

Alabama APSE

THE INDEPENDENCE

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This Special Edition Newsletter Features the winners of the 2010 AL-APSE Awards.

Please take time to learn more about each winner and why they were selected in their category.

It's not too early to begin considering who you might nominate for a 2011 award!!!

When you have pains in life,
always remember this:

PAINS:

P - Positive
A - Approach
I - In
N - Negative
S - Situations

-Author Unknown

2010 CONFERENCE ☐ ..*SUCCESS!!*

The 2010 AL-APSE Conference, co-hosted by the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, was a huge success! Approximately 250 individuals attended this year's event held at the Montgomery Renaissance Hotel and Spa at the Convention Center. The conference got off to a great start with a pre-conference day on June 23. Denise Bissonnette was the guest speaker. Her presentation was titled "Beyond Traditional Job Development...The Art of Creating Opportunity". She wowed the crowd with her unique delivery which was packed with passion and enthusiasm. Denise recited poetry and told personal stories throughout her presentation which left the attendees mesmerized and wanting more. That's just what attendees got the following day when Denise provided the opening keynote, followed by three breakout sessions. Those that completed the conference evaluation gave Denise some



Attendees listen closely to Denise Bissonnette

of the highest marks ever for an AL-APSE presenter.

After completing her Masters Degree in Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco, Denise began to work in ESL programs. Her early literacy work with political refugees drew her to the difficulties that they faced

in trying to establish themselves in the American workplace. In response, she made a career change and became a Job Developer – working with employers to secure jobs for people from groups that were not traditionally part of the workforce. (Cont'd Page 2

BARBARA DOOLEY BRINGS LAUGHTER TO APSE

"Humor is infectious. The sound of roaring laughter is far more contagious than any cough, snuffle, or sneeze. When laughter is shared, it binds people together and increases happiness and intimacy". That's just what Barbara Dooley accomplished at this year's conference as



she provided the closing keynote. Her address was filled with funny stories about her family and her life as wife of legendary football coach Vince Dooley. Her closing remarks were a perfect ending for a great conference.



AL-APSE

Seeks Board Members

To fill current vacancies

For more information
email AL-APSE at

alabamaapse@aol.com

Must be a member of
APSE and have time to
participate and work!.

This is a
WORKING Board!!



**He has achieved
success who has
worked well, laughed
often, and loved
much.**

- Elbert Hubbard

AL-APSE & ACDD RING IN A NEW DECADE

Conference planners selected "AL-APSE & ACDD 2010....A New Decade of Success" as the theme for this year's conference. The theme was in keeping with the partnership between the two organizations that began in 1998. The partnership has resulted in an overall improvement in employment services for individuals experiencing significant disabilities in Alabama. The number of employment outcomes increased each year from 1999 - 2009.

Also, the training curricula, resources, technical assistance and other services available as a result of this partnership have greatly enhanced the quality of supported employment in Alabama.

Conference attendees enjoyed a "New Decade" party following the annual AL-APSE awards presentations. The event was complete with food and party favors and music by Rev Rock and the Rhythm Band!



**Debra Williams helps ring in
Decade 2010**

DENISE BISSONNETTE CONT'D

Her extraordinary success as a job developer led to requests for her to share her expertise with other practitioners and organizations. Soon, as a partner in the firm of Milt Wright & Associates, Denise was in demand throughout North America - delivering seminars to Job Developers and Employment Specialists throughout the Employment and Training field.

Denise's job search curriculum, **Pathways**, became a cornerstone for the placement services of many social service agencies and educational systems. Her book **Beyond Traditional Job Development** stands as the definitive text for job development professionals throughout the continent. Denise's early program **Crossroads** and the later **Cultivating the Spirit to Work**

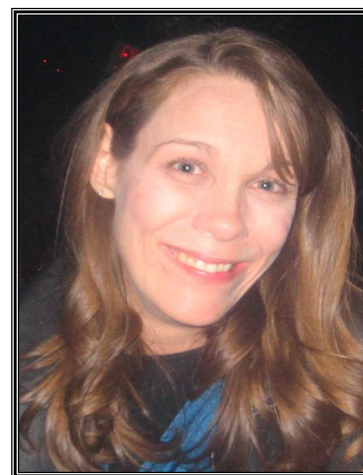
respond to the "motivational" issues encountered in clients of placement services. Her revolutionary concept of "activity-based placement" led to the development of the comprehensive **Cultivating True Livelihood** curriculum.

Denise's new **30 Ways to Shine as a New Employee** is a proactive response to emerging job retention issues.

JULIE PETTY A MESSAGE ON ADVOCACY

Julie Petty presented a keynote address at the AL-APSE & ACDD Conference from a self-advocate's perspective as she is an accomplished self-advocate and person with a disability. Julie has worked extensively in leadership roles to improve policy and has served on nationally recognized committees for self-advocacy. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas with a

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and has been a leader in the self-advocacy movement in Arkansas and nationally for several years. In 1998, she established Arkansas People First and helped it grow statewide. Julie joined the staff at Partners for Inclusive Communities, the Arkansas UCED, in August of 2009 where she works on various projects to educate people with disabilities.



AL-APSE AWARD WINNERS 2010

Individuals from across the state traveled to Montgomery on Thursday evening, June 24th for the annual AL-APSE awards presentations. The award categories included Personal Achievement in small and large businesses, Large and Small Employers, Family of the Year, Professional and Leadership awards and Agency of the Year. Winners in each category are featured on pages 3 - 6.



The **Arc of Tuscaloosa County** was the winner of the Jim Green Supported Employment Agency of the Year. Pictured from left to right, Cynthia Foster, Bill Niblett, Diane Morrow, and Mary Guyton. Standing in the back is Tim Green, Project Coordinator. The award is named in memory of Tim's dad who served as the Project Coordinator at the Arc for many years prior to his untimely death in 2004.

PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR.... *MARY ROTH*



Dedication is just one of the many words that can be used to describe Mary's passion for promoting people with special needs into employment positions within the community. For nearly 15 years, she's been employed as a Work Instructor at DABBS, a technical academy affiliated with Shades Valley High School. She works to empower children needing more instructional assistance and help with functional living skills. In addition to educating students, she gets very involved in the education of employers about the abilities and qualities her students possess.

Mary believes that there is a job for everyone. She is so creative in accomplishing this with all of her students. She knows all of her children's parents by their first name and they all have her cell number.

AL-APSE President's Award 2010

Senator Lowell Barron

Pictured Right: **Latricia Mitchell** accepts the AL-APSE President's Award from AL-APSE Co-President Byron White on behalf of Senator Lowell Barron who was unable to attend the event. Senator Barron who represents the 8th District, DeKalb, Jackson and Madison Counties has been a strong supporter of AL-APSE over the years. In addition, he is approachable and always willing to discuss how he may assist with improving and expanding employment services for people with disabilities. AL-APSE appreciates Senator Barron's support and was honored to present him the 2010 President's Award.



**AL-APSE
2011
Visit**

www.al-apse.org
for
training
and
conference
information
updates!

*"Winners are not those
who never fail,
but those who never quit"*

-Unknown



Alabama APSE
congratulates Tina
Dortch on her
appointment as the
ADRS Supported
Employment Coordinator.
Tina has worked for
ADRS for several years
and recently served as a
rehabilitation counselor
in Autauga County.



Mary Taylor has been employed at the Walter J. Hanna Memorial Library in Fairfield since October, 1992. Co-workers and supervisors at the library wrote that as long as they have known Mary, for almost 18 years, she has been an inspiration. Even though she often experiences pain and discomfort, you would never know it. She always has a smile on her face and provides excellent customer service to library patrons. Another co-worker wrote that Mary is the most dedicated and respectful person and her character and personality surpass most people who have no disability. She never misses work except for medical appointments. For her long term employment and dedication, as well as her amazing work ethic, Mary Taylor received an **AL-APSE Personal Achievement award**. AL-APSE Co-President, Beth Hanks, presented Mary's award. Mary had guests attend the ceremony, including her supervisor.

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT WINNERS LARGE BUSINESS 2010



Phillip Ward's road to success has been somewhat rocky. His Rehabilitation Counselor quoted Booker T. Washington's "Success is measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed". He hasn't always had a place to call home. After losing his mother, other family support was literally non-existent at times. Resulting personal issues, many of which he had no control, contributed to him having difficulty maintaining employment. At one time he worked for Burger King and there were days he would literally walk 8 miles to work due to no transportation. However, his motivation and perseverance for a better life paid off. He is now working 36 – 48 hours per week at Maples Rugs. Despite all the setbacks and challenges that Phillip Ward has faced, he has proven that an excellent attitude, determination and seriousness about work will pay off. Congratulations Phillip on your selection as an **AL-APSE Personal Achievement winner in a large business.**

If you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride - and never quit, you'll be a winner. The price of victory is high but so are the rewards.

Paul Bryant



Robin Doss became involved with the Arc of Walker County's Day Program at its inception. When the Arc began providing supported employment, Robin Doss was among the Arc's first job placements into competitive employment. She has been working ever since. She has been employed at Drummond Coal Company for the past 11 years. Robin doesn't let Down syndrome hold her back. She lives as independently as possible, sharing her home with another young lady. Robin is a fine example of where one's inner strength can take you. Her long-term goal is to continue to work independently, continue her employment at Drummond Company, and continue to be involved in community activities, church, Special Olympics, and People First. For the eleven successful years of employment at Drummond Company Robin Doss was selected as an **AL-APSE employee of the Year in a Large Business.**

AL-APSE Brenda McComb Leadership Award 2010

Judy Barclay has been an advocate for people with disabilities and their families for many years, beginning when she began to struggle with her own journey as the parent of a daughter with a significant disability. She has carried her daughter's dream into the lives of her classmates and friends, assisting them as they too seek independence and full lives. Upon the untimely death of her daughter, Judy turned her tragedy into a triumph for her community, working tirelessly with parents and families and eventually co-founding the Full Life Ahead Foundation.

Today, Judy can be found in her office in Birmingham, on the road traveling for presentations, providing much needed hope and information to parents, negotiating partnerships to assist people in accessing and fully involving their community to achieve their goals. Her ever present cell phone rings constantly as she counsels people and their families. She is NEVER too busy to jump into a problem with both feet to seek a solution.

Her passion is contagious. Her ability to network and bring people together to create successful outcomes stems from her sincere dedication to seeing people with disabilities succeed and realize their dreams. She has been instrumental in the successes of so many people and a true leader in the field. AL-APSE was pleased to recognize Judy Barclay as the **2010 Leadership award winner.**



AL-APSE SMALL EMPLOYER 2010



Mary Guyton accepted the AL-APSE Small Employer of the Year Award on behalf of **Dreamland BBQ** of Tuscaloosa. Dreamland has partnered with the Arc of Tuscaloosa County for several years and has hired numerous individuals with special needs. The General Manager and his staff provide natural supports to ensure that the employees are successful at their jobs and have a work environment that promotes their inclusion as team members. Their flexibility has allowed for accommodations for flexible scheduling when necessary. Further, the general manager also takes interest in the lives of his employees, assisting with employee needs outside the job. For their successful partnership with the Arc of Tuscaloosa which has resulted in numerous employment opportunities to citizens with disabilities in Tuscaloosa, Dreamland BBQ was selected as the **Alabama APSE Small Employer Winner**.

We're On The Web
WWW.AL-APSE.ORG

AL-APSE LARGE EMPLOYER 2010



When so many letters come in from individuals who've been touched by the generosity of an individual, it's hard not to recognize them. This year's large employer has been a strong supporter of Shelby County students with special needs for several years. He shows this not only in hiring students with mental and physical challenges, but by donating, sponsoring and participating in events for these students. This relationship began 6 years ago. Since that time, 8 students from Shelby county schools with significant disabilities have been employed. Also, he allows students to come into any of his restaurants during the school hours to gain employment experiences. He has opened the doors to dozens of students over the years. It's apparent he would love to hire them all. The nominator for this award indicated that she has never seen him turn down one student for experience, regardless of the severity of their disability. He finds something for everyone to do.

He is a great ambassador for the Shelby County transition program. He speaks on their behalf at Chambers of Commerce meetings, and encourages others to employ students with special needs. For these reasons and more, **Keith Richards** owner of Taziki's Restaurants and Baha Burger Restaurants was selected as the **AL-APSE Large Employer**.

Get involved in Alabama APSE.
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