The Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) program is based on the nationally-recognized Guideposts for Success developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth and adapted by The Able Trust. The Guideposts provide programmatic framework that focuses on high expectations and successful outcomes for youth with disabilities. In 2016, The Able Trust developed and implemented a sixth guidepost, Communication Skills. Whether applying for a new job or looking for a promotion, good communication skills are important. The ability to communicate both verbally and in writing with a wide variety of people, maintaining good eye contact, writing clearly and succinctly, demonstrating a varied vocabulary, and tailoring language according to the audience, are all essential skills that employers seek. Good verbal and written communication means getting the message across with less chance of misunderstanding. In 2016, The Able Trust created the High School High Tech (HSHT) Speech & Research Competition to help develop these skills.

The Competition was renamed the Jeannie Amendola Speech & Research Competition in honor of Jeannie Amendola, who passed away on December 28, 2017. Jeannie, a longtime Disney employee and a worker who was legally blind, was a passionate advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities. She served as a leader with CastABLE, the Disney diversity resource group that promotes respect, equality, and appreciation of people with disabilities through awareness, education, and inclusion. Amendola also served on the Board of The Able Trust for 12 years and as an Ambassador for The Able Trust until she passed away.
This is my final newsletter message to you as President & CEO of The Able Trust. I have officially submitted my retirement letter, and although I will be available to help the Board with transition to a new President, I am now preparing for the next adventure in my life.

I have had the unforgettable privilege of serving The Able Trust and the wonderful people it supports for the past twelve years, a journey that has truly been the highlight of my life. During those years, we have been able to grow our nationally recognized High School High Tech program, vastly expand the opportunities for work experiences for people with disabilities, support training beyond high school to post-secondary institutions, significantly increase the knowledge of the workforce talents of people with disabilities, provide significant financial and technical support to community organizations throughout Florida, and most importantly, watch as many of the individuals who we helped, become employed in meaningful, good-fit jobs, the majority of which have a career path. In the process, seeing someone with that first “real” paycheck, beaming and thrilled with their good luck at being able to work was the constant inspiration for the hard work of building awareness and raising the advocacy barometer. I have made so many good friends in these twelve years, many of them young people who are stars in their worlds, paving the way for more diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

I have also had the privilege of working with the best staff in the entire state, the best Board, and the best group of Ambassadors. These are unselfish people who have given far more than required of them, to make sure the mission of The Able Trust moves forward.

My wish to all of you who strive to improve the lives of people with disabilities is simple: Never give up. It is a challenging task, as we continue to deal with misperceptions and ancient prejudices, but it is a critical task and truly our obligation to integrate all of humanity: in schools, in housing, in the workforce, in sports and entertainment, and indeed everywhere in our communities. As one of my favorite quotes expresses well: “Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.” (attributed to the Talmud).

My retirement bucket list gets bigger by the week: more time with grandchildren, more golf, more travel, several home projects, getting (and training) a dog, and more volunteer work for some identified causes. I hope many of you will stay in touch, do let me know how you are doing and the progress you have made.

Keep up the good fight and . . . never give up.

Blessings,

Susanne F. Homant, MBA, DPA
Grantee Spotlight: Independent Living Resource Center

The Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC) in Jacksonville received a three-year strategic grant in August 2018 for the Careers 360 program. Sarah, pictured below at her pharmacy job in Middleburg, Florida, is one of the people who used the Careers 360 program at the ILRC to gain employment. The organization was able to help Sarah connect to employers and secure a job interview based on her credentialed abilities. Sarah says, “For me, it’s about independence. I’ve wanted to be a Pharmacist since I was 15 years old and I’ve dedicated many years of education to achieve my goal.” Sarah plans to be a long-term employee with the TopCare Pharmacy company and apply for positions as the company grows and expands to additional locations in the Jacksonville area.

For the ILRC, The Able Trust’s Strategic Grant has provided the opportunity to add additional staff to reach more individuals with disabilities in the Duval County area that are interested in securing employment. Staff has collaborated and networked with local government partners and private businesses to encourage recruitment and employment opportunities. ILRC staff leverages a diverse set of opportunities across the Duval metro-area, which provides their clients, who have a variety of educational backgrounds, the best opportunities for successful employment. Recently Rachel, a client of the program, remarked about her new job, gained with program support, “I want to thank Mr. Mark (her supervisor), The Able Trust, and the ILRC for giving me the opportunity to have a real job and gain professional experience. I love coming to the store every day and talking to all the customers.” That is what it is all about! Employees that love to work and employers having quality talent on hand so a company can succeed and grow.

2019 Able Trust Ability Awards!

Nominate a candidate today.
Visit www.AbleTrust.org to download a nomination packet.
Nominations must be received by Thursday, August 8, 2019.
The Able Trust hosts the annual Jeannie Amendola Speech and Research Competition to promote the development of effective communication skills among HSHT students. The goals of the contest are to develop research, public speaking, and communication skills of students, which are critical to successful employment and career growth. The Able Trust has been continuously operating the HSHT program for 20 years, and is staffed by two faculty at The Able Trust office as well as program managers at all 43 of the HSHT Florida locations.

The contest has three levels of competition: local, regional, and state. The winner of each regional contest advanced to the state competition which was held on June 21, 2019 at The Able Trust Board of Directors’ meeting in Orlando, Florida, with the Directors acting as contest judges. Competitors were evaluated based on an eight-point scoring rubric that focuses on three main tenets – oral communication and presentation skills, evidence of research, and non-verbal communication.

The Able Trust congratulates the talented 2019 Jeannie Amendola Speech and Research Competition winners.

1st Place

Audrey Thomas,
10th Grader, Bell High School
Gilchrist County High School High Tech

2nd Place

Ziege McCrutcheon,
12th Grader, A. Philip Randolph High School
Duval County High School High Tech

3rd Place (Tie)

Marnel Jean
12th Grader, Michael Krop Senior High School
Miami-Dade High School High Tech

3rd Place (Tie)

Liam Avelino
11th Grader, Windermere High School
Orange County High School High Tech

Special thanks to everyone involved who made this year’s event a great success!
Jeannie Amendola Speech & Research Competition Regional Participants

Tallahassee Regional
Back row (L to R): Emmalee Wilkerson, Dixie County HSHT; Audrey Thomas, Gilchrist County HSHT; Jabes Bradley, Escambia County HSHT; and Sharon McSwain, East Gadsden HSHT
Front row (L to R): Mary Monroe, Wakulla County HSHT; Lynsey Wilsey, Madison HSHT; and DeeDee Webbe, Leon County HSHT

Gainesville Regional
Left to Right: Ricardo Foster, Duval County HSHT; Jaquan Bryant, Bradford County HSHT; Zeige McCrutcheon, Duval County HSHT; Myles Goodwine, Alachua County HSHT; Travis Marx, Marion County HSHT; and Samantha Newman, Levy County HSHT

Celebration Regional
Left to Right: Liam Avelino, Orange County HSHT; Edwin Ruiz, Orange County HSHT; Izzabella Ladd, Orange County HSHT; Jocel Marrero, Orange County HSHT; Armand Thomas, Lake County HSHT; and Rashelle Andrews, Polk County HSHT

Miami Regional
Left to Right: Samuel Deyan, Miami-Dade HSHT; Kaleigh Williams, Hendry/Glades HSHT; Marnel Jean, Miami-Dade HSHT; Devonte Palmer, Broward HSHT; Silvio Plata, Miami-Dade HSHT; Emily Bejerano, Miami-Dade HSHT; and Rep. Michael Grieco, House District 113
While many companies have steadily cut back on philanthropic giving, Wells Fargo continues its 167 year history of charitable giving. In 2018, Wells Fargo donated $444 million to nearly 11,000 nonprofit organizations.

The Wells Fargo Foundation, approaching its 40th anniversary in 2020, has given back to people in Florida by supporting the work of The Able Trust. Every year since 2003, the Wells Fargo Foundation has sponsored The Able Trust’s annual Youth Leadership Forum for high school students with disabilities.

When The Able Trust decided to redesign and improve the leadership program in 2018, Wells Fargo Foundation was a generous sponsor of the Leadership Retreat. This event allowed The Able Trust to gather feedback from young adults with disabilities about what skills and knowledge they thought were important now and when they first started their careers. Additionally, The Able Trust met with business leaders to garner their input into what knowledge and leadership skills they would like to see in young adults who are current or potential employees. This critical information will be used to launch the inaugural Able Trust Leadership Academy this fall, and Wells Fargo is the first corporate sponsor of this new program.

Wells Fargo has supported people with disabilities in many other ways as well. For the past several years, Wells Fargo has been named one of the Disability Equality Index (DEI) Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion.

“Diversity and inclusion is one of Wells Fargo’s five primary values that provide the foundation for everything we do,” said Kathy Martinez, head of disability and accessibility strategy at Wells Fargo. Ms. Martinez, who is blind, added, “I believe in economic empowerment, and I know Wells Fargo does too.”

The Able Trust is proud to recognize Wells Fargo Foundation as an invaluable donor, a vital partner, and a steadfast supporter of people with disabilities in Florida.

“**It is a privilege to collaborate with nonprofits in the U.S. and around the world to make a difference in the communities where we live and work.”**

- Tim Sloan, CEO and President, Wells Fargo

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**Donor Spotlight: Wells Fargo Foundation**

**Wells Fargo**

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**The Able Trust Leadership Academy**

Be a Part of the 1st Class of the Leadership Academy

**APPLY TODAY!**

Visit [www.AbleTrust.org](http://www.AbleTrust.org) and click on Leadership Academy for more information.

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*Florida Grantor 6*
The 2019 High School High Tech (HSHT) program had a graduating class of 445 seniors! This class of seniors have accomplished so much over their high school and HSHT careers. The Able Trust is excited to see what the future holds for them and is looking forward to hearing about their successes as they build upon what they learned while in HSHT. Below are just a few examples of our outstanding graduates.

Lynsey W. from Madison County HSHT was this year’s recipient of the Principal’s Award at Madison County High School (MCHS). She was MCHS’s representative for the last three years at The Able Trust’s Jeannie Amendola Speech and Research Competition. Her skills, while in Beta Club, led to her being selected as MCHS Beta Club Student of the Year for 2017-2018. She served as treasurer during her senior year and contributed to leading MCHS’s Beta Club to the Leadership Summit, which qualified the group to go to the National Beta Club Convention this summer in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Lynsey earned six industry certifications while in high school and plans to continue her education at North Florida Community College.

Cole H. from Lake County HSHT was 1 of 5 East Ridge High students who competed in Washington D.C. earlier this May against 54 other states or territories in the National ProStart Culinary Competition (after winning the state championship in March). The East Ridge High team placed 2nd in the national competition! Cole H. will be attending Johnson & Wales University beginning this August.

Miles D. from the Broward HSHT program has excelled in the Deerfield Beach High Football program and was a recipient of the Broward County High School High Tech annual scholarship. Miles will be attending Georgia State University on a football and academic scholarship.
Disability Employment Awareness Month 2019: A Call to Action

October is the start of Disability Employment Awareness Activities (DEAM) in Florida. DEAM is a successful program for developing new employer relationships, reengaging those that may be dormant, or strengthening existing ones. The Able Trust consistently receives feedback from employers about how much their staff enjoys participating and interacting with participants. Last year, over 200 Florida businesses and organizations participated in DEAM. While employment is not the goal of DEAM, a relationship developed from DEAM can quickly be turned into employment for a DEAM participant. Last year, over 1,500 Floridians with disabilities participated in DEAM.

The summer is the ideal time to begin planning for DEAM. The program’s flexibility, no risk and fun atmosphere make it a great event many businesses look forward to participating in. Individuals and companies that would like to participate in DEAM 2019 are encouraged to contact The Able Trust to get connected. The Able Trust will have marketing and promotional materials available at no-cost soon. Stay tuned to The Able Trust’s website and social media accounts to get more information on the fall DEAM kick-off at the Westin Tampa Waterside.
How might Strategic Grant Employment Placement programs in North and South Florida be similar? By implementing employment strategies that actively include the platform LinkedIn.

The Independent Living Resource Center (Jacksonville) and the Miami Dade College (Miami) have incorporated LinkedIn in pre-employment training development as a primary example of online professional networking. Staff has coached participants in how to build a profile that highlight talents, goals, interests, professional accreditations, and internship experiences as a critical step to connect with employers. By mentoring participants in the concept of Professional Branding that include the opportunity to take a professional headshot for their profile, participants gain an online polished persona.

Essential to all grants is the connection between staff and the client/student participant that enables them to discuss career goals, strategies, and work experience skills. It is essential to achieve clarity in communication so that everyone can “row the boat together” to individual career goals. LinkedIn can be an additional communication resource to translate a participant’s paper resume into a virtual online footprint. Participants and students alike are forging new connections with employers and job opportunities by adding this resource to their toolbox to gain employment.

Below are some free online resources to help maximize your LinkedIn profile.

2. https://www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-resources/
5. https://topdogsocialmedia.com/linkedin-training-resources/

**2019 Able Trust Ability Awards!**

Nominate a candidate today.
Visit www.AbleTrust.org to download a nomination packet.
Nominations must be received by Thursday, August 8, 2019.
Recent Grant Awards

The Able Trust Board of Directors recently made the following Grant Awards:

General Employment Placement Support Grants (1 year grants)

- ARC Broward (Broward), for the ARC Works, $42,000
- ARC Gateway (Santa Rosa county), for Expanding Employment Services, $42,812
- Key Clubhouse of South Florida (Miami-Dade county), for the Employment Initiative for Individuals with Mental Illness, $65,000
- Lighthouse Central Florida (Orange, Osceola & Seminole counties), for Employment Opportunities & Placement for the Blind and Visually Impaired, $65,000

Strategic Employment Placement Initiative Grants (3 year grants)

- Best Buddies, Florida (Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake, Brevard, Palm Beach, Martin, Broward, Miami-Dade, Pinellas, Pasco, Hillsborough and Manatee counties), for the Jobs Expansion Program, $250,000
- MacDonald Training Center (Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Polk counties), for Career SUCCESS, $250,000

The deadline for 2019 Strategic Employment Initiative Grant applications is Friday, September 6, 2019.

Visit www.abletrust.org and click Grant Information to learn more.
The Able Trust Leadership Academy
Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders Today

APPLY NOW!

Be a Part of the 1st Class of The Able Trust’s Leadership Academy

The Able Trust Leadership Academy is designed to encourage personal leadership development and to develop a growing cadre of young employed professionals with disabilities who use those skills as emerging leaders in their industries. Leadership Academy participants will interact with seasoned professionals serving as guest speakers and faculty.

Goal of Leadership Academy:
In an experiential learning environment, young adults with disabilities will learn about workplace leadership traits and begin to refine and develop their own leadership qualities in an effort to build on their careers.

Targeted Skills Areas for the Leadership Academy:
- Teamwork
- Communication skills
- Work ethic
- Time management
- Professionalism
- Critical thinking
- Financial acumen

Participant Criteria:
- Have a disability and be actively working
- 22-30 years old
- Active in the workforce for a minimum of 12 months
- Interest in advancing in your chosen career
- Are willing to serve as a mentor to other individuals with disabilities
- A willingness to participate and share during the Leadership Academy
- Open to new ideas and ways of thinking
- Participants will need to complete a short, web-based assignment prior to the Leadership Academy
- ALL EXPENSES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY WILL BE COVERED BY THE ABLE TRUST

The Leadership Academy will be held October 3-5, 2019, in Orlando and features a combination of lectures, panel discussions, and hands-on activities. The content is explicitly designed to help participants better understand their personal leadership style to assist with professional growth, prepare them to advance in their chosen field, and develop a network of other young professionals from around the state.

The online application can be found at www.AbleTrust.org.
Application deadline is August 16, 2019, at 5 p.m.
The Leadership Academy’s first class will be limited to 20 participants.
Notification of acceptance will be provided by September 1, 2019.

Apply now before the class fills up!
The Able Trust created the award category of “Corporate Champion” to recognize those businesses that support its mission through workforce inclusion policies, welcoming people with disabilities as customers and employees, and through financial support that has exceeded $100,000 over the years. Darden, Publix, Walt Disney World Resorts, and Wells Fargo have exemplified these traits through a strong commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce that includes workers with disabilities, and supporting organizations like The Able Trust as it strives to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. The annual support of these organizations has helped sustain Able Trust grant initiatives and other employment-related programs such as Disability Employment Awareness Month in addition to nationally-recognized youth programs such as Florida High School High Tech. The Able Trust is proud to recognize its distinguished list of Corporate Champions.
Make A Difference With Your Donation to The Able Trust!

There are many ways you can support the goals of making successful employment available to Floridians with disabilities, and a gift of any amount will make a difference. For general contributions in support of our youth, mentoring and grant programs, mail your gift with the form below 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.

Is this donation (please check one):

☐ To honor someone ____________________________________________
☐ In memory of someone _________________________________________
☐ For a special occasion _________________________________________

Name: _________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: _________________________________________________

Credit Card Type: ___________________ Credit Card Number: __________

Credit Card Expiration Date: ____________ Credit Card CSV: ______________

E-mail: _________________________________________________________

Please add me to The Able Trust’s ☐ email list  ☐ mailing list (check one or both).

The Able Trust’s 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 $41 million in grants to nonprofit agencies throughout Florida for employment-related purposes, enabling thousands of Florida citizens of all ages with disabilities to enter the workforce. The Able Trust youth programs provide career development and transition for thousands of high school students with disabilities, helping to prepare young adults for life beyond high school through post-secondary education, jobs, and leadership training.

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

2019 Ability Awards - Nominations Are Now Open

Join the Able Trust in celebrating the contributions and achievements of people and organizations that help those with disabilities create opportunities for successful employment in Florida’s job market.

Please take the time to nominate a colleague, friend, employer, client, employee, media member or company who deserves to be recognized!

The Able Trust Ability Awards ceremony will be held Friday morning, September 20, 2019 in Tampa, FL.

Go to www.abletrust.org to download a Nomination Packet. Nominations must be received by Thursday, August 8, 2019.

THE AWARDS

The Able Trust’s annual Ability Awards recognize individuals, non-profit agencies, employers and other organizations that have made outstanding contributions toward providing employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities. There are five categories of the Able Trust Ability Awards open for nominations each year. Each award has its own criteria and application form. These can be found in the Nomination Packet. Before you write your nomination, please make sure you read the nomination guidelines description for each award.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program
The Beverly Chapman Award provides recognition and high visibility for outstanding job placement programs for persons with disabilities in Florida. This award is presented to a Florida nonprofit disability organization.

Dr. George L. Spelios Leadership Award
This award recognizes the outstanding leadership and advocacy efforts of an executive director or president of a Florida nonprofit disability organization.

Media Representative Award
Media plays a vital role in the public’s perception of individuals, products and services, especially for the disability community. This award honors an individual member of the media or a media organization for excellence in presenting and/or reporting about people with disabilities.

Employer of the Year Award
This award recognizes businesses of all sizes that have an exceptional record of disability friendly practices, including hiring persons with disabilities, making reasonable accommodations and demonstrating efforts beyond simple compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended.

Adult Leadership Award
This award will be presented to an adult over age 21 with a disability. This individual exhibits community and nonprofit leadership, is employed full time or part time and serves in a volunteer leadership position with a local organization. (e.g. nonprofit board member, community committee member, commission council, etc.).

Nominate a candidate today! Nominations must be received by Thursday, August 8, 2019. Visit www.abletrust.org to download a nomination packet.
The Able Trust Alumni Association is a voluntary, organized group of people with disabilities over the age of 18. It was established by The Able Trust and is designed to maintain connections between program participants and The Able Trust. Members of the Alumni Association actively support the mission of The Able Trust.

Mission
The Able Trust Alumni Association works to advance the mission of The Able Trust by providing networking opportunities and highlighting successful employment skills to support leadership development among alumni.

Membership Criteria
Participants in The Able Trust’s Alumni Association must meet the following criteria:
- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Be a high school graduate or have a graduate equivalency; and
- Be a past participant in an Able Trust program such as High School High Tech, the Leadership Academy, Youth Leadership Forum, or one of the many community-based or post-secondary Able Trust supported programs.

Join Us
If you meet the above qualifications and would like to become a member of The Able Trust Alumni Association, please go to www.abletrust.org, click on “About Us,” and then click on “Alumni Association” and fill out the online application.

Benefits of Being a Member:
- Membership is FREE
- Connect with old friends and meet new ones
- Networking
- Access to professional development
- Keep up with what’s happening at The Able Trust
- Stay connected to the current activities and resources of The Able Trust
- Get information on disability employment issues and opportunities
- Receive The Florida Grantor, The Able Trust’s Annual Report, and other regular communications
- Learn about new programs

The Able Trust Alumni Association
3320 Thomasville Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, FL 32308
850.224.4493 | AbleTrust.org | @AbleTrust | Info@AbleTrust.org

Join today by visiting:
AbleTrust.org > About Us > Alumni Association
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 non-cash property, your deduction may depend on the type of property proposed for gifting. Please call us to discuss the treatment of your gift and the best way to transfer your property to us.

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