

the Independence



AL-APSE

www.al-apse.org

Summer 2005

Mobile, Alabama was the site of the 16th annual APSE conference July 24 - 27, 2005. This conference marked the largest attendance in recent years and the first time that a state chapter actually planned and hosted the conference. Individuals from all 50 states as well as Puerto Rico, Australia and Canada attended the conference. Byron White, AL-APSE President credited the success of this conference to the hard work of the Board members and the many volunteers from the Mobile area. Highlights of the conference included the themed awards banquet, "A Night at the Oscars". This event scored almost a perfect rating on the overall conference evaluation form. In addition to the awards that were presented to individuals from across the U.S. for their outstanding success, individuals and companies that helped to sponsor the event were recognized. Also, AL-APSE dedicated the banquet to the memory of Mr. Jim Green and Mr. Charles "Chuck" Sheehan, two active Board members whose lives ended in 2004. To keep their memory alive, the Alabama APSE Supported Employment Agency of the Year Award has been renamed in Jim Green's honor. In addition, Alabama APSE will begin awarding a scholarship to an individual with a disability that seeks higher training beginning in 2006. The scholarship will be named the Charles "Chuck" Sheehan Scholarship. AL-APSE will conduct fund raisers to support the scholarship and Chuck's former employer, United Cerebral Palsy of Mobile, will provide match money.



Celane McWhorter & Byron White

Celane McWhorter, APSE Executive Director and Byron White, AL-APSE President put their heads together to prepare for the APSE awards ceremony that was held on the evening of July 25. Awards were presented in eight categories and three of the national winners were from Alabama. Please see page 2 for a listing of the local winners.

It appears that with such a successful awards banquet this year, the adage that two heads are better than one must be true.

For more conference photos, check out www.myshotz.instaproofs.com

Click on National APSE Conference



APSE Professional Award: **Cindy Vinson** is dependable, creative, and innovative and truly cares for and supports the students she works with as a transition job coach. She will use whatever means and resources are available to help her students reach their goals. She co-authored a grant which is being utilized to help pay wages for students in training. When one of her students drove a golf cart into the water at an exclusive golf course, she advocated with the employer to have the student placed at another job. She is a source of hope for students who often had little encouragement before they met her. (Award presented by Suzy Hutcheson APSE President)



Personal Achievement: **William Sampley** has been receiving services through the Arc of Jackson County for almost 16 years. Over the years, he's had several jobs which he lost due to attendance and behavior issues. He lived in a group training home for a time but set a goal to move into his own apartment. He met this goal with the wages he earns at Carrier where he works full time. He is now living in an apartment with a pool and tennis courts. He has made many purchases to furnish his apartment, including his prized possession, a 52" television. He has taught many of his coworkers to communicate in sign language. He is currently saving toward a beach vacation and hopes to one day have his own home and vehicle. (Award presented by Celane McWhorter, Exec. Dir.)



APSE Employer of the Year: **Maples Industries** is the largest employer in Jackson County with over 2000 employees. Maples hired many employees with disabilities even before supported employment was funded on the state or national level, and provided natural supports for those employees who needed them. They also act as a situational assessment site for the local SE provider. Individuals placed here receive competitive wages and benefits and most jobs are full time. Possibly most indicative of their support for individuals with disabilities is the fact that the plant manager, Larry Bailey is also the board president of the local Arc. He accepted the award for Maples.



Even the lovely Paula Abdul, along with Randy Jackson and Simon Cowell couldn't miss the first ever APSE Idol contest. Congratulations to this year's winner, Mr. Daniel Ray. For those of you that missed this event, you missed the shocking truth that Paula Abdul is really a blonde.

"A life enriched by work"

Condensed from an article by Tamara L. O'Shaughnessy

The next time you can't bear the thought of going in to work, think of Kevin.



A Picture Worth a 1000 Words
Kevin Celebrates His Win

When his parents divorced, 8-month-old Kevin and his mom landed in his grandparents' loving Hammond, Indiana home. But by the time he reached toddlerhood, Kevin became shy, withdrawn and unable to speak. Doctors' diagnosis: Autism. His mother's wish was that Kevin would be independent enough to get a job and live on his own. After his mother's death, his grandmother, Shirley, knew she had to fulfill that wish no matter how difficult it was for her. So Kevin moved out of the only home he ever knew and into a supported-living apartment nearby. When he first arrived at Arc BRIDGES, he was happiest being isolated from others, rarely making eye contact or speaking. But soon he wanted to make money like the others he saw bragging about their paychecks. "Make money," he said, ducking his head to his shoulder, but keeping an ever-present smile. That's his favorite expression, those closest to him say. Still, some questioned whether Kevin would ever leave the jobs inside BRIDGES for something more. "Although a lot of people were pretty skeptical, Kevin really went through a lot of things to prove he wanted to be out in the community working," said Margo Love-Surprise, job development coordinator at BRIDGES. He got his first job last September, delivering a weekly newspaper in Highland. But he's done more than just get a job. He's become more outspoken, solves problems and shows a sense of humor hiding behind his struggle to talk. He does baseball and bowling and goes horseback riding every Monday night -- and Shirley Roberts is always there. She was also there when Kevin recently won the personal achievement award through Indiana APSE, the Association for Persons in Supported Employment. She was there again when Kevin hopped on an airplane for his first plane ride. On July 25th he traveled to Mobile to receive the first ever entrepreneurship award given through national APSE. "I did not ever think it would come to this," his grandmother said. Love-Surprise and Sandra Hudson, direct support professionals and follow along coaches for BRIDGES, nominated him after watching his transformation. "He's so happy to get to work," Hudson said. He doesn't care if it's raining, shining, snowing, storming because "we have to deliver the papers in all kinds of weather". And Kevin really wants to deliver his papers. The city of Hammond rallied around Kevin to make the Mobile trip possible. The Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, the Urban Enterprise Association, local businesses and individuals helped pay for "Kevin's big trip." Even though he was excited to make the trip, he didn't stay long because he couldn't wait to get back to work to "make money".

Alabama APSE congratulates Kevin!!!

SE Funding Update

The language below is from the Senate Appropriations Committee Report describing funding for the SE State Grant program. The good news is that the program will continue for yet another year, assuming the House and Senate complete work on the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. The

bad news is that the Senate, like the House, cut the program by \$7.6million. This means as the bill goes to conference to iron out differences between the two bills; ours will not be one that is subject to discussion. They both have funded it at the same level, \$30 million. We will be monitoring the bill to make sure that it makes it through conference and to the President for his signature, and then we will begin our work to guard against anymore losses to the program for FY 2007.

Thanks for all of the hard work on this issue. Please continue contacts with your federal legislators to make sure they know about SE anytime it comes before them for a decision.

From the Senate Report:

The Committee's bill includes \$30,000,000 for the supported employment State grant program. The comparable fiscal year 2005 funding level is\$37,379,000 and the administration proposes eliminating separate funding for this program. "This program assists the most severely disabled individuals by providing the ongoing support needed to obtain competitive employment. Short-term vocational rehabilitation services are augmented with extended services provided by State and local organizations. Federal funds are distributed on the basis of population."

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