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The Independence

Alabama APSE, The Network On Employment

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Economy Puts Damper on Funding For Disabilities

The economy is hitting everyone these days, but individuals with disabilities are feeling the downturn more than most. From Medicaid to housing, funds for government programs that support people with disabilities are on the chopping block across the country. Here's a look at the situation:

- In Colorado, an initiative to raise the state's sales tax in order to reduce the waiting list for services for people with disabilities was defeated. The poor economy made voters skittish about raising taxes, supporters said.
- Across the country Medicaid programs are being cut just as more people need them.
- Florida is cutting home care benefits for 7,500 residents with developmental disabilities.
- Nevada is scaling back home care services, limiting the number of children it will accept into a state autism treatment program and the state is cutting the amount it will pay doctors who treat patients covered by Medicaid. That means it will likely become harder to find doctors who accept government provided health coverage
- South Carolina's Department of Disabilities and Special Needs is facing a 12 percent budget cut and is postponing plans to expand its housing program.
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There is one sliver of good news to be had. Starting in January, Social Security payments are increasing by 5.8 percent. www.disabilitycoop.com

*Employment
for All
A Celebration in
the City of
Festivals!*

June 30 - July 2,
2009
Hyatt Regency
Downtown
Milwaukee

Mark Your Calendar!!
June 24— 26, 2009
Montgomery Renaissance Hotel



AL-APSE & ACDD
Present:
“Blazing New Trails”

Approval pending for CE's in Counseling, Social Work and Nursing



Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Organizations (WIPA)

WIPA projects are community-based organizations that receive grants from SSA to provide all Social Security and SSI disability beneficiaries (including transition-to-work aged youth) with free access to work incentives planning and assistance. Each WIPA project has counselors called Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWIC). The **Alabama Work Incentives Network (Ala-WIN)** is one such project providing these services.

A Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) will:

Help you plan how to use work incentives or other benefits for a successful return to work

Provide information about Social Security work incentives and other programs such as food stamps, housing, etc....

Answer your questions about how work would affect your health insurance, individual disability benefits, and other benefits you may receive from Federal, State, and local programs

Discuss your individual employment goals, including possible barriers and the resources or services you would need to overcome any barriers. A community work incentives coordinator (CWIC) can also help you find those resources and services

Help you work with your local Social Security Office to put in place the work incentives that you need

Help you use your Ticket to Work and find the Employment Network that is right for you

For more information visit: www.alawin.org or call **866-259-1745**



Full Life Ahead Foundation of HOPE Presents

Winter Family Weekend Retreat February 6–8, 2009

3-D's you will learn over the weekend:

1. DISCOVER YOUR "HOPE"
2. DEVELOP YOUR "HOPE" TEAM FOR A LIFETIME
3. DETERMINE TO MAKE "HOPE A REALITY"

For more information or to register, go to our website at:

www.FullLifeAhead.org
contact:

Lisa Manly (205) 261-1235 or (866) 700-2026
Judy Barclay (205) 222-1969

Focus on Taylor

Taylor Pike was born with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalia which presented physical odds to overcome from birth. Learning how to walk without crutches was a real struggle for Taylor. However, his motivation and determination enabled him to graduate from high school, attend college and become an accomplished guitarist. Unfortunately though, Taylor was teased by his peers throughout school and this resulted in poor self esteem and self confidence.

Determined to obtain employment, Taylor sought assistance from the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Achievement Center – Easter Seals. The Achievement Center quickly recognized that their challenge would be to provide Taylor positive feedback in a non judgmental environment. This was needed to help him realize his true potential and shift from being a once shy and introverted young man to a secure young man ready to take on new tasks.

Presently, Taylor is a Customer Service Assistant with Alligare, LLC in Opelika. His job tasks include sorting and filing customer invoices and accounts payables, matching paperwork to be mailed with invoices/payable and inputting data into Excel spreadsheets. Also, he is providing telephone customer service. The Alligare team considers it a pleasure to have Taylor in their office and have been impressed with his great willingness to learn new processes and start new projects. Congratulations Taylor!

Congratulations Taylor on your success!



Spotlight on Employer



The Parker Group, Inc., a telemarketing company located in Birmingham, AL, has been a remarkable employer of individuals with disabilities. They have opened the door of employment tailoring the responsibilities of their operational needs to meet the needs of those who want to be in a working environment. The Parker Group is an ideal employer because they focus on the abilities of each person rather than limitations. They go out of their way to accommodate an individual if necessary – working with employees on their weekly scheduling and transportation needs, to getting the appropriate equipment to help them do their job effectively.

Cari Jansen, who started working for The Parker Group in September, says she “likes working there because they are very nice about working with me on my schedule. The supervisors take the time to help me if I have any questions and even allow me to bring in a back massager to help my back while I work. It’s a great place to work.”

Carolyn Sanders, an Employment Specialist at UCP of Greater Birmingham who has worked with employees of The Parker Group, states “It is a good place for people who come to work with little to no experience, because the staff at The Parker Group takes the time to provide support and make accommodations if necessary. They help each person along the way so the individual can become a valuable employee and gain greater independence. They give people an opportunity to develop social skills and to learn how to be a part of the working world.”

The Parker Group, Inc. has recently been acknowledged for their efforts by being nominated for the Small Employer of the Year Award at the 29th Annual National Disability Employment Awareness Awards Luncheon in Birmingham, Alabama in October 2008. They were nominated for their ability to recruit, accommodate, employ and retain employees with disabilities. The Parker Group recognizes the value of having a diversified employee population and work with several agencies to help them recruit for their staffing needs. They see it as a necessity to ensure their business continues to thrive. Good Job Parker Group. Enjoy the spotlight!

Meet a 2009 AL-APSE & ACDD Conference Keynote

Victoria Maxwell (**Crazy for Life Co.**[™]) is one of North America’s most sought-after educators and speakers on the ‘lived’ experience of mental illness and recovery, reducing stigma, improving therapeutic alliance and adherence and addressing workplace mental illness.

Creative Director of **Crazy for Life Co.**[™] and an award-winning actress and playwright with over 18 years experience, Victoria has worked alongside David Duchovny, John Travolta and Johnny Depp, among others.

After her diagnosis of bipolar disorder, anxiety & psychosis, she became extremely proactive in her recovery. She combines her theater background, personal experience of psychiatric illness & professional knowledge as a group facilitator & mental health worker, to give a unique & powerful insider’s perspective on dealing with depression & other mental illnesses.

Her critically acclaimed one-woman show **Crazy for Life**, her true-life story about accepting and living with a psychiatric disorder, tours internationally to sold-out audiences and rave reviews. Recent runs include Toronto, England, and New Zealand. **Crazy for Life** recently captured the Moondance International Film Festival award for best stage play in Colorado and the Gordon Armstrong Theatre Award. As well her efforts have won honours as a finalist at the Canadian National Playwriting Competition and the Courage to Comeback Award. She is also featured in the Knowledge Network ‘Living with Depression’ and numerous national magazines.

Crazy for Life Co.[™] programs provide health providers with key insights to make them more effective in their jobs, assists employers to recognize employee depression early and enhance workplace wellness. Her highly anticipated second play **Funny...You Don’t Look Crazy!?** premiered in both Canada and the US and continues to tour throughout North America to capacity audiences.

Make your plans to meet Victoria at this year’s conference, June 24–26, 2009 at the Marriott Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery.

Training Opportunities

<p><i>February 4, 2009, Mobile</i> <i>9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.</i> <i>Alabama Department of Rehabilitation</i> <i>Services Office</i> <i>2419 Gordon Smith Drive</i> <i>Mobile, AL 36617</i></p>	<p><i>February 5, 2009, Montgomery</i> <i>9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.</i> <i>AIDT</i> <i>One Technology Court</i> <i>Montgomery, Alabama 36116-3200</i> <i>Phone: (334) 242-4158</i></p>
<p><i>February 18, 2009, Huntsville</i> <i>9:00a.m. – 3:00 p.m.</i> <i>Alabama Department of Rehabilitation</i> <i>Services Office</i> <i>3000 Johnson Road, SW</i> <i>Huntsville, AL 35805-5847</i></p>	<p><i>February 19, 2009, Birmingham</i> <i>9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.</i> <i>Aldersgate United Methodist Church</i> <i>2701 Sydney Drive</i> <i>Birmingham, AL 35211</i></p>

April 22–24, 2009

Essentials in Supported Employment
CERTIFICATE BASED JOB COACH TRAINING
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services 236 Goodwin Crest Drive
Birmingham, Alabama Conference Rooms D, E & F

For registration information visit the Alabama APSE website at www.al-apse.org
or email alabamaapse@aol.com

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