

## THE INDEPENDENCE

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### Save The Date!!!

**The 2015  
Conference Date  
has been Set!!!!**

JUNE 17 - 19, 2015  
MOBILE, ALABAMA  
RIVERVIEW PLAZA  
HOTEL

UPDATES POSTED @  
WWW.AL-APSE.ORG  
OTHER SPONSORS  
PENDING

Alabama APSE along with the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities hosted another successful conference in June at the Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile. More than 315 people attended this year's event, making this the largest ever. Many memorable highlights were included, some professional and some not so professional. Attendees this year were able to dress down for the first ever "almost womanless wedding". Mavis and Cletus tied the knot, redneck style. Our own Beth Hanks and Jennifer Robinson entertained the crowd with their version of "Mama's He's Crazy" and "Redneck Woman". Many thanks go out to the fellas that put their pride to the side and dressed up in evening gowns, painted up with Maybelline and made this a fun night for all. Following the ceremony, guests were treated to a reception to celebrate the marriage. The event was complete with redneck caviar and other southern delicacies. Mr. Mark Vosel performed the ceremony sporting a borrowed pair of "daisy dukes". Everyone was encouraged to save their gowns for future fun!



### Live Television Broadcast

Montgomery's own award winning broadcaster and the Director of Communications and Governmental Relations at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Kim Wanous hosted an "Open Mic Friday/On Air" at the conference that featured life stories of challenges, victories, and careers told from the perspective of individuals with disabilities and their family members and professionals that work in the field. Each individual shared their story that the audience found both informative and inspiring. Panel participants included Mr. Jonathan Peak, pictured, Mr. Derek Greer, Mrs. Kim Kielbasa, Mr. Bret Heim, Mr. Justin Clemmons, Mr. Jim Harris, III, and Mr. Jacy Todd. In addition to the open discussion, video clips of the panelists were included. This session was a hit and conference attendees indicated a



desire for similar panels at future events. So with a little bit of planning and some extra audio/visual support, this conference brought "live television" into the Bon Secour Ballrooms of the Riverview Plaza Hotel. A special thanks goes out to Kim Wanous and our panelist for making this session possible. Continued best wishes to them all!

### 2014 AL-APSE Award Winners

Alabama APSE recognized winners from across the state at the June conference.

This year's winners include:

**Personal Achievement:** Meredith Rucker, Mattie Allen, Miracle Jackson & Charles Akers

**Family Support of the Year:** Ms. Rosia Dowdell

**Chuck Sheehan Academic Scholarship:** Dennis Reyes

**Small Employer:** Candlewood Suites & Jason's Deli

**Large Employer:** Renaissance Birmingham Ross Bridge Resort

**Best Practice Award:** Artist Thomas Findlay

**Innovation Award:** Shelby County Schools & Mr. Keith Richards (Taziki's Restaurants)

**Professional of the Year:** Mrs. Secunda Abrom

**Brenda McComb Leadership Award:** Mr. Courtney Tarver

**Jim Green Agency of the Year:** The Arc of Shelby County

**AL-APSE President's Award:** Mr. Jim Harris, III

**Congratulations Winners!!**

Alabama's Project SEARCH program continues to expand. After the 2012 start with 2 school systems, the program has grown to 7 sites. These include: Mobile County Schools, Baldwin County Schools, Montgomery County Schools, Shelby County Schools, Birmingham City Schools, Tuscaloosa County Schools and Huntsville City Schools. Personnel from each system with the exception of Tuscaloosa attended this year's Project SEARCH conference in Omaha, Nebraska. Tuscaloosa just recently completed the prep work to implement the program this August. This included the selection of a business, student selection, staff selection, etc.

Twenty-one individuals from Alabama attended the national conference in July which placed the state as one of the top 5 with most attendees. The conference offers great training sessions, mostly provided by staff of other PS programs from around the country. Alabama's own Tina Dortch and Byron White, along with members of the Alabama delegation conducted a session "Alabama Team—Project SEARCH: Striving for the National Championship and Creating Systems Change through State Leadership". Attendees had a chance to experience a little rivalry between the University of Alabama and Auburn University. The session wrapped up with a couple of videos produced by the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities and Mobile County Schools.

This conference is always an excellent opportunity for programs to network and learn from each other.

The Montgomery Project SEARCH program/Baptist Medical Center South was recognized during the awards banquet for achieving 70—79% of their placement goals for year 1. Congratulations!!

Project SEARCH 2015 is scheduled for July 27—31, 2015 in Glendale, Arizona.



**Alabama APSE to host CESP Exam  
November 2014**

ESPCC developed the Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) program to set a standard of knowledge and distinguish employment support professionals who have shown they have the skill and competence to perform the requirements of the job.

According to the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), the trade association for the professional certification industry, certification is the voluntary process by which a non-governmental entity grants a time-limited recognition and use of a credential to an individual after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria. It is the vehicle that a profession or occupation uses to differentiate among its members, using standards, sometimes developed through a consensus-driven process, based on existing legal and psychometric requirements.

In simpler terms, a certifying agency, ESPCC grants a credential to an individual who has demonstrated, by passing an exam, they have the knowledge and skill required to perform the job of an employment support professional.

The applicants for CESP certification must meet all of the following requirement before they take the exam:

1. Education Requirement: High school diploma, GED or equivalent
2. Experience Requirement: Each applicant must meet one of the following requirement: 1 year of employment support professional (ESP) work experience, which may include up to a maximum of 3 months of internship or practicum time; or a 9 months of ESP work experience with training component; and
3. Code of Conduct: Each applicant must agree to and sign the Code of Conduct included in the application.

Email [Alabamaapse@aol.com](mailto:Alabamaapse@aol.com) for more information or visit [www.al-apse.org](http://www.al-apse.org).

**Customized Employment/  
Job Coach Training**

November 5–7, 2014  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Embassy Suites  
2300 Woodcrest Place

For more information:  
[WWW.AL-APSE.ORG](http://WWW.AL-APSE.ORG)

Register at:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=eq8in9eab&oeidk=a07e9n2hvcc13554cc7>

**AL-APSE workshop on Assistive Technology**

October 8, 2014  
10:00–12:00

Center for Disability Research and Service  
215 S Donahue Drive  
Auburn, Alabama 36849

Visit [www.al-apse.org](http://www.al-apse.org) for more information

**Free AL-APSE Memberships**

Email [alabamaapse@aol.com](mailto:alabamaapse@aol.com) by September 1, 2014 for your chance to win a free membership!!

Subject Line: *Make me an APSE member!!*

*Winners notified in September!!*

**Alabama APSE** is pleased to announce that next year's annual conference and training event will again be held in Mobile at the Riverview Plaza Hotel. Mobile always seems to be a crowd favorite based on attendance numbers. Also, this location allows attendees a chance to visit the white sand beaches of south Alabama following the conference. Co-sponsors are currently being sought and the planning committee is looking for speakers. More information will be posted on the organization's website. Go ahead and make your plans to attend. The dates are June 17 - 19. Registration and hotel information will be available in January.



## Obama Signs Law Limiting Sheltered Workshop Eligibility

The measure known as the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* significantly limits placements at sheltered workshops and other work environments where people with disabilities earn less than minimum wage. Under the new law, individuals with disabilities age 24 and younger will no longer be allowed to work for less than the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour unless they first receive pre-employment transition services at school and try vocational rehabilitation services.

The measure also mandates that state vocational rehabilitation agencies work with schools to provide transition services to all students with disabilities and requires that the agencies allocate at least 15 percent of their federal funding toward such transition efforts.

“As we approach the 24th anniversary of the ADA, this bill takes new steps to support Americans with disabilities who want to live and work independently,” Obama said in signing the legislation, which provides a broad update to the nation’s workforce system that took years to come to fruition.

The updated rules specific to what’s known as subminimum wage will take effect two years after the law’s enactment.

Though requiring that most young people try competitive employment before working for less than minimum wage, there are exceptions for those who are deemed ineligible for vocational rehabilitation and to allow individuals already earning less than the federal minimum to continue in their jobs.

In cases where individuals with disabilities do earn less than minimum wage, the measure requires that they periodically be provided career counseling by their state and are informed about other work opportunities. Aside from changes to employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the new law also shifts responsibility for some disability and independent living program functions from the U.S. Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



In 2013, 17.6 percent of persons with a disability were employed according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for those without a disability was 64.0 percent. The employment-population ratio was little changed from 2012 to 2013 for both groups. The unemployment rate for those with a disability was 13.2 percent in 2013, higher than the rate for persons with no disability (7.1 percent). The jobless rate for persons with a disability was little changed from 2012 to 2013, while the rate for those without a disability declined.

The data on persons with a disability are collected as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 households that provides information on employment and unemployment in the United States. The collection of data on persons with a disability is sponsored by the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.

### Did you know?

- Persons with a disability were over three times as likely as those with no disability to be age 65 and over.
- For all age groups, the employment-population ratio for persons with a disability was less than half that of those with no disability.
- In 2013, 34 percent of workers with a disability were employed part time, compared with 19 percent of those with no disability.
- Fifteen percent of workers with a disability were employed in federal, state, or local government, similar to the share for workers with no disability (14 percent).