The 2009 Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) concluded on Sunday, July 26 with heart-felt goodbyes as delegates prepared to make the journey back to their respective homes. Though saddened by the thought of leaving behind new friends, participants took home a fiery determination to embrace the life-changing lessons they learned at YLF and emerge as leaders in their community.

Event highlights included a visit to the Florida Capitol House Chambers, where delegates participated in a mock session, and the annual Career Fair and Mentors Luncheon. More than 20 mentors participated in this year’s career fair, representing 13 different vocations ranging from Arts & Entertainment to Sports & Recreation. Mentors spent the morning and early afternoon sharing their experiences and advice on the critical skills necessary to land that dream job.

Delegate Jonathan Heimowitz from Pensacola enjoyed the unique environment provided by the YLF. “It’s nice to socialize with people who have the same and different disabilities,” he said. “I come here and everyone has something in common with each other.”

More than 80 percent of the staffers and facilitators that volunteer their time during the YLF were once delegates themselves. In the spirit of leadership, these individuals return year after year to lend their talents to the next generation. Anthony La Cava, a 2001 alumnus of the YLF, is an example of what delegates can achieve with hard work and dedication. He is now an Apple Certified Network Services Engineer in Boston who returns to the YLF every summer to share his experiences with the new delegates.

His pathway to success began by being vocal about his disability instead of hiding it, a skill he learned from attending the YLF. “I was able to start advocating for myself when I got into college, where you don’t have someone there all the time advocating for (you), and then into the work environment,” he said.

This year marked the 10th anniversary of the Forum, an event sponsored by The Able Trust. With help from public and private partners, high school students with disabilities from across Florida participated in four days of leadership and social training at no cost to the participants. This marvelous support removed all financial barriers to attendance, and thus opened participation opportunities to everyone.

The 2010 Youth Leadership Forum is scheduled for July 21 – 25.
A Message from the President
Disability Employment Awareness Month Recognized

Each year for the past several years, Florida has recognized October as Disability Employment Awareness Month. During the month The Able Trust hosts several events and provides support for many others, encouraging all communities and businesses to work together to increase opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. October is special because of its purpose and because of the partnerships it encourages. We are very pleased to work with partners such as the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation, The Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Office of the Governor, and members of the Cabinet, among others.

The road to employment, and for many, self-support, often begins before the age of 18, and we believe that is especially true for young people with disabilities. It is well known that individual ambition and future plans can be encouraged or discouraged at a young age. The young people we work with have had a wide range of support, from well-meaning but limiting protective support to the discouragement of being too ambitious, to full support and a climate of high expectations. The Able Trust believes in this climate of high expectations for young people, and we have put our resources behind that belief. Our Youth Leadership Forum, our Florida High School/High Tech program, and our youth mentoring activities work together to provide the maximum source of information and support available in Florida for young people with disabilities.

This summer, our Youth Leadership Forum hosted 37 new students, brought back 22 student-mentors, and welcomed a number of adult volunteers to four days of intense leadership training. Students are exposed to many career options and taught to set goals, participate in their communities, and learn more about their public responsibility. The participants of the YLF are phenomenal individuals: I met one young man who was fluent in Italian despite his Down’s syndrome. Eight young people with various types of autism participated. Several moved with assistive equipment, from wheelchairs to walkers to canes. Some were deaf and some were blind. All grew immensely over the four days, and committed to active pursuit of a productive life beyond high school.

Many of these students are participants in the Florida High School/High Tech (HS/HT) program that is administered through The Able Trust office and financially supported by The Able Trust and the DVR. This program prepares the students for employment in a number of ways including transition skills training, summer internships, and leadership skills education. The success of the HS/HT program is very impressive: More than 100 high schools participated in the program in 36 counties last year. From those HS/HT programs, 239 students secured employment (the work-based learning principle). The program has a much lower than average dropout rate of only 2%, and 86% of the program’s graduates moved on to post-secondary education or jobs. The training that the HS/HT program provides to students with disabilities readies them for the world of work like no other program available in Florida. We honor the career plans of these students during Disability Employment Awareness Month. And we also honor and respect the courage and commitment of those wonderful businesses that take a chance on people with disabilities and are willing to share the practical, business rewards of expanding and diversifying their workforce to include all Floridians.

Susanne F. Homant
President & CEO, The Able Trust

Florida Grantor 2
Grant Awards for the First Quarter of 2010

Sertoma Speech and Hearing Foundation
The Sertoma Speech and Hearing Foundation will receive $28,498 for Employer Sensitivity and Awareness Training, to provide disability sensitivity training to employers located in Pasco and Hernando counties and facilitate the placement and job retention rate for individuals with disabilities.

The Southwest Florida Job Squad, Inc.
The Southwest Florida Job Squad, Inc. will receive $45,000 for Employment Services in order to allow Employment Specialists to assist individuals with disabilities in a five-county area of southwest Florida (Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades and Hendry).

Visual Innovations & Solutions
Visual Innovations & Solutions will receive $11,000 for Empowering People with Disabilities Through Adaptive Technology for Employment, to provide assistance in gaining access and training in adaptive technology for individuals with disabilities in Volusia county to succeed in the workplace.

Personnel Development Services
Personnel Development Services will receive $36,585 for Workforce Introduction Training (WIT), to provide for intensive employment skills training for students with disabilities in Taylor, Madison and Jefferson counties of rural north Florida.

Epilepsy Services of West Central Florida
Epilepsy Services of West Central Florida will receive $40,800 for Epilepsy Employment Opportunity Program, to provide employment placement services to individuals with epilepsy in Polk, Hardee, Hillsborough and Highland counties in south central Florida.

Florida Outreach Center for the Blind, Inc.
Florida Outreach Center for the Blind, Inc. will receive $34,994 for Teaching the Skills to Place the Blind on a Career Path, to provide employment skills training encompassing adaptive equipment, mobility instruction and computer training for individuals with visual impairment in Palm Beach County.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc.
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of Florida, Inc. will receive $28,000 for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Employment Success, for a program providing a communication class for individuals and their co-workers to assist the deaf and hard of hearing with successful employment in Pasco and Hernando counties.

Judge Ricky Polston addresses Youth Leadership Forum delegates in the House Chambers of the Florida Capital.
**Breaking Down Barriers for Students and Job Seekers with Disabilities**

Building relationships with business executives, gaining on-the-job experience, and helping employers break down barriers: This year’s Florida Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) was a win-win event for people with disabilities and participating businesses. On October 21, career professionals across Florida shared their career experiences, serving as on-the-job mentors to nearly 2,000 students and job seekers with disabilities.

In 57 counties representing more than 150 towns and cities in Florida, young people and job seekers with disabilities were matched with more than 1,000 professionals from hundreds of companies including: Kennedy Space Center at NASA, CVS Pharmacies, Publix Supermarkets, Inc., Darden Restaurants, SunTrust Banks and ClearChannel Radio.

“Mentees” spent the day observing job responsibilities and getting a better understanding of the workplace environment. Participants were given the opportunity to experience the day-to-day activities required of their desired occupation and the skills and education requirements specific to a job in that career field. Employers and employees gained valuable knowledge of the benefits of working alongside an individual with a disability.

“Every year, DMD gets better and better,” said Sally Ash, assistant director of Disability Mentoring Day for The Able Trust and chair of the Florida Statewide Planning Committee. “Florida continues to lead the nation with the most employer-mentee matches and it’s because of the strong support we get from the business community and the local organizations that seek to improve the lives of Floridians with disabilities.”

Florida Disability Mentoring Day 2009 was launched on October 1 in Tallahassee at the annual Disability Employment Awareness Month celebration, hosted by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, The Agency for Workforce Innovation, and The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The event was sponsored by The Able Trust. Governor Charlie Crist served as Honorary Chair for this year’s DMD activities.

“I am pleased to once again serve as an honorary chair during this year’s Disability Mentoring Day,” said Crist. “I firmly believe that Floridians with disabilities are an important part of the Sunshine State’s workforce and when people with disabilities want to work, they deserve to have that opportunity. I will continue to support and raise awareness for Floridians with disabilities to ensure they have every possible chance to succeed. I also applaud the hard work of The Able Trust and the Commission on Disabilities. They are tireless, everyday advocates who have been instrumental in prioritizing meaningful employment for Floridians with disabilities. I encourage Florida’s business leaders and employers to learn more about how to better utilize this pool of untapped talent.”

Disability Mentoring Day is a national initiative of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. It is organized in Florida by The Able Trust and a collaboration of statewide disability organizations. Disability Mentoring Day 2009 was sponsored by: Publix Supermarkets, Inc.*, ISES Corp., ADAAG Consulting, Advantica EyeCare, Capital City Bank, Capital City Consulting, Conga River Golf, Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Gulf Power, MV Transportation, Pittman Law Group, Volunteer Florida, Walt Disney World Corp., WeLocalize, and was supported by a host of statewide organizations, employers and individuals.

* = Sustaining Sponsor

For more information about Florida Disability Mentoring Day, visit www.floridadmd.org or contact info@abletrust.org.
A Great Year for Florida HS/HT 2008/09 Outcomes

The Florida HS/HT Program of The Able Trust served 1,469 students with disabilities this year. One hundred-seven schools and alternative education settings in 35 Florida counties were provided a total of 263,824 transition services based on five nationally recognized, evidence-based Guideposts for Success:

1) School-Based Preparatory Experiences,
2) Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning,
3) Connecting Activities,
4) Youth Leadership & Development
5) Family Involvement & Supports.

As a result of the program, Florida HS/HT students entered post-secondary education at more than three times the rate of other Florida graduates with disabilities. Seventy-three percent of Florida HS/HT graduates entered post-secondary education after graduation, as compared to 22% of other graduates with disabilities in Florida. Eighty-six percent of Florida HS/HT students entered post secondary education or employment this year.

Congratulations to all students, teachers, family members and Florida HS/HT project coordinators! Because of the hard work and commitment of all partners, students with disabilities are achieving their goals and dreams.

What Is a Planned (or “Deferred”) Gift?

A planned gift is a gift that in most cases will benefit organizations like The Able Trust at some future point in time. Unlike an outright gift that provides The Able Trust full benefit upon receipt (such as a contribution to YLF or High School/High Tech), a planned gift defers the organization’s use of transferred assets until the death of a donor, a beneficiary, or until the end of a specified period of time.

In return for a planned gift, donors and their families may receive important estate and income tax benefits, and, depending upon their gift, an attractive annual income stream for their life or the life of a secondary beneficiary. Another term commonly used is a deferred gift.

Planned gifts can be either revocable or irrevocable. Revocable gifts can be changed by a donor. Funds are not available to The Able Trust until death, so these gifts enable a donor to preserve the potential need for the asset during their lifetime. Yet, because they benefit the organization in the future and often provide attractive estate tax benefits, they serve as an excellent philanthropic tool.

Irrevocable gifts cannot be rescinded and are immediate transfers of assets for The Able Trust to use at some defined future point in time, or at the death of the donor or secondary beneficiary. In return, in most cases, the donor will receive an immediate income tax deduction, an annual income stream, and favorable capital gains and estate tax benefits.

Please contact Mike Campbell to discuss ways you can make a planned gift.
Recent amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) refocused attention on workplace accommodations by broadening the definition of disability. As a result, more employees will likely be entitled to such accommodations. While some employers may be concerned about implementation costs, a study conducted by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a service of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), shows that workplace accommodations create a positive impact on the workplace in many tangible ways.

JAN and the University of Iowa’s Law, Health Policy, and Disability Center interviewed nearly 1,200 employers between January 2004 and December 2006. Employers participating in the study reported increases in the following areas as a result of providing accommodations in the workplace:

**DIRECT BENEFITS**

- employee retention: 88%
- employee productivity: 72%
- eliminated cost of training new employees: 59%
- employee attendance: 52%
- company diversity: 43%
- saved worker’s compensation & other insurance costs: 39%
- attracting qualified employees with a disability: 16%
- promoting employees with a disability: 11%

**INDIRECT BENEFITS**

- improved interactions with co-workers: 69%
- company morale: 61%
- overall company productivity: 57%
- improved interactions with customers/clients: 45%
- workplace safety: 43%
- overall company attendance: 37%
- company profitability: 33%
- customer base: 18%

**NOTES FROM THE ABLE TRUST**

CEO: Of particular interest are the statistics relating to productivity (up 72%) for the employee, but also up 57% for the company as a whole. And music to the ears of every executive: employees stay with the company much longer (up 88%), attendance improves (up 37%), and who doesn’t like an increase in company morale (up 61%)?


**Youth Leadership Forum volunteer Hilbert Hampton learns about culinary arts during the 2009 Career Fair.**
We Make Donating to The Able Trust Easy!

You can make your donation by visiting The Able Trust Web site at www.abletrust.org and clicking the “Make a Donation” button. Or you can fill out the form below and mail your donation to:

**The Able Trust, 3320 Thomasville Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, Florida, 32308-7906**

Tax Deductible Donation Amount ($): _____________________________________________

Cash, Check or Credit Card Donations are Accepted. Please make checks payable to The Able Trust.

I’d like to join the Friends of The Able Trust and help with this gift:

- [ ] $50
- [ ] $250
- [ ] $100
- [ ] Agency - (complimentary)
- [ ] $150
- [ ] Other $________

Is this donation (please check one):

- [ ] To honor someone
- [ ] In memory of someone
- [ ] For a special occasion

Describe:_____________________________________________________________________

Name:_________________________ Company: _________________________________

Address:__________________________

City, State, Zip:_____________________

Credit Card Type: [ ] Visa [ ] AMEX [ ] Mastercard

Credit Card Number: ___________________________ Exp. Date: _______________

Please charge my card: [ ] Monthly $___________________ [ ] One Time $ ___________

Email:___________________________

Signature:_________________________________________________________________

- [ ] Check if you would like to be put on our mailing list
- [ ] Check if you would like to be on our e-mail list

We get by with a little help from our Friends!

Become part of The Able Trust’s mission and promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Join the Friends of The Able Trust. This support organization represents individuals, small and large businesses and organizations who care about the vocational rehabilitation process. Nonprofit agencies that join will receive special updates on RFPs and other programs related to the Foundation. With a little help from our Friends, The Able Trust can continue to broaden the possibilities for people with disabilities throughout Florida.

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

The Able Trust is recognized as exempt from federal income taxation under section 501c3 of the IRS and eligible to receive tax deductible contributions. Federal ID: 59-3052307. The Able Trust is registered with the Florida Division of Consumer Services as required by the Solicitation of Contributions Act (#CH957). A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free in Florida: (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.
Thank You, Disney!

The Able Trust receives another significant donation from its partner, Walt Disney World. Walt Disney World has supported the programs and services of The Able Trust for more than 10 years through generous financial donations and in-kind support and donations. Participating in the check presentation are (l to r) Richard Cole, Vice Chair, The Able Trust Board of Directors; Jeannie Amendola, Secretary, The Able Trust Board of Directors and Walt Disney World Ambassador; Mickey Mouse; Bob Billingslea, Ambassador, The Able Trust and Walt Disney Corporate Director of Urban Affairs; Susanne Homant, President & CEO, The Able Trust.

Upcoming EVENTS

October 2009
National Disability Employment Awareness Month – NDEAM

Tuesday, October 1, 2009
2009 Disability Mentoring Day Statewide Kickoff
Tallahassee

Wednesday, October 21, 2009
DMD 2009 Commemoration

Friday, December 11, 2009
The Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting

Contributions are deductible according to applicable IRS guidelines. The Able Trust is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization and in compliance with the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act.