



NEWS

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Gainesville-area business leading the way toward an inclusive workforce

*West End Animal Hospital garners 2015 Small Employer of the
Year Award from The Able Trust*

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. –West End Animal Hospital is the recipient of The 2015 Ability Award Small Employer of the Year, for its commitment to providing job-shadowing and internship experiences to students in Alachua County.

The award was presented by The Able Trust, a statewide nonprofit with a mission to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.

The Able Trust's annual Ability Awards ceremony honors businesses, organizations and individuals for their employment, leadership and services that allow more Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce.

West End Animal Hospital gives students with disabilities the opportunity to learn skills that are required of a veterinary technician, including basic animal care, bloodwork, surgery assistance, and customer service through the High School High Tech (HSHT) program. The program is funded by The Able Trust and provides high school students with disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to technology-related careers.

"We are honored to win an award for doing what we believe every small business should do," said Dr. Deborah Cottrell, owner of the West End Animal Hospital. "We are always hopeful that the students who come through our hospital will learn something that can benefit animals, themselves, and their community."

"Every award given marks progress toward our goal of a truly inclusive Florida workforce," said Dr. Susanne Homant, president and CEO The Able Trust. "West End Animal Hospital recognizes the benefits, and exemplifies the commitment required to make employment possible for individuals with disabilities."

The Able Trust is celebrating 25 years of making a positive impact on the state of Florida. In that time, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$35 million in grants to organizations whose goal is to help Floridians with disabilities gain employment and has developed the nationally recognized Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) program and Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) to

help Florida's teens learn self-advocacy and pursue post-secondary education and/or entry into the workforce. The HSHT program has a 99 percent graduation rate for all seniors.

About The Able Trust

The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, is a 501(c)(3) public-private partnership foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$35 million throughout Florida, enabling thousands of Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce.

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