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theAdvance

News from APSE

Theme: Self-Advocacy

September, 2009 - Vol 1, Issue 3

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Dear Jenny,

Letter from your Executive Director, Laura A. Owens, Ph.D.

It is hard to believe that I am nearing my one year anniversary as your Executive Director - I can't believe how fast this year went! While I have had some ups and downs, I am hoping that the membership has been pleased with the movement APSE has been making.



So what have we done this year?

First and foremost, with the tremendous support of the Wisconsin APSE, we had an incredibly successful conference this past June. While most other organizations reported low attendance at their conferences, APSE attracted 425 participants to Milwaukee for our 20th Annual Conference - close to what we had the year before. Thanks to all who supported the conference through their attendance, donations to the silent auction, and volunteer work before, during and after the conference. Overall, we received rave reviews from conference participants - of course there are always areas to improve, and we will try to do that in 2010 in Atlanta! Look for information on the 2010 conference in the few weeks! The Community Conversations stimulated great discussions about our next "bold moves" personally and as an organization. I would love to hear if people have been working towards their next bold moves - so please email me any stories you have!

We moved our offices to Rockville, MD to be closer to

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Membership Corner

APSE Staff and Board of Directors

APSE Hires Stephanie Birmingham, New Public Policy Associate



Stephanie Birmingham is the new Public Policy Associate with APSE. She graduated from St.

Norbert College in De Pere, WI with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a minor in Peace and Justice in May 2009. Having personal experience with disability related issues as a wheelchair user herself, Stephanie is looking forward to working with APSE as an avenue for something she strongly believes in - providing equal opportunity for all persons. Stephanie's position starts October 1, 2009.

Washington, DC. Betsy and Jenny will continue in our "Richmond satellite" by telecommuting. Our leadership has been renewed with the addition of eight new board members elected to the APSE National Board of Directors, two new Regional Representatives to the Delegates Council and a new member to the Foundation board.

One of our biggest achievements this year, thanks to Jenny Levet, our Communications/Membership Director, is our on line newsletter. We have received a great deal of positive feedback about the content and structure of our revised newsletters. We are always looking for new information, so if you are interested in writing an article for the newsletter, please contact Jenny.

A new member benefit this year was the addition of the on line version of Job Training and Placement Report (JTPR) which you should have received in July and August - this new member benefit (a \$99 value) we believe will be helpful to the front line staff working to enhance integrated employment. If you have not received the on line version of JTPR, please contact Jenny at jenny@apse.org.

Our biggest accomplishment this year is the hiring of a Public Policy Associate. Stephanie Birmingham will join the National APSE team October 1, 2009 (see her information below). Stephanie will be the liaison between our Washington work and the membership. She will also work with the Delegates and Chapter Presidents to develop tools that assist members in impacting public policy in their own states as well as nationally.

Finally, our hope is that in the next few weeks you will see a new look to our website. The Communications Committee has worked very hard at designing a website that is user friendly and provides members with the information they need. APSE will also be selling products on our website - a portion of the proceeds will be going back to chapters to support efforts in their states.

Despite all of our successes this year, we have had some sadness in our field with the deaths of Eunice Shriver and Senator Ted Kennedy - both of whom were staunch advocates on behalf of individuals with disabilities. Their presence will truly be missed in the disability community, and we can only hope that others who have been handed their torch will continue their efforts.

As a final point, I would like to thank everyone for their feedback, guidance and support over the past year. I would like to thank Betsy and Jenny for their continued dedication to APSE; and the APSE and Foundation Boards for giving me the freedom to move forward. I feel confident we are moving in the right direction. We have renewed energy and enthusiasm around the advancement of integrated employment and have been making great strides to make APSE a recognizable organization around the country - and recognition is paramount to moving our mission forward. With perseverance, we can get something done - and we can make a difference!

Laura

When Self-Advocacy Needs to be Reached Through Person-Centered Approaches

**submitted by Elizabeth A. Coles, M.S., CRC
Program Supervisor, Employment Support
SharpVisions, Inc., PA**

Definition of self advocacy: *an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions. (VanReusen et al., 1994)*

The self-advocacy movement is said to have begun in Sweden during the 1960s, where individuals with mental retardation were supported to form and lead their own leisure clubs. National conferences for the members of these clubs were held in 1968 and 1970, and the participants developed statements about how they wanted to be treated. Great Britain and Canada began to support the concept of self advocacy in similar fashion in 1972.

In 1973, when a group from Oregon attended a conference in Canada that purported to be for people with mental retardation they felt it was dominated by professionals, so they returned home and formed their own self-advocacy group, calling themselves "People First," because they felt that their disabilities were secondary to their personhood. From there, the idea of self-advocacy spread across the United States.

In September 1991, at a national coalition of state and local organizations, SABE: (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered), was begun as a national organization governed by a Steering Committee made up of 16 representatives. Today the self-advocacy movement continues its impact in the provision of school-to-work transitions services.

A commitment to support self-advocacy efforts falls on those of us who are providing employment support services to individuals who, because of their particular intensity of, or multitude of disabilities, cannot effectively advocate for themselves. We must seek out methods that would ensure that the individual's needs and wishes be effectively addressed.

It is perhaps a matter of course that along with, or in response to, the growth of the self advocacy moment, human services agencies throughout this country are continuing to move from a focus on agency practices and system rules, to being more centered on the individuals with disabilities, what each individual wants for their life, and how people with disabilities can have fully inclusive community lives. This also includes the world of work for the supported individuals.

The person-centered approach to the provision of services, which may have had its origin, or at least was influenced by those practicing the approach to therapy first proposed by Carl Rogers, has now further evolved into a strategy for planning for and providing services based on the individual needs of the person receiving services.

So what is necessary to make that commitment, especially when it requires an ongoing, potentially ever-changing effort? When the individual supported has no discernable verbal language, how can we be sure we are truly listening to what they want in community services, especially in employment supports? How do we make sure that it is the person, not us, who is driving the car?

While practicing customized employment is one answer, especially when we have paid close

attention during the discovery process, we have to be sure that what we have learned regarding the individual's necessary conditions of employment, preferences and contributions is an accurate reflection of who that person is vocationally at that time. We need to question and confirm the accuracy of each item when we meet as a team to review the vocational profile and begin employment planning.

In the same manner that the employment supports professional is "always on"-we do find ourselves constantly identifying potential jobs or job components, don't we?-we need to be "always on" in our efforts to partner with those we serve and to support them in communicating what they want to do.

Most of us know that behavior is communication: we all watch the news and can easily see when someone, by their behavior, harbors a particular viewpoint, especially if it is negative. We even recognize that an increase in intensity of feeling is followed by an increase in the intensity of behavior.

But how often have we, as professionals, forgotten, or been tempted to forget, that *behavior is communication* when it comes to those for whom we provide services? We have even been guilty of referring to behavior as a noun and not as a verb or adjective. It is a failure on our part when "having a behavior" becomes a management problem instead of a communications problem.

We are all now familiar, either directly or indirectly with those lovely, often computerized, tests designed for the retail industry to predict the propensity of the potential employee to engage in theft. We take note of the fact that these instruments ask the same question in many different ways, in an attempt to ensure their predictive validity. Much effort has gone into the development of these instruments, because they are viewed as having the ability to screen out potential candidates that could cost the company money.

Do we not owe it to ourselves, and those we serve, to invest in that kind of effort to ensure that the employment supports services we provide will be meaningful and chosen by these individuals? Shouldn't we be remembering that the responses we may get from our individuals may be based on limited exposure to the question or the world of work and may not be truly reflective of what they mean to say? Shouldn't we expend as much effort in sleuthing out what works for those we serve? Shouldn't we ask our questions in many different ways, as we develop our relationships with them and listen carefully to the answers in the various contexts we provide?

We also need to be committed to reading body language as a part of our communication efforts. After all, for many for whom we provide services, this is a survival skill. Our beliefs and expectations of those individuals certainly come across in more ways than the words we choose to use.

Constantly checking in with the individuals we serve, making sure that we are truly communicating, is something that can be easily done, and most people can appreciate and have some basic understanding of our efforts, especially if we make it a regular part of our communication style.

What I think Self-Determination Means

by Cindy Bentley, Self Advocate
National APSE Board Member

I am an African American woman who has strong values. I was always determined to do the best that I can do. Growing up, I was always told what I couldn't do not what I could. I always had my faith I knew that my dreams wouldn't come true overnight, but I always dreamed that one day I would be in a professional job, helping people like myself, with intellectual disabilities, to realize their own potential. I learned leadership through experience and from my circle of friends. Every leader has a voice. Also, leaders have to stop and listen to one another. If you don't hear others' ideas, you may miss something.



I also think self-determination means we need to teach employers to treat all employees as employees. If you are in a professional job you should be treated like a professional, not like a person with a disability. Everyone should be held to the same standards. I might need extra help or time doing a task, but I should not be excused from it. I experience this all the time: people still view me as a consumer, not as a professional. I am determined to show these people that I am a professional. When I go to meetings I listen and take in the information and bring it back to share with my consumers. I also dress like a professional and teach other consumers how to dress appropriately for the workplace.



Mrs. Eunice Shriver was my hero. She always wanted the best for people with intellectual disabilities and for them to be treated like all other human beings. She always said that she wanted us to be integrated into our communities, in the workforce and in schools and colleges. Also, integrated into sports, not only Special Olympics. She was determined to change people's attitudes about people with intellectual disabilities and change healthcare for people with disabilities. She wanted people with disabilities to be leaders and to have a voice. That means fighting for what we believe in, and that we can do more than people think that we can do. We just need to be respected.

My dream is to start my own advocacy agency. I know that it will take a lot of work and a lot of determination and help from colleagues. I would like to have people with intellectual disabilities working with me. That's my dream for the future. I figure that if I was able to get out of a state institution, live independently and hold down a job, I would also like to be my own boss. Nothing happens without hard work, but I am willing to work hard.

Get Help; Get a Plan; and Get Going!!

by T. J. Monroe, Self-Advocacy Consultant
National APSE Board Member
Ohio APSE Board Member

Hi! My name is T. J. Monroe. I am a member on both the National and Ohio APSE Boards. And, I am a strong advocate for people with disabilities. It is very hard to be an advocate, to have a disability and, sometimes, it's hard to speak up for yourself. You need to 1) Get Help; 2) Get a Plan and; 3) Get Going!



First, you will need other people to help you who understand what it is like to have a disability. You can't do it alone. You need people like family, friends, teachers, and even coworkers, if you have a job, to give you the support you need. Self Advocacy is not for the shy. But, we have rights. An advocate is strong and must have a very strong voice about these rights. You must also have a thick skull and strong backbone to keep speaking up.

Why don't people listen to us? Maybe it's because we are different. Maybe it's because we scare them. Maybe it's because they don't think we have the skills to do what we need to do. Maybe they just want us to go away and not to be bothered with us. I don't really know. But, I know that there are people who want to help us and you can find them, if you keep looking. So, you need to start by finding people who believe in you and people that you can trust to help you.

Secondly, you need to get a plan. All we want is to live as other people do. It is as simple as that. Most of us would like to live in a house, with a family and have a job. Most of us don't need a group home or institution. We can do it for ourselves with a little help. Most of us don't want to work in a sheltered workshop, because they want to have regular jobs and be independent. We can do that with Supported Employment. What we need to do is to shine our Self Advocacy light on our issues that we need help with. Once we find the people that we can trust and let them know what we want,

then we can get going on getting there. So, once you get to this point, then it's time to get going!

I grew up in Foster Homes, a State Institution, a Group Home, and a sheltered workshop. But, today I have a regular job, I can drive my own car, and I live in my own apartment. I have friends, and very good support people. This journey has been hard and it is still hard. But, it sure is worth it! I was the first person with a disability to sit on the President's Committee on People with Mental Retardation. I have presented across the United States and in Japan on Self Advocacy and the rights of people with disabilities to make their own choices for their own lives just like I have fought to do. I have met President Mikhail Gorbachev, President Bush, Sr., President Clinton (twice), John F. Kennedy, Jr. and many more through my travels and work. It's been very hard work, but very rewarding and it will be for you, too. So, Get Help; Get a Plan; and Get Going!!

The Importance of Self-Advocacy: A Self-Advocate's Perspective or View

by: David Taylor, Jr., Self-Advocate

What self advocacy means to me is I have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness just like everyone else. I am an equal and can have the same respect that others have. I am a member of the National Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE).

We believe:

- People with disabilities should be treated as equals.
- People should be given the same decisions, choices, rights, responsibilities, and chances to speak up and empower themselves.
- People should be able to make new friendships and renew old friendships just like everyone else.
- People should be able to learn from their mistakes like everyone else.



Our goal is to:

- Make self-advocacy available in every state including institutions, high schools, rural areas and people living with families with local support and advisors to help.
- Work with the criminal justice system and people with disabilities about their rights within the criminal justice system.
- Close institutions for people with developmental disabilities labels nationwide, and build community supports.

Self advocacy helped me get to where I am today - an educated, employed person with a disability who lives in the real world, on my own making my own choices of where to live, work, and play. And I live life in the real world to the fullest!

By being a self advocate, I was able to stand up for my rights when VR told me I was not capable of owning my own business. I showed them that I was able to become a very successful man - and at the age of 25, I am now the owner of three businesses under the umbrella of Race Car Waterboy, LLC.

While I stood up for my individual rights, I was also able to change the state of North Carolina's Vocational Rehabilitation to do a better job for others like me with severe disability. I was able to

triumph and obtain 40 hours of supported employment services through a CAP waiver. Again, like with VR, I was able to change the traditional view of a waiver (not being able to go over 15 hours a week) to starting a Micro enterprise.

As a self advocate, I changed international laws in the American Quarter Horse Association to have a rider with a disability class for persons with disabilities in any show in the world. I could have just rode and gone along, but it was my right and others to participate in regular horse shows with our family and friends. I did this in 5 years time during my high school years, and my story is in Chicken Soup for the Horse lovers: "Don't Fence Me In".

I won the President's Life Time Achievement Award for over 2000 hours of volunteering for being a self advocate changing lives of others and the Heffner Award from the North Carolina DD Council in NC for the same achievement.

My mom is the reason I am a powerful self advocate - she taught me well.

You have to believe in yourself, and you have to go for your dreams. You may have to work harder or do it differently but you have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and only YOU can decide what makes you happy and then go for it! I love NASCAR and I wanted a job in NASCAR no matter what I had to do. I got one but it is part time, so I started my own company. I am on every DD committee and state and national disability board I can get on, because I want a great life for everyone with a disability.

All of my work demonstrates that when someone says "No, it can't be done" as a self-advocate, I say, "It can't be done NOW, but we can change things." It is important for self-advocates to help change the current systems that keep people with disabilities unemployed or underemployed.

How can providers or agencies help self advocates? First, let me say I hear about the past 20 years and all the accomplishments the providers and agencies have done. To them I say THANKS! In order to keep moving forward - it is our time now and it is time to listen, to us. Everyone needs to think outside the box! Listen to our dreams, what we want and be part of the future by getting out of the rut of the past. You accomplished a lot but move on and get in the fast lane, and let's get real jobsjobs that self advocates really want not what is easy to get. Include the self advocates in all decisions, and let them make the decision, it is their life but I want to also say if you have self advocate classes and self advocate meetings you will help those adults that are just getting out of the group homes and shelter workshops

I attended the first Disability Inaugural Ball. There is a first time for everything and be the provider that helps the self advocate in your area take those steps and be the one that helps with the leap of faith to Life in the Real World!

A Town Hall Meeting with President Barack Obama

June 12, 2009

Southwest High School, Green Bay, Wisconsin

by Gary Ormsbee, Co-President, WI APSE



Erin Goff, Cindy Bentley, Lisa Neis and myself were invited to attend a Town Hall Meeting with President Obama on June 12th, 2009. Three of the four of us are WI-APSE Members, and we were offered this opportunity thanks to Kareem Dale, who works with President Obama as an advisor on disability issues. He contacted Laura Owens because of her advocacy work with APSE, and the arrangements were made.

We were fortunate to have two self advocates along, Cindy and

Lisa, hearing President Obama's point of view on various issues including health care and how changes might have an impact on their lives. Cindy Bentley, a self advocate and APSE board member, feels that it was very important for self advocates to educate themselves on the current state of health care in the United States. She reports that she learned a lot at the Town Hall meeting and will be talking about this topic with the self-advocate groups that she currently runs in Milwaukee, WI.



This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to see the President live and in person and to listen as he discussed his now familiar plans for health care reform and other issues. From the time we arrived at the High School to the time we left, it was apparent that this was a well-planned event that went according to schedule. That set the tone well for the day. There was an invocation by a local Pastor, followed by a brief statement from a person who was dealing with some major health issues and how this had affected her and her family. She stressed the need for change, so that there might be better options for others.



President Obama then came forward and said he was going to read a brief statement, and follow that up with questions from the audience, which he stressed were not planned, planted, or rehearsed. He gave a brief overview of his plan, and talked about the need for some type of healthcare for the millions of people who currently have none. He stated that Green Bay was selected as a place to speak, because it was one of the few places in the country where people were paying less for healthcare and getting better, positive results. He said that he felt that by learning from the example set there, the rest of the country could model their healthcare results on places such as Green Bay.

After finishing his statement, President Obama then opened the floor for questions. Most of the questions were focused on healthcare, although there were also questions related to education. At one point, a person in the audience mentioned that he was there with his daughter, who was supposed to be in school for the last day of school. President Obama then asked what her name was, and he went and wrote her a note excusing her from class to see him. A later news report talked about the reaction of the young girl, and her teacher, and it was a very positive, heartfelt moment.

The President stressed several times that he was not interested in socialized medicine, such as they have in Canada or England: He emphatically stated that he was not interested in controlling the personal choice of people and that if people were satisfied with their healthcare as it was, it wouldn't have to change. He made the point that we are already paying for those who do not have healthcare now, so change in how healthcare is administered needs to happen to save money. Healthcare is the number one most expensive budget issue there is, he said.

The feeling we all left with was that President Obama was well informed on the issues and delivered his message and answered questions very coolly and confidently. All of us were thrilled to be able to experience this in person.

This was a wonderful opportunity, and I would like to thank Laura Owens once again for making it possible for the four of us to attend.



APSE HR Connect Staffing:
The New Staffing Industry Collaboration Model

James Emmett, Director, HR Connect

Is it time to re-analyze the collaboration between supported employment and the temporary/permanent staffing industry? There has long been a wide division between these industries largely because staffing agency employment has been viewed as dead end with low paid work that does not result in positive career progress. Also, the concept of "temporary" has been seen to contradict the priority placed on long-term, permanent employment by the vocational rehabilitation system.

However, it may be time to rebuild partnerships with the staffing industry in a large way. The facts speak for themselves:

- The US personnel staffing industry includes about 23,000 companies.
- These companies have a combined annual revenue of about \$120 billion.
- 90% of U.S. companies use staffing agency services.
- The average wage of staffing agency employees is over \$10/hour.
- Many Fortune 500 companies work with staffing agencies as the sole or main point of entry for new, permanent employees.

Sources: American Staffing Association, Staffing Industry Report, The Conference Board, The Omnicomp

Given these facts, it may be time to establish a different working relationship with staffing agencies. APSE HR Connect Staffing is a pilot in which there is a collaboration model between staffing agencies and community rehabilitation providers. An Employment Consultant/Placement Specialist from a local rehabilitation agency will be co-located at the partner staffing agency helping fill job orders with qualified candidates who have disabilities, as well as working to create new customers for the staffing agency. This model creates the following benefits:

<u>Staffing Agency</u>	<u>Community Rehabilitation Provider</u>
Increased revenue	Increased revenue
Access to new labor pool	Larger presence in local business community
Reduced turnover	Increased access to jobs
Increased diversity	Dramatic decrease in job development time
Additional recruiting support	More time for creation of natural supports
Development of new customers	Greater opportunities for people served
Risk Reduction/ADA Compliance Support	Creation of new business partners

The staffing agency & rehabilitation agency decide on the revenue split created by vocational rehabilitation dollars, ticket-to-work monies, on-the-job training or training grant funds, and other incentives such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). APSE HR Connect Staffing will provide all the start-up support including: liability agreements, marketing packets, and strategic plans. For more information on APSE HR Connect Staffing, please contact James Emmett at 574-808-9779 or via email at james@apse.org.

APSE Business and Marketing Committee Update
submitted by Betsy Barnes and Chris Davies

Building on the successful Employer Leadership Forum at the Milwaukee Conference, the Marketing and Business committee has started working on recruiting Atlanta employers to participate at the 2010 APSE conference.

HR Connect is working with employers to assist businesses to successfully recruit and utilize employees from the disability community. HR Connect started working with TIAA-CREF, a large investment house that owns a variety of businesses across the world. The first pilot project assisted this company with hiring individuals with disabilities at one of their orchards. The project was a real success, hiring 24 individuals. HR Connect has another pilot program starting in August with Wal-Mart in Indiana with expansion planned for 2010. Three stores are targeted to participate in the program.

The Marketing Subcommittee is currently working on a new brochure that will be sent out to the membership along with a survey to get feedback on our marketing campaign. We want to identify how the state chapters will effectively utilize the marketing campaign and materials. The committee is looking for testimonials of what it means to be a member of APSE from different perspectives - employers, community service providers and people with disabilities.

Questions and feedback can be sent to [Betsy Barnes](mailto:Betsy.Barnes@arkansas.gov) - Betsy.Barnes@arkansas.gov or [Chris Davies](mailto:cdavies@kapsia.com) - cdavies@kapsia.com

APSE Public Policy Committee Update

submitted by David Hoff

Over the past few months, a primary focus of the APSE Public Policy Committee has been on development of an APSE position regarding sub-minimum wage. The catalyst for these discussions was the discovery this past February that 21 men with intellectual and developmental disabilities had been working in a turkey processing plant in Iowa for twenty to thirty years at well below minimum wage. The employer, Henry's Turkey Service, was housing these individuals in a cockroach infested 106 year old "bunk house" with no central heating, taking their wages and SSI checks in return. However, the situation at Henry's Turkey is just the latest in a series of events over the past several years, that have raised serious questions and concerns regarding the US Department of Labor's (DOL) 14(c) certificate program, that allows employers to pay individuals with disabilities less than minimum wage. These include a March 2001 DOL Inspector General's Report that was highly critical of DOL's oversight of 14(c), a September 2001 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that echoed the findings of the Inspector General's report, and increases in findings by DOL that 14(c) certificate holders have underpaid workers, requiring the payment of back wages. Despite the attention paid over the last several years to the issue of lack of oversight and misuse of the 14(c) program, in the wake of the scandal at Henry's Turkey Service, DOL officials admitted that holders of 14(c) certificates are still subjected to minimal oversight and few potential penalties other than payment of back wages.

Given the most recent attention being paid to the issue of sub-minimum wage, and with the expectation that Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa may introduce legislation to reform the 14(c) program, the Public Policy Committee felt strongly that APSE, as an organization whose sole focus is on integrated employment in the community for people with disabilities, needed to take a stand on this issue. The process for looking at this issue has been a deliberate one, with an examination of the history, facts, and data regarding use of sub-minimum wage, and extensive discussions regarding the implications of changes in the sub-minimum wage. In addition, extensive efforts have been made to gain input from APSE chapters and members, through the recent member survey on this issue, as well as discussions at the APSE national conference in July. The Public Policy Committee is confident that the statement that will be issued in the near future is one that is fully reflective of this deliberate process, that is true to APSE's values and role as a leader regarding the issues of employment and civil rights for people with disabilities, and also recognizes the challenges that may be created by

changes in the sub-minimum wage.

In addition to the sub-minimum wage issue, the Public Policy Committee has also been focused on the following areas:

Federal Legislation Developments: The Public Policy Committee has continued to work with other disability groups to develop proposed changes and feedback on an array of federal legislative issues, in particular the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Rehabilitation Act. Within these efforts, the focus continues to be on increased resources and legislative support for employment of people with disabilities in the community, and clarity regarding the goal of integrated employment. Public Policy Committee co-chair David Hoff attended a Senate hearing on WIA this past July, and assisted in the preparation of testimony presented at the hearing by Dr. William Kiernan (video and a transcript of the testimony are at http://help.senate.gov/Hearings/2009_07_16/2009_07_16.html).

New Public Policy Staff Person: A key role for APSE is active engagement in legislative and public policy developments. While this is critical to the growth of integrated employment for people with disabilities, having a voice on Capitol Hill is also a vital service and benefit for our membership. APSE Executive Director Laura Owens and members of the Public Policy Committee have been undertaking this role, but it has become clear that APSE must have increased staffing devoted to public policy issues. Fortunately, resources have been identified to meet this need, and APSE has hired a new public policy staff person, Stephanie Birmingham, who will begin work on October 1st.

Questions and feedback regarding Public Policy Committee activities can be sent to the Committee Co-Chairs: Bob Lawhead - Rlawhead@emplink.org, or David Hoff - david.hoff@umb.edu

APSE Conference and Training Committee Update *submitted by Wendy Quarles*

The APSE Training committee has been busy supporting National APSE in moving forward as the leader in Training, Education and Professional Development in the field. Our work continues to lead us in several directions:

Community Conversations: hundreds of attendees participated in our first annual APSE Community Conversation at the national conference in Milwaukee. Using the World Café model we challenged the participants to speak freely on the state of supported employment and the actions that we need to embrace to move our efforts forward. The enthusiasm was inspirational and APSE has collected dozens of suggestions and challenges to move forward on our national plan for enhancing employment opportunities for the individuals that we support. Participants were also charged with taking the Community Conversation back to their state, tool kits were provided and the Training Committee will be available for technical assistance. If you are interested in learning more to host your very own Community Conversation, we are here to support your efforts.

2010 Conference: Watch for more details on our exciting 2010 Annual Conference in Atlanta. With the enthusiasm and commitments made at the 2009 conference, we will continue to the conversations and "rally" to move Employment for All onto everyone's agenda. Over the next few months we will be seeking candidates for speakers and service awards. Be sure to get involved!

Training Opportunities: The Training Committee will be working with the state chapters to identify opportunities for APSE to provide professional development workshops, conferences, etc. in your back yard. Realizing that training dollars are tight, and travel is limited by funding, APSE will continue to explore and support the development of alternative ways of delivering training. If you are a trainer or want to support APSE in the area of Training and Professional Development, please contact Wendy Quarles at wquarles@humanservicesed.org.

APSE Communications Committee Update

submitted by Katherine Inge

The Communications Committee continues to work on improving communication between National APSE and the membership. The website will bring new features and hopefully easier accessibility related to finding what you need online. One new feature that should help you access membership information is an online request form to receive your username and password via e-mail! So, if you go online and can't find your membership card, you will be able to have this e-mailed to you from the APSE membership database. Another new feature is that there will be a link to the APSE Facebook Group and LinkedIn from the homepage. Hopefully, this will get all of us to communicate better with each other and share information. We will also have an online store where you will be able to purchase APSE items such as bumper stickers and hats as well as materials to make your job easier. Look for these new features when our new, improved website becomes available, which we hope will be in September! Finally, the Committee wants to welcome our new committee members to include Elizabeth Coles from PA and Patty Ghioffi from LA!

For more information, please contact the Communication Committee Co-Chairs: [Suzanne Hutcheson](#) or [Katherine Inge](#)

News from Chapters around the Country



News from Region II

submitted by Phil Chase, Regional Delegate

Georgia APSE invites all APSE members, friends, and interested others to the 21st Annual APSE Conference in HOTLANTA sometime in mid-June, 2010. The Hot in Hotlanta refers to the many wonderful things to do in Atlanta, especially the fantastic conference APSE is planning. We would be remiss if we didn't mention Hot is used to describe the nightlife Atlanta is famous for. To a lesser degree, it also refers to the summer temperatures common to Atlanta. Y'all Come!

The summer has been very good to Region II APSE Chapters. The most memorable event took place in Montgomery, AL, the site of the first ever super conference on disability hosted by Alabama APSE and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities. As part of the conference, The Full Life Ahead Foundation conducted a self-advocate track. Approximately 100 self-advocates and family members attended the conference and participated in a variety of training sessions including "the meaning of a full life, healthy relationships, mock interviews for employment, and dreams and goals." The conference theme was Blazing New Trails attended by about 300 people who said the event was a hit!

Florida APSE just completed their 10th annual conference in Orlando. Although attendance was down from past years, those in attendance agreed it was a very successful event. After a year long effort, the Florida chapter's bylaws were re-written and approved. State and national bylaws are now consistent and chapter operations have been streamlined.

North Carolina and South Caroling APSE are putting finishing touches on their joint conference to be held in Myrtle Beach, SC, September 23 - 25. We are pleased that the conference, Employment First in the Carolinas: Something for Everyone, will even be attended by some Georgia APSE members. In the future, we should consider an Employment First in the Southeast event. Related to this subject, North Carolina APSE is working with the Mecklenburg Disability Action Collaborative to begin community conversations and early implementation of an Employment First initiative. Charlotte is the largest city in Mecklenburg County. The North Carolina chapter continues to seek funding with

the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to develop and implement an Employment Online Learning Center for employment specialists and VR counselors.

Georgia APSE is committed to making integrated employment the first and preferred option of all Georgians with disabilities. The Georgia Chapter, the Georgia Advocacy Office, and the Georgia Council for Developmental Disabilities have agreed to partner in clearly defining and communicating statewide what Employment First Georgia means. That's just the beginning!

Davan Cloninger, North Carolina chapter president, and Mike Capps, Florida chapter president, communicate well the overall mood of our southeastern chapters. Davan reflects "[our states have] been hit by crippling budget reductions in Medicaid and state funded services for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental illness, and addictions. It is a very tough landscape to navigate presently for individuals with disabilities, their family members, and [service] providers." Mike wraps up by saying: "The economy continues to be a struggle for many of our members: High unemployment and shrinking funding dollars challenge us daily. While things are still difficult, we are beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel. Unemployment is slowing down and a few employers are actually hiring."

News from Region III

submitted by Bob Lawhead, Regional Delegate

Colorado

The Colorado Chapter of APSE is planning COAPSE Summit II for October, 2009 to follow up after the successful COAPSE Summit in May, according to Co-Presidents John Chambers and Todd Graves. This is an effort to bring together a variety of individuals, associations and state governmental entities including self-advocates, parents, and supported employment service providers to come together to discuss how to expand employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other disabilities associated with significant barriers to ones employment efforts. Some movement has been made on the present Order of Selection status of Colorado citizens with the "most significant disabilities" applying for vocational rehabilitation services. Approximately 1,050 people in this category reportedly came off the wait list in July following 660 leaving the wait list two months previously. Colorado's Division for Developmental Disabilities has attempted to fund supported employment job development and job coaching services during this period. COAPSE has continued to advocate that they also fund assessment (preferably a "discovery" style assessment) as they presently have disallowed this service. COAPSE continues to expand the network of stakeholders in Colorado fighting for the expansion of integrated employment opportunity!

Wyoming

According to President Bill McDonald, the Wyoming Chapter of APSE is in the early stages of planning for a next May statewide conference. Some board members will be meeting in September to look at a conference hotel site and are still not sure if it will be just a one day or our typical two day event. Also being considered is a joint conference with Colorado. The 2010 conference will be the 20th annual state APSE chapter conference for the Cowboy State!

Utah

In the face of legislative funding cuts to supported employment programs and with limited focus on supported employment issues by the executive branch, Utah is facing an uphill battle, reports President Tricia Jones Parkin. "The system just seems to be broken," she recently stated. However, the Utah APSE Governing Board decided to put out a challenge to each other asking, "What can I do within the next 60 days to improve the situation?" The results have included developing new ways to interest self-advocates in APSE, setting up promotional tables at two recent conferences in Ogden (Utah People's First Conference) and in St. George (Family Links

Conference), as well as initiating planning on putting together a statewide summit to develop strategies to push the integrated employment agenda. Go Utah!

News from Region IV

submitted by Deborah Goins, Regional Delegate

VA APSE is busy getting ready for the 12th Annual Collaborations Conference. This conference is a collaboration between three organizations representing people with disabilities (Virginia APSE, Virginia ACCSES (Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs) and Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA).

VA APSE is also busy planning our second Providers Forum. The provider's forums is a place where members and non members can come together to discuss issues and trends in the Supported Employment field. Employers are also invited to share their thoughts on what they are looking for in employees are employment services organizations. VA APSE also offers training on current topics of interest to members.

DC APSE is still working toward becoming a full chapter, as they are currently a chapter in development. They are also trying to increase their chapter membership and board participation.

MD APSE continues to work with other state agencies to establish Employment First as a priority in the state of Maryland. MD APSE is also trying to increase their chapter membership and board participation through marketing and outreach.

News from Region V

submitted by Tom Alexander, Regional Delegate

MN APSE Chapter Update

June 2009:

- The Employment First Coalition held a Employer Summit with Federal Managers with support from MN APSE.
- MN APSE had a great turnout for our State Conference that was held towards the middle of May-Employment Yes you Can! was the focus.
- MN members attended the National Conference and had a leadership role

July 2009:

- MN-TAT (MN- Training and Technical Assistance Center) and MEPI (MN Employment Policy Initiative) take off in MN! MN APSE will play key roles in both of these grants.
- The "white paper" on Employment First came out-written by National APSE and MN APSE members.
- Employment First work continues.

August 2009:

- MN APSE held their strategic planning session in Duluth, MN. Reviewed accomplishments of the last year and set new higher reaching goals for the next two to three years that will help advance the Employment First Initiative.
- Employment First work continues.

ND APSE Chapter Update

submitted by Amy Armstrong, ND APSE Chapter President

Summer has been pretty quiet for the ND APSE chapter. We finished co-sponsoring our state conference in April along with our silent auction fund raiser and Best of the Best Awards. The ND Legislative session, which meets every other year, just finished up in late April also, so everyone had a busy spring. We have been busy this month selling raffle tickets to support our ND Disabilities Advocacy Consortium (NDDAC) of which ND APSE is a member. NDDAC helps to advocate for disability issues in ND including employment issues. We are planning a fall chapter meeting and will begin planning for the next conference and best of the best nominations. ND APSE is very interested in the sub-minimum wage reports and information coming from the national APSE office. We plan to discuss this at our next meeting. Approximately five ND APSE members attended the national APSE conference this summer in Milwaukee. Two groups from ND also presented for the national conference.

WI APSE Chapter Update

WI APSE was thrilled to host the 2009 national APSE conference at the Hyatt in Milwaukee. We hope that it was a wonderful experience for everyone who attended.

Since the national conference, WI APSE has been busy coordinating and conducting discussion groups around the state to gather information and support for the WI Employment First Initiative. So far this year, seven groups have met and two more are scheduled for September. Through these regional discussion groups, we have been gathering information about strengths and barriers that exist for integrated employment in different parts of the state. We have also been talking about a definition of Employment First that makes sense for Wisconsin and asking the group to answer four general questions that were developed by the WI APSE Employment First Committee. Those cover the topics of how to spread an Employment First Vision, how to drive policy and service delivery to increase employment outcomes for citizens with disabilities, how to engage more employers in discussions about hiring people with disabilities and how to share successful practices from one part of the state to others.

The first annual WI Employment First Summit is scheduled to take place at the Osthoff resort in Elkhart Lake, WI on Friday November 13th, and we are pleased to have Dave Hammis and Bob Niemiec joining us for that.

In addition to our Employment First Initiative Efforts, WI APSE is also collaborating with Rehabilitation for Wisconsin (RFW) to host a one day conference on November 12th, also at the Osthoff resort.

News from Region VI

submitted by Jennifer Joyce, Regional Delegate

Region VI congratulates Pat Gutowski, on her election to the APSE Board of Directors. We appreciate the great job Pat has done in her role on the Delegate Council and wish her the best in her new role on the Board. Since Pat had to step down from the Delegate Council now that she is a Board member, Jennifer Joyce, Immediate Past President from NJ APSE, was elected to the role and is looking forward to working with Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware.

There was a great turnout from Region VI at the Leadership Summit held before the APSE conference got under way in Milwaukee. The chapter leaders from Region VI enjoyed getting the opportunity to share a table and network with each other and our colleagues from Region IX. We also appreciated hearing from the other regions and sharing our thoughts and ideas with the National APSE Board. NJ APSE provided the funding for the refreshments enjoyed by those chapter leaders in attendance.

New Jersey

NJ APSE was well represented by the five Board members, three of whom presented workshops, who attended the National APSE Conference. We would also like to congratulate our NJ APSE Board members Pat Gutowski and Jennifer Joyce for their elections to the National APSE Board of Directors and Delegate Council, respectively. .

In an effort to increase awareness of integrated employment and NJ APSE, the NJ APSE Board of Directors and Marketing Committee have been working on a marketing plan for several months. During this last quarter, we sought out and received proposals from three marketing companies and were able to meet with each in order to compare the services they have to offer us. Based on this research, we are nearly at a point where we will be choosing and signing a contract with one company.

NJ APSE has been in conversation with National APSE about a collaboration to develop a template for chapter websites that will allow all of us to share resources and connect as APSE on many levels. Our next conference call is scheduled for August 26th.

We are in the process of planning and scheduling our 4th annual Leadership Networking event in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October and have set the date for NJ APSE's 18th annual Facing the Future Conference to be held on March 19, 2010 in Somerset, NJ.

New York



The NY Chapter of APSE has changed our name from "Empire State APSE" to "New York State APSE".

In response to difficult economic times and the postponement of our annual conference in Lake Placid, NYS APSE sponsored and hosted a job development forum attended by 120 people and entitled "The Secret of Job Development", in Albany.

In addition to exhibiting at the National Conference in Milwaukee, there were a total of 7 NYS APSE members, including 6 Board members, in attendance at the conference.

NYS APSE has been actively engaged in a strategic planning process and, now that the strategic plan has been developed, we are involved in carrying out the actual work of the plan. This plan has included the adoption of a revised Mission and Vision Statement and identification of four areas which include the following: (1) Relationships, (2) Funding, Advocacy & Legislative, (3) Education & Training, and (4) Governance.



News from Region VII

submitted by Sherry Becker, Regional Delegate

IA APSE is busy getting ready for its first Employment First Summit on October 22, 2009. In partnership with the Iowa Medicaid Infrastructure Grant and the Governor's Development Disabilities Council, Iowa APSE conducted 14 focus groups around the state to gather grassroots input to be used at the Summit. Five Employment First Outcomes were identified: 1) Policies and funding dollars are aligned with Employment First, 2) Individuals with disabilities and family members advocate for Employment First and participate in the design of employment services and supports, 3) Businesses influence businesses to create employment opportunities, 4) Strong partnerships remove barriers to employment outcomes and 5) Best practices models drive successful post-secondary outcomes for working, learning and living. IA APSE has worked collaboratively with many other state agencies to

advance The Employment First movement and looks forward to working with other Midwest APSE chapter members as facilitators and recorders at the Iowa Summit.

Illinois APSE is in the midst of revitalizing its chapter. Early in the summer, a conference call between current ILAPSE leaders, several prospective IL members, and National APSE Director Laura Owens and Membership Director Betsy Elwood took place to discuss future directions for ILAPSE. Another call is scheduled soon to plan specifics on how to encourage new member participation on the board.

ILAPSE continues to provide/cosponsor training events throughout the state. Currently, ILAPSE is collaborating with the Chicagoland Provider Leadership Network (CPLN) and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce to host a job development training on November 17th.

KANSAS APSE efforts are focused on supporting and expanding their state's Employment First activities. Their Employment First initiative began out of developmental disabilities contract negotiations establishing a statewide taskforce. KS APSE is providing leadership in the state with two major activities: 1) developing a certification/accreditation process for SE/CE personnel and 2) conducting an Employment First Summit.

MISSOURI APSE continues to work with other state agencies to establish Employment First as a priority in their state. APSE MO is in the process of developing a white paper and plan to schedule a summit by June 2010.

News from Region VIII

submitted by Charles Murphy, Regional Delegate

Massachusetts APSE

Submitted by Gil Cote, Chapter President

Several of the board members attended the national conference in Milwaukee and came away with a positive energy in regards to the direction that our national association is headed. We all enjoyed the communication forums and hopefully the feedback learned from this process will lead to better employment outcomes for those we serve. Having David Hoff and William Noone on the national board gives us some credence in helping make these changes. In the near future we would like to continue our dialogue with the foundation to help us raise needed resources.

The board has decided to work on achievable goals for this year. We will be focused on five things:

Membership: Started process of reviewing existing and past membership to do outreach

Website Modifications: Committee formed to review present site and provide suggestions to improve

Statewide Public Policy Issues: Provided input to the state's rate setting commission for viable rates

Bylaws/Conflict of Interest Policy: In the process of reviewing and modifying as needed

Fundraising/APSE Foundation Support: Work with National APSE to see if possible to partner up to raise needed resources

Maine APSE

Submitted by Gayla Dwyer, President

ME APSE involvement over past few months has been as member of Commission on Disability & Employment. We are going to be collaborating on a Fall Conference as well as having some preliminary involvement with Ticket To Work workshops that will be scheduled for this Fall as well. Efforts to establish/partner on activities for National Disability Employment Awareness Month events for October around the State. No definite dates established as of yet. Hopefully ones will be set soon, next CDE meeting is 20 August. Discussion with State regarding any roles that ME-APSE can

play in establishing certification standards for Job Coaches and Employment Specialists after Dec. 31, 2010. Also case by case talks with folks in efforts to recruit new members as well as bring back old ones. Need to find a way to have folks see need for State Chapter and why & how they can contribute. ME-APSE member, Deb Gilmer, attended the National APSE Conference in July and will share her new info at 31 August meeting.

Vermont APSE

Submitted by Bryan Dague, President

We are hosting the Vermont Conversion Institute II on October 8-9, 2009 at the Hilton Burlington, Burlington, Vermont.

For more information please visit: http://vermontapse.org/vermonts_conversion_institute

CT APSE

Submitted by Karin McMahon, President

CT APSE is busy planning a year full of trainings and network sessions to promote our Employment First mission. Topics that will be offered as training sessions include: Strategies to Create Independence / Transition Overview, Stimulus Money and Interagency Collaboration, Transportation / Travel Training, Benefits Counseling, and Assistive Technology for Work / Tech Act. Networking and discussion topics paired with APSE meetings include Disability Mentoring and Job Shadowing, Employment Initiatives / Connectability update, Ticket -to- Work follow up, CT Business Leaders Network, and Self Advocates panel discussion.

News from around Region IX

submitted by Vic Gable, Regional Delegate

Indiana APSE will be holding their 19th Annual Conference on December 9 & 10 at the Indianapolis Marriott East, featuring the Business Leadership Network. The key note speaker will be Randy Lewis, the Senior Vice-President of Distribution and Logistics for Walgreens who will be speaking about "Setting a new standard for Employing People with Disabilities - how Walgreens put the "able" in Disabled" In addition Indiana APSE is continuing their involvement with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) activities to provide guidance in removing barriers to employment. They continue to distribute the "Fact" sheets on employment for both policy makers and employers. (If you are interested in obtaining those, they are on nationals website) Indiana APSE is stepping up it's outreach to consumers, families and service providers as well as increasing communication with their current memberships, which also includes a new state sub-committee "Consumer Involvement".

Kentucky APSE has scheduled their annual state conference "Supported Employment Works" on November 4 & 5, please go to their web-site for more details and registration information.

Tennessee APSE had two training this year. On June 2-5 they held a topical regional conference in Nashville and on June 30, July 1 & 2 they held a topical conference in Cookville

Ohio APSE is holding it's Annual State Conference on September 24th in Columbus, "Issues in Delivery of Supported Employment. Jon Alexander (National Board Treasurer) will be this years keynote speaker. Over lunch Ohio APSE has invited all the state Supported Employment award winners and guests to attend to receive their recognition for the accomplishment in Supported Employment. The afternoon session will include two tracks, one on "Ethical Dilemmas in serving too many Masters" and a track on "Supported Employment for workers with Autism/Aspergers" Ohio APSE is very close to launching a state website - it will be posted on the national website when construction is complete.

News from Region X

submitted by Sue Killam, Regional Delegate

LA APSE is currently a chapter in development. We have made much progress over this past year with the creation of our brochure, website and identification of training needs in our state. We will focus strongly in the coming months on membership development, scheduling trainings and developing our website.

MS APSE had their annual fund raising golf tournament on September 1st and the 2nd Annual MS APSE Conference on September 2-3, 2009. The conference had state and national speakers including Laura Owens, Executive Director of National APSE, speaking about inclusive employment. Conference highlights included: live entertainment by Clayton Pepper and Theron Denson, MS APSE Idol/Karaoke evening, and a Silent Auction. The Mississippi APSE Chapter is looking forward to an even better year in 2010.

APSE Foundation

The APSE Foundation relies on the generous support of donors to advance employment nationwide for people with disabilities. The APSE Foundation is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible, as allowed by law.

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[For more information about the APSE Foundation, please click here.](#)

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Membership Corner



Please contact [Jenny](#) if you have a membership question or would like to write an article for **theAdvance**.

APSE is now sending first and second renewal notices to members via email. You will still receive a renewal notice one month prior to your expiration date.

The renewal reminder will include your log in credentials, so you can easily log in and renew your membership online using a credit card or download the renewal form and send it in with a check to the APSE office.

[Click here to renew online.](#)

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