The Able Trust Ability Awards

The Able Trust Ability Awards annually recognizes individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions toward the employment of Florida citizens with disabilities. This year, the luncheon and awards ceremony was held Friday, June 12, 2009 in Tallahassee, Florida at the Golden Eagle Country Club. The Ability Awards were presented by The Able Trust as well as Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp. Sixteen individuals and programs from around the state were recognized for their contribution to the quality of life for the individuals they serve—people who are excellent employees and just happen to have a disability. These honorees help The Able Trust fulfill its mission to get people with disabilities trained and working, and remaining or becoming productive members of their communities.

2009 Ability Award Recipients:

- Gratitude House, Inc – Beverly Chapman Award
- Donna Fassett of ARC Gateway – Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award
- Lockheed Martin and Roxane MacGillivray – Large Employer of the Year
- Mark Kamleiter – Small Business of the Year
- Panhandle BLN – Business Leadership Network (BLN) Site of the Year
- Florida Public Radio and Tom Flanigan – Media Award
- Don Chester – Adult Leadership Award
- Anthony LaCava – Youth Leadership Award
- Senator Stephen R. Wise, Ed.D – Legislator of the Year
- Representative Will Weatherford – Legislator of the Year
- Paul Martell – Public Employee of the Year
- W. Drew Andrews – Volunteer of the Year
- Dr. J. R. Harding – Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year
- Fonda Lee – Gala Fundraiser of the Year
- Florida Crown Workforce Board – High School High Tech Program of the Year
- University of Florida – Business Mentor of the Year

Congratulations to all of the Ability Award winners! The Able Trust looks forward to celebrating next year’s successes and honoring those individuals that continually make a difference in lives of others.
A Message from the President
Growing Awareness

The Able Trust’s primary mission is to create fair employment opportunities for people with disabilities, a mission that has become especially challenging in the tough economic times Florida is experiencing. Anyone seeking work who has a disability faces challenges in a normal economy due to barriers, misperceptions, and a general misunderstanding of capabilities. Competing with an increased pool of people looking for work makes the task more difficult for the job seeker with a disability. However, and in spite of the additional challenges, there is a growing awareness among businesses, especially those that take their social responsibility seriously, to make sure that open positions in their organizations are available to all, and that people with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Perhaps that is because organizations are becoming delightfully surprised at the talent in this workforce pool. Perhaps it is because the businesses realize the return on their investment as these employees tend to change jobs less often, thus reducing hiring and training costs; perhaps it is because diversity in the workforce opens more markets for the business. We think it is all of these, plus a growing awareness that, in spite of the economy, our country may face a workforce shortage in the near future, and talent will be in demand with companies becoming more willing to make accommodations in exchange for such talent.

In addition, as our population ages, more and more people are becoming aware that talent and skills continue, even as the percentage of people with disabilities increases. According to the National Organization on Disability, 1.7% of all people under the age of 22 have a disability. The numbers increase with age:

- 6.4% of all, age 22-44
- 11.5% of those age 45-54
- 21.9% of those age 55-64
- 27.8% of those age 65-79
- 53.5% of those, 80 and older.

The increase in disabilities among our aging population brings an increased awareness to the capabilities of people continue, in spite of challenges, which can surely help to diminish and hopefully eventually eliminate many misperceptions about the talented workforce that is made up of people with disabilities.

This should also be encouraging to Florida’s youth with disabilities. As they grow in the pursuit and then practice of their careers, more and more of their fellow workers will also have a disability, which will help to “level the playing field.” Thus we encourage our youth to seek summer internships, to participate in mentoring opportunities and to spend some time doing volunteer work so that they can learn as much as possible about different businesses and industries, allowing them to find their niche in this world. And they should do this sooner rather than later, to stay ahead of the naysayers and those that find purpose in discouraging others. Our board and staff are dedicated to making these opportunities happen, through our grants, through our youth programs, and the public messages we deliver.

My refrigerator door is full of quotes I have found to be interesting and often inspiring. One of my favorites is from the first Star Wars movie. In that movie Yoda said, “Try not. Do or do not. There is no try.” And perhaps that is the best message we can give to those we serve - that they need to continue to be “doers” for themselves and those who will follow. There is a double reward.

Have a wonderful summer, and do something good for someone in need.

Susanne F. Homant
President & CEO, The Able Trust
The 2009 Youth Leadership Forum is Here!

Delegates from across the state of Florida are attending the tenth annual Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) in Tallahassee. The delegates are all high school students with disabilities who are gathered to learn to be leaders in the face of their challenges.

Thanks to the help of its YLF partners and sponsors, The Able Trust is once again hosting this program. Fifty invitations were extended to high school juniors and seniors with disabilities to partake in an all-expenses-paid experience enhancing their leadership, citizenship, and social skills.

“I used to always use my disability as an excuse for something I couldn’t do. I never tried,” Catherine Rudniski, a rising senior from Pinellas Park High School, shared. “Now, I don’t let my disability get to me. I try as many new things as I possibly can.”

For the past 10 years, the YLF has provided teens with disabilities the opportunity to gain confidence and learn about leadership and responsibility. Selected from all high school juniors and seniors in the state, these 50 students were selected.

“It makes me work harder to prove them wrong in school,” said 2009 delegate Kristina Ball, a rising senior from Father Anglim Academy in Ft. Myers. “I like to show my fellow classmates that we can do anything that any other teen can.”

This tenth edition of the Florida YLF will be highlighted by a mock session in the House Chamber of the Florida Capitol, where delegates will get to actively participate in the legislative process by debating and voting on an issue. Other events will include the annual Career Fair and Mentors’ Luncheon featuring keynote speaker Paul Martinelli, and the annual dance and talent shows.

The Business Connection - Florida BLN

The Florida Business Leadership Network, a group of 15 local Business Leadership Networks (BLN), is headquartered at The Able Trust and supported in its growth as a strategic initiative of the Trust. It is a strong belief of The Able Trust that businesses are primary in assuring that open positions are available to people with disabilities as well as those without disabilities. Many businesses in Florida, large and small are encouraging people with disabilities to apply for jobs within their companies, and these firms are often members of their local BLN. In August the Florida BLN leadership will learn about the “Look at My Abilities” media campaign, designed to raise awareness of the talent in this special workforce pool – people who love their jobs, are reliable and loyal to their companies. The campaign is expected to launch in late 2009 or early 2010 as a statewide campaign.

Local BLNs are located in Pensacola, Destin, Panama City, Tallahassee Jacksonvile, Gainesville, Orlando, Tampa Bay, Lakeland, Palm Bay, Sarasota, Fort Myers, Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami. For information on joining a local BLN, to www.abletrust.org and click on Employers/Florida Business Leadership Network (left column) or call Samantha Springfield at 850-224-4493, Ext 233 for membership forms.
HS/HT Students Take 3rd Place in the VEX World Robotics Championship

Florida High School/High Tech (HS/HT) students recently took third place in the PiraTech VEX World Robotics Championship. Team 508 competed against 273 other teams from 50 states and 12 countries, representing a total of 1,300 teams who vied for the title.

HS/HT students at Palm Bay High School in Brevard County actively participate in VEX Robotics, which promotes education in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The program also teaches critical life skills such as teamwork, project management and problem solving. Students worked with educators, mentors and coaches prior to the competition to build and design a robot using the VEX Robotics Design system. The goal for the team was to build a robot that could solve competition challenges quickly and efficiently.

As the recipient of the award, Cody will receive $1,000 in parts and the team will receive an automatic placement in the 2010 Vex World Championship. As a high school senior, Cody has participated in the Palm Bay HS/HT Program for the last two years. As a result of program opportunities, Cody plans to pursue a career in 3D Animation and Modeling and hopes to attend the University of Central Florida next year.

Florida High School/High Tech (HS/HT) is designed to provide high school students with all types of disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to technology-related careers. HS/HT links youth to a broad range of academic, career development and experiential resources and experiences that will enable them to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce. This project is funded by The Able Trust and the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

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Disability Mentoring Day Offers Unique Opportunity To Meet Your Workforce Needs

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Disability Mentoring Day will be officially commemorated on October 21, 2009, in observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) activities. Each year, hundreds of businesses and community partners collaborate with The Able Trust to offer this unique experience for their employees to provide mentorship and career development support to individuals with disabilities. Community liaisons across the state in 57 Florida counties are available to connect your employees to students and job seekers interested in a variety of careers!

DISABILITY MENTORING

Disability Mentoring Day is more than an opportunity for companies to demonstrate positive leadership in their communities. It offers a great solution to access qualified job candidates beyond the traditional labor pool.

For corporate sponsorship opportunities, contact Natalie Lamb at natalie@abletrust.org. To learn more about how to participate in Disability Mentoring Day as a mentor or a mentee, please contact Sally Ash at The Able Trust, or sally@abletrust.org.


Grants for 4th Quarter 2009

**Brooks Health Foundation**
Brooks Health Foundation will receive $51,175 for its Clubhouse Vocational Integration Program (VIP), to expand the Clubhouse for Vocational training and placement for individuals who have had a traumatic brain injury or stroke in a four county area (Duval, St. Johns, Nassau, Clay) of northeast Florida utilizing a 20 step program for individuals with brain injuries.

**Best Buddies International, Inc.**
Best Buddies International, Inc. will receive $31,188 for Project Search Metro Zoo, a comprehensive and coordinated effort to provide employment skills that will help young people in gaining and retaining employment.

**Florida Crown Workforce Board, Inc.**
Florida Crown Workforce Board, Inc. will receive $40,000 for its ENABLE Program, providing additional staff to enhance employment services to veterans with disabilities in a four county region of north-central Florida.

**Lee Mental Health Center, Inc.**
Lee Mental Health Center, Inc. will receive $40,000 for Supported Employment Services for Veterans with Disabilities, which will provide a comprehensive supported employment program for veterans with disabilities desiring employment in Lee county communities.

**Life Management Center of Northwest Florida, Inc.**
Life Management Center of Northwest Florida, Inc. will receive $40,000 for Supported Employment: Removing Barriers to Employment for Disabled Veterans in Rural Florida, which will provide for a Job Coach and support for veterans with disabilities returning to work in four counties.

**WestCare Gulf Coast- Florida, Inc.**
WestCare Gulf Coast-Florida, Inc. will receive $40,000 for its EmployAble Program, an expansion of the Veterans Employment Program which helps veterans with disabilities gain and retain employment in the community.

2009 Gala Committee

We would like to thank the following individuals for their hard work in organizing our annual gala, along with their fundraising efforts in South Florida. We love our volunteers!

**2009 Gala Committee**
- Paul and Kelly Martinelli – Co-Chairs
- Margarita Abrishami
- Peter and Caridad Belisi
- Sheila Buchbinder
- Mindy Curtis- Horowitz
- Michele Jacobs
- Fonda Lee
- Denva May
- Jason May
- Richard Muello
- Cathy Polselli
- Florence Seiler
- Joanne Thompson
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:

- Individual - $15
- Family - $25
- Small Business - $100
- Corporate - $250
- Agency - (complimentary)
- Other $_______

- We are a nonprofit agency and would like to become a Friend of The Able Trust at no charge. Please add our name to your mailing list.

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: ________________

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.
Memorial Gifts

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

You may wish to make a memorial gift while providing current life income for yourself. If your memorial gift is made to fund a charitable remainder trust, you can receive income monthly, quarterly or annually. You receive a charitable deduction for your gift this year and avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale of your appreciated assets. The remainder passes to us as a gift in memory of your loved one. Please contact us for more information on charitable trust plans.

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 Director, at 850-224-4493 or Natalie Lamb, Director of Development and Marketing, at 850-224-4493 ext.223. You may also visit our planned giving website at www.myabletrust.org.

Upcoming EVENTS

July 22-26, 2009 Youth Leadership Forum
Tallahassee

Friday, September 25, 2009
The Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting
Orlando

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.