year college in the country offering students with learning disabilities both bachelor and Associate of Arts degrees. The Able Trust is proud to assist in the expansion of the Career Development program for students enrolled at Beacon College in Lake County. ■

The Able Trust has awarded more than \$28 million to grantees across the state of Florida, enabling approximately 2,000 Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.

Guardian Angels for Special Populations, Inc.
Gulf Coast Community Care
Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Habilitation Center for the Handicapped
Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County
Hardee Association for Retarded Citizens
Hearing Impaired Persons
Heron-Peacock Supported Living
HOPE Center
Hope Haven Children's Clinic and Family Center
Horses and the Handicapped of South Florida, Inc.
Human Services Council
I Can Grow, Inc.
Independence for the Blind
Independent Living and Resource Center NE Florida
Independent Living Resource Center of Northeast Florida
Janssen
Jeff Industries
Jewish Association for Residential Care
Jewish Community Services of South Florida, Inc.
La Amistad Foundation, Inc.
Lakeside Alternatives
Lakeview Center Foundation
LARC, Inc.
L'Arche Harbor House
Latino Leadership, Inc.
Law, Redd, Crona & Munroe, P.A
League for the Hard of Hearing
Liefers & Associates
Life Management Center of Northwest Florida, Inc.
Life Stream Behavioral Center
Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches, Inc.
Lighthouse of Broward
Lighthouse of Central Florida
Lincoln-Marti Community Agency
Lock Towns Community Mental Health Center, Inc.
Louise H. Graham Training Center
Loveland Center Inc.
MacDonald Training Center, Inc.
MACTown, Inc.
Madison County HSHT
Madison County School Board Dept, ESE
Magellan Health Services
Manatee Glens
Marianne Center Services
Martin Memorial Health System
MAXIMUS
McDaniel Consulting, L.L.C.
Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County
Mental Health Care, Inc.
Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Miami-Dade Disability Services and Independent Living (DSAIL)
Michael D. Cusick & Associates, Inc.
Monroe Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc.
Moore Consulting Group, Inc.
Muscular Dystrophy Association
NAMI Florida, Inc.
NASA
National Multiple Sclerosis (FL Gulf Coast)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society- Mid FL Chapter
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, North Florida Chapter
National Wheelchair Sports Fund
New Hope Drop In Center, Inc.
New Horizons Community Mental Health Center, Inc.
New Horizons of the Treasure Coast, Inc.
Northside Mental Health Center
OFCCP Miami Area Office
OFCCP Orlando District Office
Office of Health Services
Office of the Governor
Okeechobee Rehabilitation Facility
One Stop Career Center
Orange County Public Schools
Osceola ARC, Inc.
Palm Bay High School
Palm Beach County HS/HT
Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.
Pathways to Independence, Inc.
Pensacola Care, Inc.
Pensacola Penwheels
Perdido Bay Tribe, Inc.
Pine Castle, Inc.
Primrose Center, Inc.
Project Special Care
Project STAND, Inc.
PSI Family Services of Florida, Inc.

Pyramid, Inc.
 Rehabilitation Services, Inc.
 Remmert Employment Project
 Renaissance Behavioral Health System, Inc.
 Roe & Associates Integrated Behavior Supports, Inc.
 Rotary Youth Camp
 Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service of S. Palm Beach Co.
 Seacamp Association, Inc.
 Seagull Industries for the Disabled, Inc.
 Self Reliance, Inc.
 Seminole Work Opportunity Program
 SGS
 Sickle Cell Disease Association of Broward County, Inc.
 Sickle Cell Disease Association of Florida
 Small Business Development Center/ FGCU
 Social Security Administration
 SOS Children's Village of Florida
 Southeast Parkinson Disease Association
 Space Coast Center for Independent Living
 Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health - FL
 Supreme Court
 St. Andrew's Bay Center
 Stand Among Friends
 Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention FL Office of Drug Control
 Suncoast Center for Independent Living
 Suncoast Epilepsy Association, Inc.
 Suncoast Health Council, Inc.
 Sunrise Cape Coral Cluster
 Sunrise Community of Polk County
 Sunrise Community of Southwest Florida
 Sunrise Community, Inc.
 Sunrise of Pasco County
 Sunrise Opportunities, Inc.
 Tallahassee Community College
 Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind
 Taylor County High School
 Technical & Career Education
 Technical and Career Education
 The ARC of Jacksonville
 The Center for Independence, Inc.
 The Harbor
 The Learning Experience School
 The Spina Bifida Association of Jacksonville, Inc.
 The Watson Center
 TLC Landscape Contractors, Inc.
 Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
 Tri-County TEC
 Tyler Institute
 United Cerebral Palsy of Central Florida
 United Cerebral Palsy of East Central Florida
 United Cerebral Palsy of North Florida
 United Cerebral Palsy of Northwest Florida
 United Cerebral Palsy of Panama City, Inc.
 United Cerebral Palsy of Sarasota-Manatee & SW Florida
 United Cerebral Palsy of South Florida
 United Cerebral Palsy of Southwest Florida, Inc.
 United Cerebral Palsy of Tallahassee
 University of South Florida
 Urban League of Broward County
 Van Gogh's Palette, Inc.
 Veterans Administration
 Victory Living Programs
 Vincent House
 Visual Dialogue
 Visually Impaired Persons of Southwest Florida
 Volunteer Florida Foundation
 Volunteer Jacksonville, Inc.
 VSA Arts of Florida
 Walton County ARC
 Washington/Holmes ARC
 WAVE The Workshop for Adult Vocational Enrichment
 Wellcare
 Woodland Hall Academy/Dyslexia Research Institute
 Workforce Alliance, Inc.
 Workforce Development Board
 Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa & Walton Counties
 Workforce Florida
 Working Solutions

Grant Awards for 1st Quarter 2012

The Able Trust Board of Directors proudly announces six new grants awarded to organizations that are making a difference in providing employment placement in their communities.

Three awards were made to programs that will assist veterans with disabilities develop job skills and gain employment. Those recipients are:

- **The Center for Independent Living of South Florida** - was awarded \$40,000 to provide services in Miami-Dade county.
- **The Center for Independent Living in Central Florida, Inc.** - was awarded \$30,000 to provide services in the three-county area of Orange, Osceola and Seminole.
- **and ServiceSource** (previously known as Abilities, Inc.) - was awarded \$30,000 to provide services in both Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.

A grant in the amount of \$34,540 was awarded to the **Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida** for the second year of their rural county response in providing employment placement assistance to individuals with disabilities in Citrus County.

A new grantee, **The Key Clubhouse of South Florida**, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$32,500 to provide transitional and competitive employment for individuals with serious mental illness in Miami-Dade county.

The final grant award of the quarter was made to the **Goodwill Foundation** in the amount of \$32,500 to expand the number of Job Coaches available to participants of the GoodPartner Coach program, which will benefit individuals with disabilities in Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee and DeSoto counties in gaining community-based employment. ■

Grantee Spotlight: Hope Clubhouse

by Guenevere Crum

Hope Clubhouse of Southwest Florida, Inc. is a new grantee to The Able Trust, and received a \$30,000 grant in January 2011 for a Transitional Employment program for individuals with mental health disabilities in Lee, Collier, and Charlotte counties.

The clubhouse is located in Fort Myers, and serves as a place where individuals living with mental illness can be reintegrated into the community. Clubhouse members take an active approach to acquiring these life skills through participating in work, education, and social events in a caring and respectful setting.

The Clubhouse is working on establishing partnerships with area employers, and one of the first companies is Scott Fischer Enterprises, who works closely with Harley Davidson Motorcycles.

John, a member of the clubhouse, recently gained employment at the local Harley dealership, working in the Accounting and Human Resource departments. Prior to joining Hope Clubhouse, John spent nearly seven years unemployed; rarely going outside. Through the help of the Hope Clubhouse he has made great strides in recovery, managing his condition by participating in the employment skills program daily. He has regained the confidence and social skills necessary to become a successful employee, but most importantly, he is the happiest he has been in many years. ■



Thanks to grant funding from The Able Trust, John has renewed hope and confidence.



A Veteran's Story



“Disability Mentoring Day really opened the door for me. Now I just need to get through the door.”

“Mentoring Day at *Florida Power & Light* was great, wonderful. We talked about my work experience and I distributed my resume. From the moment I got there until the moment I left, I knew that I was in the right place. Because of the training they offer their customer service staff, I know I can become an even better customer service professional. All day, I thought, ‘This is the employer I want to work for.’ During Mentoring Day, it felt more like a small business than a big corporation. They genuinely wanted to help the mentees.

My mentor was a fantastic person. She took me to one of her meetings with team members about Smart Grid planning. She took it upon herself to help me find opportunities in the company and went online to find customer service positions – I left with several new contacts. Another mentor invited me to come back to experience his department as well, since he wasn’t scheduled as a mentor that day.

The mentoring team filmed a video interview at the end of the day. During the video, they asked me how they could improve Disability Mentoring Day. I suggested that they do it more than once a year, perhaps every six months, so more people with disabilities could be exposed to opportunities in their company. This Disability Mentoring Day experience really opened the door for me. Now I just need to get through the door.” ■

–Miami/Dade Mentee & Armed Forces Veteran, 2011

November 2011 - Florida Hire A Veteran Month

Did You Know?

Florida has more than 970,000 veterans under the age of 65, who are ready, willing, and able to work.



In November, please join us in observance of “Hire a Veteran Month”

- Recognize veterans’ military service AND the contributions they bring to the workforce
- Learn about tax credits available to companies who hire veterans (Recovery Act-expanded Work Opportunity Tax Credit)
- Bring employers and veterans together using the full network of available services, including the Employ Florida Marketplace, Disability Mentoring Day activities, and more!

“Hire a Veteran Month” is an initiative coordinated by the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI), Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI) and the state’s 24 Regional Workforce Boards. Employers are encouraged to contact their local One-Stop Career Center to receive assistance in connecting with and recruiting veterans. The Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM) is accessible online at www.employflorida.com. Employers who are interested in pro-active recruitment of veterans may search the database for veterans who may be qualified for job openings and contact them directly.

Florida High School/High Tech: Promoting Quality High-tech Careers for Florida's Students with Disabilities

by Allison Chase

According to the US Department of Labor, 50 percent of sustained economic expansion comes from jobs in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Currently, only 5 percent of US workers are employed in STEM careers. The National Science Foundation reports that the percentage of students studying math and science has decreased from 21 percent in 1980 to 16 percent today.

Not only is it critical to increase the numbers of students pursuing STEM careers, but it is important to bring diversity to the population of people in STEM careers.

“Diversity drives innovation and...its absence imperils our designs, our products and, most of all, our creativity – all components of competitiveness.” (President and CEO, NACME (National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., Dr. Irving Pressley McPhail)

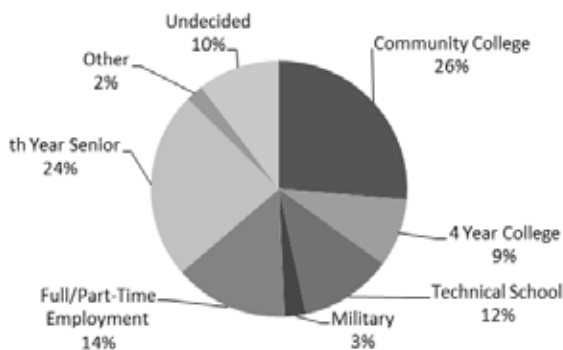
The Florida High School/High Tech Program (HS/HT) is designed to expose students with disabilities to the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to enter the 21st century workforce in technology and science-related careers. Core features of the program – job shadowing, industry site visits, mentoring, and internships – are critical program components that help students form postsecondary education and employment goals and transition from school into the world of work.

The HS/HT program is based on the five nationally recognized, evidenced based Guideposts for Success: School-Based Preparatory Experiences, Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning, Connecting Activities, Youth Leadership & Development, and Family Involvement & Supports. Research has proven that each guidepost is essential to what youth with disabilities need to succeed in adulthood.

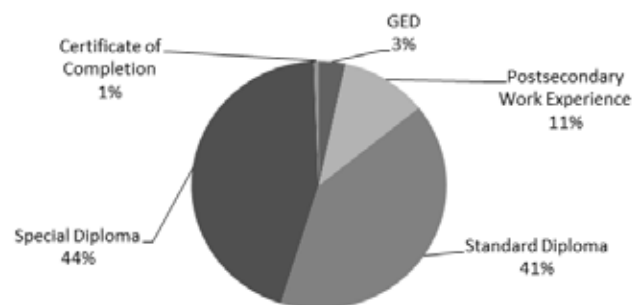
2011 Statewide Outcomes

During the 2010-2011 school year, the Florida HS/HT Program served 1,711 students with disabilities in 35 Florida counties.

Florida HS/HT Postsecondary and Employment Outcomes July 2011



Florida HS/HT Graduation Outcomes - July 2011



The Florida HS/HT Impact

- The Florida HS/HT Program experienced a high school dropout rate of less than 1 percent.
- 74 percent of Florida HS/HT graduates entered postsecondary education or employment (unduplicated) as compared to the Florida Department of Education rate of 50 percent of graduates with disabilities (unduplicated).
- Approximately 47 percent of Florida HS/HT graduates entered postsecondary education after graduation compared to only 27 percent of other graduates with disabilities in Florida.
- Services were provided in 305 high schools and alternative education settings including Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.

- 199 high school students (representing grades 9-12) secured employment.
- Disability diversity of enrolled students includes: autism spectrum disorder, 6 percent; emotional disturbance, 7 percent; hearing impairment including deafness, 2 percent; intellectual disability, 7 percent; other health impairment including attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, 11 percent; orthopedic impairment, 2 percent; specific learning disability, 50 percent; speech or language impairment, 4 percent; traumatic brain injury, 1 percent; visual impairment including blindness, 1 percent.

Local Impact

On October 5, 2011, the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida was recognized as the 2011 High School/High Tech Site of the Year. The CIL of NE Florida partners with employers, families, and other community organizations to provide services to youth with disabilities in Alachua, Bradford, Levy, Marion, and Putnam counties. As a result of the HS/HT services in this area, there was a 100 percent graduation rate for high school seniors and 71 percent entered postsecondary education or employment. ■

Broadening Horizons: Florida's Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP)

Any huge transformation starts with a simple idea.

Positive change can happen if that idea is nurtured and its components are carefully planned. Through a process we call *RAMPformation*, Florida's Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP) is creating change in the perceptions of employers, educators, mentors, staff, and the community. More importantly, it is helping to transform the negative self-perceptions of youth with disabilities into more positive, constructive ones.

Jerry has been in the Florida High School/High Tech (HS/HT) program for several years, but only this past year (since he enrolled as a RAMP mentee) did he really decide to be more open to new experiences. The transformation of his attitude has really opened doors for him. For a young man who had never traveled outside the small rural town of Fort White, Florida, he is really going places now. Playing football and attending Future Farmers of America (FFA) were Jerry's only hobbies prior to RAMP. This year, he stretched his horizons, and has learned to build a robot, prepare and deliver speeches to an audience, and has become quite the world traveler. Working with his teammates as they built their robot, Jerry's leadership skills began to shine when the team decided he would be the best candidate to "drive" the robot at competition.

"I didn't realize there were any other ways to compete besides football!" He said.

Jerry has driven the robot competitively at several competitions, attending the VEX Robotics 2011 World Championships as a participant-observer. This past summer, Jerry was a delegate at the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) in Tallahassee, where he further honed his leadership skills. On two separate occasions he was invited to Washington DC: once to share a presentation about working as a team to build and compete with a robot, and another time to participate in the *Youth Summit: Voices in Action* meeting. Jerry was nominated by his counselors to be a participant in this forum that allows the opinions of youth leaders to be heard by policymakers and leaders in education.

Florida's Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program allows mentees a jumping off point for their dreams – ideas they imagine as impossible for now, are being made possible during a transformative process we like to call *RAMPformation!* ■



Young men like Jerry are expanding their horizons, learning new skills, and becoming competent leaders because of Florida's Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP).

Renewed Faith for the Future - The 2011 Florida Youth Leadership Forum

by Ray Ford, Jr.

On July 20, nearly 50 high school students from across the state of Florida embarked on an incredible journey. Leaving the friendly confines of home and the loving arms of parents, they came to Tallahassee to participate in the 2011 Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) sponsored by The Able Trust. For four days, forum delegates learned the importance of education, advocacy, and leadership while forging friendships that will last a lifetime.

“I feel like something new and great has appeared in my life,” delegate David Senokossoff said. “Thank you YLF, and all the supporters. I feel like I’m not going to forget the last four days, nor the people who made a difference in that short time.”



Florida Youth Leadership Forum participants pose for the annual group photo taken in the House Chambers of The Florida Capitol.



Enable America founder Richard Salem in a light moment during his address at the 2011 Florida Youth Leadership Forum Mentors' Luncheon.

Able Trust Board Chair Richard Cole addressed the group during *Capitol Day*, stressing the importance of leadership, encouraging them to continue following the path they’ve chosen.

“You were selected to attend the 2011 Florida Youth Leadership Forum because you demonstrated leadership qualities,” Cole said in the House Chambers of the Florida Capitol. “You, the people here today, are our future. You are the leaders of tomorrow.”

Delegates participated in a mock legislative session later that morning, giving them a unique insight on the decisions that affect the lives of millions of Floridians each day. Representative Marti Coley made a surprise visit, further extolling the students on the leadership qualities that helped earn their selection to attend the forum. She reminded them that getting the highest level of education possible would cement their futures.

“I see education as your opportunity for a future,” Coley said. “Your education helps determine and shape what kind of future you will have.”

The next day, delegates spent the morning doing just that, participating in a career fair at the University Center Club on the campus of Florida State University. More than 20 mentors from 13 different vocations shared their experiences, personal and professional, as students explored careers ranging from Agriculture and Environment to Sports. Afterward, a crowd of nearly 200 attended a mentors’ luncheon where keynote speaker Richard Salem, founder of Enable America, gave an emotional account of the baseball accident during a high school game that took his sight. Salem urged the group to work hard to overcome the obstacles standing in the way of their dreams, never forgetting to help make things better for those coming behind them.

“In order to be a leader, you have to take some baby steps,” Salem said. “You have to take some chances. Most importantly, you’ve got to build a leadership base that follows what you’ve done; lay a foundation for others to follow.”

They learned so much in such a short amount of time. In-between seminars about managing their finances, college life, dinner and business etiquette and disability resources, a subtle transformation took place. Over the course of four days, the faith that others displayed in them was mingled with a new-found faith in themselves. Suddenly they realized that they were not alone in their plight; that there were others fighting the same fight.

“(I’ve) just got to say YLF is the best thing that ever happened to me,” delegate Mercela Miguel said, describing her experience. “Now I can open up to people and not care what they say. I am me and only me. Thank you YLF, you have changed me and I am happy.” ■



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The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities successful opportunities for employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$28 million in grants to nonprofit agencies throughout Florida for employment-related purposes, enabling thousands of Florida citizens with disabilities to enter the workforce each year. The Able Trust youth programs provide career development and transition for thousands of students with disabilities since its beginnings, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school.

For more information about The Able Trust visit www.abletrust.org.

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There are many ways for you to make a gift in remembrance of someone special that will have meaningful significance for years to come. Here are a few options to consider:

Make a Deductible Gift and Receive Life Income

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A Memorial Gift of Cash or Property

A gift of cash is one of the simplest ways to remember your loved one or

friend. You receive a tax deduction for the value of your gift to The Able Trust. Please designate the person you wish to remember and the best way that we can honor them. If you are making a memorial gift of appreciated stock or real estate, your deduction may depend on the type of property gifted. Please call us to discuss the treatment of your gift and the best way to transfer your property to us.

PLANNED GIVING

Please feel free to Contact Mike Campbell, Regional Endowment Consultant, at 850-224-4493.

You may also visit our planned giving website at www.myabletrust.org.

Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

October 19, 2011

Florida Disability Mentoring Day

November 4, 2011

*Development & Marketing Committee
Conference Call*

November 10, 2011

*Finance Committee
Conference Call*

November 18, 2011

*Executive Committee
Conference Call*

December 9, 2011

*Board of Directors Meeting
Conference Call*

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