

Chuck Sheehan Scholarship Fund

In Recognition of a Remarkable Life...



We, the Alabama Association for Persons in Supported Employment hereby endow the Charles Sheehan Scholarship, to be awarded annually to an individual with a disability seeking higher learning. In memory of our colleague and friend Charles "Chuck" Sheehan continuing his vision of independence for all people.

*Presented to his parents,
Mr. & Mrs. James Sheehan
on this the 25th Day of July, 2005.*

The Alabama chapter of APSE suffered a profound loss last December with the passing of Chuck Sheehan, long time AL-APSE board member and Supported Employment Coordinator at UCP of Mobile. To honor his service to APSE and supported employment, The Board of Directors has endowed a training scholarship in his name. When AL-APSE announced this endowment at the national conference in July, UCP of Mobile came forward with a pledge to provide matching funds. Look for more details and application instructions in future AL-APSE newsletters.



INTERESTED IN MAKING A DONATION?

Complete the form below and mail to Lisa Alford,
P. O. BOX 1610, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Amount _____

Check out our website: www.al-apse.org



AL-APSE
8228 Royal Oak Court
Montgomery, AL 36117

*Blessed are those that can give without remembering
and receive without forgetting.*

—Author Unknown



AL-APSE Independence

NOVEMBER 2005

THE NETWORK ON EMPLOYMENT

Birmingham Bound



After six years in south Alabama, AL-APSE moves north for the 2006 state conference. Mark your calendars for August 9th through 11th, when we will meet at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham. Your board is already hard at work on planning the agenda. We look forward to seeing you in the Magic City!



DONATIONS ANYONE!!!

Would you like to make a contribution to the Sheehan Scholarship, please see page 4 for further details.



Accessing Supported Employment & Best Practices in Supported Employment

Job Coach Training
January 25–27, 2006
Montgomery

Applications for Training
Contact: *Byron White*
(334) 613-3527
or
www.al-apse.org

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Alabama APSE enjoyed a very successful year. Thanks to the work of many individuals throughout the state, our chapter was in the spotlight as a result of serving as the host state for the 2005 APSE conference. We really did experience a dream come true. Our membership numbers grew to more than 200. We hope that each of you will continue to be an active part of this great organization as we work to expand and improve employment opportunities for people with the most severe disabilities.

As we prepare for one of the busiest times of the year, the AL-APSE Board hopes that each of you will:

*Count your blessings instead of your crosses;
Count your gains instead of your losses.
Count your joys instead of your woes;
Count your friends instead of your foes.
Count your smiles instead of your tears;
Count your courage instead of your fears.
Count your full years instead of your lean;
Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.
Count your health instead of your wealth;
Count on God instead of yourself.*

Author Unknown



Stress, Depression and the Holidays: 12 tips for coping



Three issues that commonly trigger holiday stress or depression are: **Relationships, Finances, and Physical Demands.** Some practical tips you can use to minimize the stress and depression are:

AL-APSE
President's Award



Byron White has selected Judy Barclay as the 2005 winner of the AL-APSE President's Award. Judy currently serves on both the state and national APSE Boards. She is founder of The Full Life Ahead Foundation and works closely with individuals and families to help them make a smooth transition from school to adult life. In recent years, she has successfully planned and hosted APSE conference tracks targeted specifically for individuals with disabilities and their family members. **Congratulations Judy and thanks for all you do!**

Acknowledge your feelings: It's ok now and then to take time just to cry or express your feelings of sadness that sometimes comes with the holidays as you remember those that are no longer with you.

Seek support: Seek out family, friends and the community for companionship and support.

Be realistic: As families grow, traditions often change as well. Understand that you may not be able to spend the holidays with your entire extended family.

Set differences aside: Try to accept family and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to your expectations.

Stick to a budget: Before you begin shopping, decide how much you can afford to spend and stick with it. Plan ahead: Set aside specific days to shop, bake, visit family and friends and participate in other holiday activities.

Learn to say no: Believe it or not, people will understand if you can't do certain projects or activities during the holiday season.

Don't abandon healthy habits: Don't let the holidays become a dietary free-for-all.

Take a breather: While you may not have time for a "silent night", make some time for yourself.

Rethink resolutions: Resolutions can set you up for failure if they're unrealistic.

Forget about perfection: Holiday TV specials are filled with happy endings, but in real life, people don't usually resolve problems within an hour or two.

Seek professional help if you need it: Talk to your doctor or mental health professional if despite your best efforts, the depression and stress don't fade.

For more information on coping with holiday depression and stress go to: www.mayoclinic.com

AL-APSE Welcomes Three New Board Members

Todd Perkins

Mobile

Todd currently serves as Director of Adult/Youth Services for United Cerebral Palsy of Mobile and has been on the front lines of supported employment since 1989.

Latricia Mitchell

Rainsville

Latricia currently serves as Program Coordinator/ Employment Specialist for North Alabama Family Services. She has been involved with working with persons with disabilities since 1995.

Diane Shields

Birmingham

Diane serves as a strong advocate for persons with disabilities and knows first hand the value that work adds in the stages of recovery for individuals experiencing a mental illness.



AL-APSE SALUTE TO SUCCESS



My name is Diane Shields. In 2001, I woke up in the intensive care unit of a local hospital. I had attempted to take my own life. It wasn't my first attempt, but it was nearly my last. My family made the difficult decision to have me involuntarily committed to a psychiatric facility. My life had reached the point where I was stuck in a deep dark hole.

I had always felt that something just wasn't right for most of my life. Like many others with a diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder, I became an accomplished actress. I hid many things about myself, my drinking, my promiscuity, my eating disorder, the voices, the visions, everything. To those around me, I was "normal."

I graduated from nursing school in 1988. I worked up until 1995. My specialty was open heart intensive care, a highly stressful position. The manic episodes helped me to function quite well. My outward appearances were certainly deceiving.

In 1994, I was stalked by an abusive partner. After leaving him, he invaded my home and kept me prisoner for three days. I was repeatedly raped and beaten and tied up in a closet. After convincing him to untie me, I tried to escape. He caught me and beat my skull into a concrete porch until I blacked out. I woke up and he was gone. I sent him to prison, but I was never the same. The fragile thread holding my sanity together finally broke. Six short months after that, I was living

on the edges of society. I went from making \$60,000 per year as a nurse to being a non-person, homeless and sleeping in my car. A friend helped to get me into a homeless shelter where I met a wonderful volunteer. She allowed me to move into her home. I was really drinking a lot at this time and doing things just to get by.

I couldn't function as a nurse at this time so I let my license lapse. I found a job in 1999 at a hotel, working in housekeeping. I met my now ex-husband there. After we got married, I took a serious nosedive. I didn't even leave my house for over a year. I had numerous stressors upon me at this time. As a result, I again ended up hospitalized.

After leaving Bryce Psychiatric Hospital in May 2001, I moved into a transitional home with JBS Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority. In October of 2001, I was approached by a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor about a job within the day treatment facility. Little did I know how much that one encounter would impact my life. I began working as a van driver. I would transport consumers to NA/AA meetings. Over the next two years, I advanced to become a kitchen/janitorial supervisor. While doing this, I became involved with APSE. I was selected as Alabama APSE's *Employee of the year* for 2003. In October, 2003, I applied for the position of Mental Health Tech with JBS. I am still working in this capacity today. I have even worked in the same transitional home where I once lived. In July

2004, I received the National APSE *Personal Achievement*

Award. I have spoken and conducted training at both state and national APSE conferences.

Returning to work has been essential in my recovery. As I look at the major turning points on my road to recovery, I give credit to many individuals. The support and services of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, JBS Mental Health Authority and Alabama APSE have been very instrumental in just how far I've come.

Today, I'm happy to report that as of October 2005, I've had my nursing license reinstated. I'm looking forward to continuing to work in the mental health field as an RN. I've also been accepted to a local University to major in Psychology. Finally, I'm happy to report that I'm the newest Board member of Alabama APSE. My goal in life is to share my story and the benefits of my experiences with others. Thank you for allowing me to share the story of Diane Shields both as a professional and consumer of services. Many of you that read this article impact the lives of others in various ways. The work you do may just be the difference that someone like me needed at a very critical time in my life. Thank you!

