

# FLORIDA GRANTOR

Official Publication of The Able Trust • [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org)

## Congratulations to our 2012 Ability Award Winners!

by Ray Ford, Jr.



*(from left to right) Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins congratulates The Lighthouse of Collier County Executive Director & CEO Kathleen Peck on receiving the Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award at the 2012 Able Trust Ability Awards luncheon. Presenting the award is Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole, along with luncheon keynote speaker and Board Secretary Jeannie Amendola, and Able Trust President & CEO Susanne Homant.*

On June 15, 2012, The Able Trust recognized individuals, organizations, and businesses representing every corner of the State of Florida at the annual Ability Awards luncheon held at Golden Eagle Golf & Country Club in Tallahassee. Thanks to their tireless efforts, a group of people that are often underestimated have a chance to experience things that many of us often take for granted: employment and independence.

“The Able Trust represents people with disabilities, with a specific task of leadership in helping them find good jobs that fit their skills and the needs of businesses,” Able Trust President and CEO Susanne Homant said. “We are succeeding in that effort, knowing that our support has put thousands of people to work, but we do not do this alone. Today we honor several individuals and organizations from around the state who have been very involved with helping to achieve the mission of successful employment for people with disabilities.”

Eleven awardees were honored by the luncheon guests, saluting them for their dedication to the cause of providing successful employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities. Luncheon keynote speaker Jeannie Amendola and Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins commended The Able Trust on its mission, reflecting on the lives affected by its programs.

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THE  
ABLE  
TRUST™

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.

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## A Message from the President



*The Board of Directors of The Able Trust met in mid-June to begin its planning of activities for the next two calendar years. As a Foundation that serves the dual roles of operating its internal youth programs while providing support for community organizations statewide through grant awards, this organization regularly reviews the use of its resources as it works to achieve its mission. With a mission of helping to create successful employment opportunities for Floridians with Disabilities, the Board realizes it has a complicated and difficult charge. Being focused, however, allows The Able Trust to use its philanthropy to be a catalyst in the important arena of employment.*

*At the June Board meeting, the Directors specifically took an in-depth look at the economy of Florida, the industries that are likely to be strong over time, the job market today, and the likely jobs of the future. Knowing where to direct those in our youth program and knowing where to direct our grantees as they help train and re-train people with disabilities in their communities is serious and important business for the Board. We enjoyed the expertise of Dr. Dale Brill from the Florida Chamber Foundation and Vesselka McAlarney of the Department of Economic Opportunity, and reviewed several pieces of research and data on the subjects, with the strong belief that if we don't know where the economy is going and where the jobs are, we cannot effectively dedicate resources. I believe the famous related statement is, "if you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."*

*Here is some of what we learned. The economy of Florida is recovering, although slowly, and certain geographic areas are doing better than others. Tourism is strong, with Tampa, Miami and Orlando as key economic engines. Construction jobs and government jobs everywhere continue to see declines, with the possible exception of construction jobs in the Miami area. Jobs in the trades, transportation and utilities arenas are gaining faster than others. Although the unemployment rate continues to decline, so does consumer confidence, raising questions about credibility in the calculation of the unemployment rate. Interestingly, Workforce Indicators showed over 300,000 job openings available in March, 2012, with only 30,000 filled, clearly suggesting a skills-needs mismatch. All of that data and more that was studied during the afternoon of June 14, directed the Board to consider the talent available, and the skills needed by people with disabilities to compete in this changing economy. The DEO has used its economic modeling to project that over one million new jobs will be secured in Florida by 2019, and that agency has indicated the five industries likely to see the most gains are 1.) professional and business services; 2.) education and health services; 3.) trade, transportation and utilities; 4.) construction; and 5.) leisure and hospitality. Within those industries, the top five categories listed for new jobs by 2019 were 1.) administrative and support services; 2.) ambulatory health services; 3.) professional, scientific and technical services; 4.) local government; and 5.) specialty trade contractors – with food services and drinking places nearly a tie for the fifth spot. The Board also looked at the national study done by Manpower on the hardest jobs to fill by businesses in 2012 to date. The top five were 1.) skilled trades; 2.) engineers; 3.) IT staff; 4.) sales representatives; and 5.) accounting and finance staff. Without elaborating on the complications of the studies, it became clear that the direction of The Able Trust with the organizations and individuals it advises and serves, needs to be driven by the best projections of the future of Florida's economy, and the skills needs of that economy. That may mean a closer look at how we advise grantees on matters of education requirements, training and employment options, and how we*

mentor young people into career choices. The Board of Directors will continue its work on deciding strategic direction for the next two years at its September meetings, but that will clearly be related to what we learned on June 14.

The Able Trust is dedicated to helping to create successful job opportunities for people with disabilities. That means we need to identify the best career directions possible for those we serve, to make sure that people with disabilities, like the rest of Florida's job seekers and workers, have the education and training needed to satisfy the skills demanded by Florida's businesses. And then we need to take that knowledge and translate it into action at the community level. The task is big, the rewards are greater.

Have a wonderful summer!

Kind regards,



Dr. Susanne F. Homant

President & CEO, The Able Trust

## Meet the Board of Directors

The Able Trust is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors, all appointed by the Governor of the State of Florida. The Board of Directors is primarily responsible for the overall governance of the organization, which includes fiduciary duties to assure the financial viability of the organization, to provide strategic and long-term direction to the organization, to approve grants, and to hire its CEO. The Able Trust is very fortunate to have nine very talented Directors, all of whom have extensive knowledge of the disability network or have a disability themselves, and all of whom have impressive business backgrounds. The Grantor will feature three of the Directors in each edition during 2012.

### Jeannie Amendola



Ms. Amendola has been a member of The Able Trust Board of Directors since the spring of 2006, and currently serves the organization as Secretary of the Board and Chairs the important Development and Marketing Committee. Raised in Connecticut, Jeannie and her parents moved to Florida in 1989, and she began her 23 year career with Walt Disney World that year. Currently a senior executive administrative assistant at the Orlando WDW office, she has been honored numerous times for her commitment to excellence on the job and her dedication to community and state effort that help those with challenges and in need of extra support

to be as successful as possible. Jeannie is legally blind, and has used her low vision as a platform for discussion in helping to create a workplace that is inclusive of those with disabilities. Her accomplishments are many and she has received many awards in her work and volunteer activities. She was named a Partner on Excellence by WDW; was selected as a WDW Ambassador and helped to open Hong Kong Disneyland in that capacity; has served as President of CastABLE, a group of supporters and advocates of Disney Cast Members, is on the Board of the Lighthouse of Central Florida, and is Vice Chair of the Greater Orlando Business Leadership Network. She has often spoken on behalf of the mission of The Able Trust throughout Florida, using her experience to inspire and motivate others. Jeannie earned her bachelor's degree from the College of Notre Dame in Maryland, and has studied abroad. In her spare time, she enjoys swimming, music, and carries on her father's love of cooking.

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- Abilities Foundation
- Abilities of Florida, Inc.
- Ability 1st
- Accessible Alternatives, Inc.
- ACT Corporation
- Action Disability Advocates, Inc.
- Advance Ability Solutions
- AFIRE of Pasco County, Inc.
- Against All Odds-Macular Degeneration Network
- Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc.
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Agency for Workforce Innovation
- Aids Community Project of Tampa Bay
- American Foundation for Visual Rehabilitation
- American Habilitation Services, Inc.
- American with Disabilities Working Group
- Ann Storck Center, Inc.
- Apalachee Center, Inc.
- ARC, Inc.
- ARC Alachua County
- ARC Florida
- ARC Gadsden
- ARC Gateway, Inc.
- ARC Glades Area
- ARC Jackson County
- ARC Madison-Jefferson
- ARC Marion, Inc.
- ARC Nassau
- ARC Nature Coast
- ARC of Alachua County
- ARC of Bradford County
- ARC of Broward
- ARC of Indian River County
- ARC of Martin County
- ARC of Okeechobee
- ARC of Palm Beach County
- ARC of Putnam County
- ARC Ridge Area
- ARC South Florida, Inc.
- ARC St. John's County, Inc.
- ARC St. Lucie County
- ARC Sumter County
- ARC Upper Pinellas
- ARC Volusia
- Archways Behavioral Healthcare
- Association for the Development of the Exceptional
- Axon Technologies, Inc.
- Bay Point Schools, Inc.
- Bayview Center for Mental Health, Inc.
- Behavioral Health Services
- Bethune-Cookman College
- Big Bend Workforce Center
- Blind Americans, Inc.
- Boley Centers for Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
- Brain & Spinal Cord Injury Program
- Brain Injury Association of Florida
- Brevard Achievement Center
- Brevard Community College
- Brevard Public Schools
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
- Bureau Chief for Medicaid Services
- CARC-Advocates for Citizens with Disabilities, Inc.
- Caring & Sharing CIL
- CCAR Services, Inc.
- CCDH, Inc.
- Celestial Therapeutic & Ornamental Gardens
- Center for Drug Free Living
- Center for Independence, Technology and Education
- Center for Independent Living of Broward
- Center for Independent Living of Central FL- Polk office
- Center for Independent Living of Central Florida
- Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida
- Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida
- Center for Independent Living of South Florida
- Center for Independent Living of Southwest Florida
- Center for Independent Living of the Keys
- Center for Positive Connections
- Center for Space Education
- Center for the Visually Impaired
- CHAC-Sarasota/Manatee Co. HSHT
- Charter School at National Deaf Academy
- Chipola Junior College
- Citrus Hearing Impaired Program Services, Inc.
- Coalition for Independent Living Options, Inc.
- Communication Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Community Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Community Haven for Adults and Children with Disabilities

Creech Engineers, Inc.  
 DAAWG  
 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Pasco/Hernando Co, Inc.  
 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Volusia/Flagler  
 Deaf & Hearing Connection for Tampa Bay, Inc.  
 Deaf & Hearing Services of Lake & Sumter Counties  
 Deaf Service Bureau of West Central Florida  
 Deaf Service Center of Palm Beach County  
 Deaf Service Center of Pasco/Hernando County  
 Deaf Service Center of SW Florida, Inc.  
 Deaf Service Center of the Treasure Coast, Inc.  
 Dept. of Children & Families  
 Dept. of Corrections  
 Dept. of Education  
 Dept. of Education-BISCS  
 Dept. of Elder Affairs  
 Dept. Elder Affairs Employment Programs Unit  
 Dept. of Veterans Affairs  
 Deputy of Juvenile Justice  
 Developmental Services, Inc.  
 Developmentally Disabled Residential Corp.  
 Disability Rights Florida  
 Division of Blind Services  
 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
 Division of Workers Compensation  
 Division of Workers' Office  
 DOE/BICS  
 DOT'S WRITE  
 Easter Seal Society of Broward County, Inc.  
 Easter Seals Miami-Dade  
 Easter Seals of Broward County  
 Easter Seals Society of Volusia & Flagler Counties, Inc.  
 Echo Outreach Ministries  
 Eckerd Academy/Eckerd Youth Alternatives  
 Elder Care of Alachua County  
 Emmanuel A.M.E. Zion Church, and Childcare Center  
 Epilepsy Association of Central Florida, Inc.  
 Epilepsy Foundation of NE Florida  
 Epilepsy Foundation of South Florida  
 Epilepsy Foundation of Southwest FL  
 Escambia HS/HT  
 FAAST  
 Fellowship House  
 FL Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged  
 FL Crown Workforce Development Board  
 FL DDC  
 FL Dept. of Business and Professional Regulation  
 Florida Aids Action Council  
 Florida Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Inc.  
 Florida Association for the Deaf and Blind, Inc.  
 Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living  
 Florida Capital County  
 Florida Center for the Blind, Inc.  
 Florida Coalition for the Homeless  
 Florida Council for Community Health, Inc.  
 Florida Council for Community Mental Health, Inc.  
 Florida Crown Workforce Board, Inc.  
 Florida Crown Workforce Career Center  
 Florida Department of Education  
 Florida Impact  
 Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.  
 Florida Institute of Rehabilitation Education (FIRE)  
 Florida Keys Employment & Training Council  
 Florida Lions Conklin Center for the Blind  
 Florida Medicaid  
 Florida Psychiatric Society  
 Florida Rehabilitation Association  
 Florida Society of Ophthalmology  
 Florida Space Grant Consortium  
 Florida's Voice on Mental Retardation  
 Florida Department of Corrections  
 Foundation for Orange Co. Public Schools, Inc.  
 Friends of the Deaf Service Center, Inc.  
 Glaxo Smith Kline  
 Global Care Provider Services  
 Good Hope Equestrian Training Center  
 Goodwill CDC  
 Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast  
 Goodwill Foundation, Inc.  
 Goodwill Heart of Florida  
 Goodwill Industries of Broward  
 Goodwill Industries of Central Florida  
 Goodwill Industries of North Florida  
 Goodwill Industries of South Florida, Inc.  
 Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida  
 Goodwill Industries Suncoast, Inc.  
 Goodwill Industries-Manasota, Inc.  
 Grove House Supportive Services, Inc.

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## Robert A. Butterworth, Esq



General Butterworth has served the State of Florida in several capacities, notably as its 33<sup>rd</sup> Attorney General, serving under three different Governors and the longest serving Attorney General in Florida's history. He later served as Secretary of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), helping to restore credibility to the troubled departments operations. During his tenure as Attorney General, he led the Florida lawsuit against the tobacco industry, which eventually resulted in a settlement of \$11 billion to the state and national recognition for the General. His impressive public service background also includes work as sheriff of Broward County, mayor of Sunrise, Florida, and Director of the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles. After his resignation from DCF, he joined the Ft. Lauderdale law firm now known as Fowler White Boggs. General Butterworth experienced a deep personal tragedy in his earlier years, which gave him a keen awareness of the public obligation to help those who suffer from disabilities and other challenges. His love of children in the foster care system was evident in his work with DCF, and he has been a champion of the foster care high school high tech project of The Able Trust. Bob was appointed to the Board of The Able Trust in 2009, and serves on its Ethics, Bylaws, and Policies Committee and the Grant Committee. He has remained very active outside his law practice, serving on several public commissions and task forces. He is respected and consulted nationally for his expertise on issues related to citizen rights and the rule of law. He was born in New Jersey, moving to Florida with his family as a child. He earned his business degree from the University of Florida, and his law degree at the University of Miami. General Butterworth is married to Marta, and they have two children, BreAnne and Brandon.

## J.R. Harding, Ed.D



Dr. James R. Harding works with the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities as its External Affairs Coordinator, working in that public agency to promote the health and wellbeing of all people with disabilities, with an emphasis on those with developmental disabilities, and focusing on jobs, transportation and community relations. Born in Chicago, he was injured as he was approaching his senior year in high school, suffered a severed spinal cord, and now lives with quadriplegia. Dr. Harding, who prefers to be called JR, learned by overcoming his own challenges that a person with a disability can have a productive and rewarding life. He works full time, drives his own vehicle using special controls, and communicates easily with computer, phone and other technology. JR is an exceptional speaker, delivering presentations statewide and nationally. He has published his first book, has written several articles, and is working on a second book. He has received many awards from public organizations, including the 2009 Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year Award from The Able Trust. JR was appointed to The Able Trust Board of Directors in the fall of 2009, and serves on its Marketing and Development Committee and Grant Committee. He is a graduate of Leadership Tallahassee, and is the first graduate with a disability from Leadership Florida. He earned his bachelor's degree from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, his master's from the University of West Florida, and his Doctorate in Education from Florida State University. He moved to Florida in 1990, and is married to Erika.

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“When we started this administration 16 months ago, one of the things we really wanted to do more of was create more opportunities for the citizens in this state who are most in need,” Wilkins said. “As we began, one of the first organizations I met that shared our mission was The Able Trust.” ■



We congratulate our 2012 Ability Award winners (front, from left to right) Kelly Greene - Center for Independent Living of S. FL, Amy Kessel - Sykes, Donna Cornellier - State Attorney's Office of the 4th Judicial Circuit, Barbara Ramos - Goodwill Industries of SW FL, Sarah Goldman, (back, from left to right) Steve Howells - FFAST, Bob Bromberg, Joseph Behr - Sykes, John Miller, Angela Hemstreet - Goodwill Industries of SW FL., Kathleen Peck - Lighthouse of Collier, Jackie Bevel - State Attorney's Office of the 4th Judicial Circuit, Bob Gabordi - Tallahassee Democrat

## Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole with CIL Executive Director Kelly Greene, Able Trust Sr. Vice President Guenevere Crum, Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins, and Able Trust President & CEO Susanne Homant.

the Miami-Dade area as a result of the program's efforts. The Able Trust congratulates the Center's hard work in making the employment dreams a reality for veterans with disabilities in South Florida.

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Guardian Angels for Special Populations, Inc.  
Gulf Coast Community Care  
Gulfstream Goodwill Industries  
Habilitation Center for the Handicapped  
Habitat for Humanity of Hillsborough County  
Hardee Association for Retarded Citizens  
Hearing Impaired Persons  
Heron-Peacock Supported Living  
HOPE Center  
Hope Haven Children's Clinic and Family Center  
Horses and the Handicapped of South Florida, Inc.  
Human Services Council  
I Can Grow, Inc.  
Independence for the Blind  
Independent Living and Resource Center NE Florida  
Independent Living Resource Center of Northeast Florida  
Janssen  
Jeff Industries  
Jewish Association for Residential Care  
Jewish Community Services of South Florida, Inc.  
La Amistad Foundation, Inc.  
Lakeside Alternatives  
Lakeview Center Foundation  
LARC, Inc.  
L'Arche Harbor House  
Latino Leadership, Inc.  
Law, Redd, Crona & Munroe, P.A  
League for the Hard of Hearing  
Liefers & Associates  
Life Management Center of Northwest Florida, Inc.  
Life Stream Behavioral Center  
Lighthouse for the Blind of the Palm Beaches, Inc.  
Lighthouse of Broward  
Lighthouse of Central Florida  
Lincoln-Marti Community Agency  
Lock Towns Community Mental Health Center, Inc.  
Louise H. Graham Training Center  
Loveland Center Inc.  
MacDonald Training Center, Inc.  
MACTown, Inc.  
Madison County HSHT  
Madison County School Board Dept, ESE  
Magellan Health Services  
Manatee Glens  
Marianne Center Services  
Martin Memorial Health System  
MAXIMUS  
McDaniel Consulting, L.L.C.  
Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County  
Mental Health Care, Inc.  
Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Miami-Dade Disability Services and Independent Living (DSAIL)  
Michael D. Cusick & Associates, Inc.  
Monroe Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc.  
Moore Consulting Group, Inc.  
Muscular Dystrophy Association  
NAMI Florida, Inc.  
NASA  
National Multiple Sclerosis (FL Gulf Coast)  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society- Mid FL Chapter  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society, North Florida Chapter  
National Wheelchair Sports Fund  
New Hope Drop In Center, Inc.  
New Horizons Community Mental Health Center, Inc.  
New Horizons of the Treasure Coast, Inc.  
Northside Mental Health Center  
OFCCP Miami Area Office  
OFCCP Orlando District Office  
Office of Health Services  
Office of the Governor  
Okeechobee Rehabilitation Facility  
One Stop Career Center  
Orange County Public Schools  
Osceola ARC, Inc.  
Palm Bay High School  
Palm Beach County HS/HT  
Palm Beach Habilitation Center, Inc.  
Pathways to Independence, Inc.  
Pensacola Care, Inc.  
Perdido Bay Tribe, Inc.  
Pine Castle, Inc.  
Primrose Center, Inc.  
Project Special Care  
Project STAND, Inc.  
PSI Family Services of Florida, Inc.  
Pyramid, Inc.

Rehabilitation Services, Inc.  
 Remmert Employment Project  
 Renaissance Behavioral Health System, Inc.  
 Roe & Associates Integrated Behavior Supports, Inc.  
 Rotary Youth Camp  
 Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service of S. Palm Beach Co.  
 Seacamp Association, Inc.  
 Seagull Industries for the Disabled, Inc.  
 Self Reliance, Inc.  
 Seminole Work Opportunity Program  
 SGS  
 Sickle Cell Disease Association of Broward County, Inc.  
 Sickle Cell Disease Association of Florida  
 Small Business Development Center/ FGCU  
 Social Security Administration  
 SOS Children's Village of Florida  
 Southeast Parkinson Disease Association  
 Space Coast Center for Independent Living  
 Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health - FL  
 Supreme Court  
 St. Andrew's Bay Center  
 Stand Among Friends  
 Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention FL Office of Drug Control  
 Suncoast Center for Independent Living  
 Suncoast Epilepsy Association, Inc.  
 Suncoast Health Council, Inc.  
 Sunrise Cape Coral Cluster  
 Sunrise Community of Polk County  
 Sunrise Community of Southwest Florida  
 Sunrise Community, Inc.  
 Sunrise of Pasco County  
 Sunrise Opportunities, Inc.  
 Tallahassee Community College  
 Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind  
 Taylor County High School  
 Technical & Career Education  
 Technical and Career Education  
 The ARC of Jacksonville  
 The Center for Independence, Inc.  
 The Harbor  
 The Learning Experience School  
 The Spina Bifida Association of Jacksonville, Inc.  
 The Watson Center  
 TLC Landscape Contractors, Inc.  
 Tri-County Community Council, Inc.  
 Tri-County TEC  
 Tyler Institute  
 United Cerebral Palsy of Central Florida  
 United Cerebral Palsy of East Central Florida  
 United Cerebral Palsy of North Florida  
 United Cerebral Palsy of Northwest Florida  
 United Cerebral Palsy of Panama City, Inc.  
 United Cerebral Palsy of Sarasota-Manatee & SW Florida  
 United Cerebral Palsy of South Florida  
 United Cerebral Palsy of Southwest Florida, Inc.  
 United Cerebral Palsy of Tallahassee  
 University of South Florida  
 Urban League of Broward County  
 Van Gogh's Palette, Inc.  
 Veterans Administration  
 Victory Living Programs  
 Vincent House  
 Visual Dialogue  
 Visually Impaired Persons of Southwest Florida  
 Volunteer Florida Foundation  
 Volunteer Jacksonville, Inc.  
 VSA Arts of Florida  
 Walton County ARC  
 Washington/Holmes ARC  
 WAVE The Workshop for Adult Vocational Enrichment  
 Wellcare  
 Woodland Hall Academy/Dyslexia Research Institute  
 Workforce Alliance, Inc.  
 Workforce Development Board  
 Workforce Development Board of Okaloosa & Walton Counties  
 Workforce Florida  
 Working Solutions

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## Media Representative Award



(from left to right) Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins with Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole, Bob Gabordi, and Able Trust President & CEO Susanne Homant.

The Tallahassee Democrat is the only daily newspaper serving Tallahassee and most of Leon County. Known simply as the Democrat to many, it has the task of covering community news, as well as the activities of the State Legislature, state agencies, and other elected state officials. Importantly, and in line with the mission of The Able Trust, the Democrat has been very generous with the news space it provides to help its customers learn more about the needs, desires, and talents of people with disabilities and their families. Unlike many other newspapers in the state, the Democrat often provides front page coverage about the challenges and successes of people with disabilities.

For The Able Trust, this means excellent coverage of activities during Disability Employment Awareness Month, Disability Mentoring Days, and the Youth Leadership Forum. This is a reflection of the philosophies of the Publisher, Patrick Dorsey, and Executive Editor, Bob Gabordi. Mr. Dorsey has supported frequent reporting about people with disabilities, and Bob Gabordi writes often about their needs, very likely inspired by his own young daughter who lives with a disability. Both of these gentlemen help to make sure the community they serve understands and accepts those members who are challenged by a disability, and The Able Trust is proud to recognize their work at the Democrat.

## Adult Leadership Award



(from left to right) Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins with Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole, and John Miller with his daughter.

John Miller was born in 1968 in Montreal, Quebec. As a child, he dealt with many social and academic difficulties. Through much perseverance, he graduated from high school in 1986 and went on to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida Atlantic University, later earning a master's in Special Education in hopes of helping those with special needs. However, John was later diagnosed with Asperger's. Realizing the many difficulties and barriers he faced throughout his life, he became a strong advocate for individuals on the spectrum. In 2010, he finished a manuscript based on his own life and teaching experiences titled, "The A Word: My Life

With Asperger's and the World of Autism." In early 2011 he was invited to the Autism Society of Florida's Board, and later that year was profiled in Autism Spectrum Quarterly. He is a community leader, creating and implementing a curriculum for students on the Autism Spectrum, mentoring the teachers of such students in the Palm Beach School System, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Florida Atlantic University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (who nominated him for this award). The Able Trust is proud to recognize his accomplishments.

## Young Adult Leadership Award



*Sarah Goldman at the 2011 Able Trust Ability Celebration in Orlando, FL.*

Sarah Goldman's life has been about challenges. Not only facing and overcoming them, but encouraging others to do the same. Born with Cerebral Palsy, Sarah has not allowed her disability to define her. She is a senior at the University of Central Florida in Orlando in the School of Social Work after starting off in the Early Childhood Education and Psychology programs. She serves as President of UCF's Society of Scholars. Her dream is to inspire children with disabilities, showing them that they can have hope and a future, no matter their challenges. A 2007 alum of The Able Trust's Florida Youth Leadership Forum, Sarah returns to this event each summer to serve as an adult volunteer and group facilitator. Her dedication to this program, and to the young people that it impacts, teaching life and leadership lessons, embodies the spirit of the Young Adult Leadership Award that she receives today. She is a community leader that has assisted The Able Trust in public speaking roles whenever possible, mentoring new and old friends about their capabilities, and has represented the United States at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing. The Able Trust is proud to recognize Sarah Goldman with the Young Adult Leadership Award.

## Large Employer of the Year



*(from left to right) Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins with Amy Kessel, Able Trust Chief Development Director Kathryn McManus, Able Trust President & CEO Susanne Homant, Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole, and Joseph Behr.*

Sykes is a company dedicated to providing employment opportunities for all. The company is known for being aggressive and proactive in finding the right employees for vacant positions, and demonstrating a willingness to provide accommodations to those that they hire. The company was nominated by the Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind for this award, and the organization has worked with Sykes for more than 10 years after the company contacted the Lighthouse looking for potential employees. In addition to their hiring, Sykes opens their doors to teenagers that participate in the Lighthouses' summer program, providing mentorships, tours, and job-seeking pointers. One student, who spent several summers under the mentoring program of the Information Technology (IT) Department, is now seeking an IT degree. In the midst of a sluggish economy, they have remained committed to hiring a diverse workforce. The Able Trust commends Sykes for being proactive in the hiring of each individual for their abilities.

## Medium Employer of the Year

The Ross Dress for Less location in Stuart, Florida is known in Martin County for encouraging applicants with disabilities to apply for positions. They formed an employment referral relationship with Gulfstream Goodwill Industries (who nominated the location for this award) in 2007. Since the collaborative arrangement was created, the store manager and her team have actively supported the inclusion of individuals with disabilities referred by Goodwill in a variety of positions at the store. Accommodations, modifications to job descriptions, and alternative communication methods have all contributed to the success of the employment gained. All team meetings, trainings, and evaluations have included either a note taker or interpreter, and Ross has allowed full access for Job Coaches to assist during the training period as well as follow-up opportunities throughout the placement. The Able Trust commends Ross Dress for Less and Store Manager, Jill Wahler, for opening up employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

## Representative of the Year Award



*(from left to right) Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins with Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole, Representative Marlene O'Toole, and Able Trust President & CEO Susanne Homant.*

Representative O'Toole, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, moved to Florida in 1996 after a 30-year career with IBM, retiring as an executive for the Southeast Region based in Atlanta, Georgia. She settled in The Villages and soon became interested in volunteer and public work. In 2008 she was elected to the Florida House of Representatives, and reelected subsequently. Almost immediately she became a respected member of the Florida Legislature, known for her wisdom and kind, but firm negotiation skills. When she learned of the mission and good works of The Able Trust, she became a strong supporter, frequently helping to champion legislative initiatives of The Able Trust in whatever way feasible. Representative O'Toole and her staff have always been extremely responsive to requests for information and direction on legislative issues, and The Able Trust could not have a better friend in the House of Representatives. She serves on multiple committees in the Florida Legislature and chairs the important Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, which votes on The Able Trust's HSHT budget. Her volunteer work is extensive, and includes service at The United Way, Hospice, Take Stock in Children, and Workforce Florida. In acknowledgement of her service, Representative O'Toole was recently appointed to the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on State Higher Education Reform. The Able Trust is proud to recognize her service to the State of Florida, and the mission of our organization.

## Senator of the Year Award

Senator Latvala became a Floridian in 1961, moving from Mississippi as a child. He first entered public office in 1994, and served as a Senator through a term ending in 2002. After a break in legislative work, he was elected to the Senate again in 2010. Senator Latvala is CEO of Gulf Coast Imprinting Services in Largo, Florida. His support of organizations and businesses is extensive, and during 2011-2012 alone, he received 16 different awards for his work in the Senate. Known as a quick study, he has an in-depth knowledge of how the legislature works, and has been able to identify solutions for many problems with efficiency and through the influence he has developed with other legislative colleagues. He has long been a supporter of organizations that support children, people with disabilities, and the education of Florida's citizens. During the legislative sessions in 2011 and 2012, Senator Latvala worked with The Able Trust to ensure that legislative action occurred to facilitate the efficient transfer of funds to The Able Trust for its allocation from sales of temporary handicap parking permit fees. He identified a way to handle our concerns, and was instrumental in assuring passage in 2012. The Able Trust is proud to recognize Senator Latvala as the Senator of the Year for his service to the State of Florida, and the mission of our organization.

## High School High Tech Program of the Year



*(from left to right) Barbara Ramos and Angela Hemstreet with Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins, Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole, and State Director of Florida High School High Tech Allison Chase.*

Goodwill Industries of SW Florida serves approximately 75 youth with disabilities in Lee, Charlotte, Hendry and Glades counties for The Able Trust's Florida High School High Tech Program on an annual basis. The talented professional staff is led by President/CEO, Tom Feurig, Vice President of Career Development Services, Fred Richards, and Program Supervisor, Tim Goodman along with a top-notch staff of Project Site Coordinators, Angela Hemstreet and Barbara Ramos, and Grant Writer Shannon Maitland. Their team leadership ensures that students experience the depth and breadth of career and personal development, which is the core intent of the HSHT program. Their impact and results speak for themselves. In the last year, 100% of their students graduated from high school, and 70% of those graduates went directly to college or employment. This summer, nearly half of their students will participate in paid summer internship experiences that are a result of community business partnerships and additional local grant support. The Able Trust commends Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida for creating and sustaining in four counties highly successful HSHT programs.

## Public Employee of the Year



*(from left to right) Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins with Able Trust Ambassador Eladio Amores, FAAST Executive Director Steve Howells, and Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole.*

Steve Howells is the Executive Director of FAAST, an attorney, and a great friend of The Able Trust. Formerly, he worked 23 years with The Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities (now known as Disability Rights Florida) as director of various protection and advocacy programs designed to protect the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. He became FAAST's Executive Director in 2007, taking on the task of managing a statewide organization that provides an extensive inventory of assistive devices and work assistance information to all Floridians with disabilities. FAAST is a non-profit organization funded by the US Department of Education through the Assistive Technology Act of 2004, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and has the mission of improving the quality of life for people with disabilities through the use of assistive devices and technology. The Able Trust's HSHT program is one of the programs that he and FAAST have continually supported. In 2010, FAAST and The Able Trust began distributing refurbished laptop computers to HSHT students who did not have access to computer technology at home. Since the laptop program's inception, 66 students with disabilities now have a computer at home. All of those students join The Able Trust in honoring Mr. Howells with this award.

## Public Organization of the Year



*(from left to right) Able Trust Board Member J.R. Harding with Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins, Donna Cornellier, Jackie Bevel, and Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole.*

In 2003, the State of Florida passed legislation creating the Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program, an idea that grew out of a Jacksonville-area organization and moved forward with the strong support of Senator Steve Wise. The PCA program was designed to assist people with disabilities who are employed to obtain and pay for a personal care attendant. In 2008, the program was expanded and renamed the James Patrick Memorial Work Incentive PAS Program, as a tribute to the man who worked to make it possible. Mr. Patrick, a quadriplegic, worked in the State Attorney's Office in Jacksonville, and was the first to suggest that a portion of severely delinquent sales tax funds be put into a special program for collection and use by working people with disabilities, to help pay for their personal care attendants so they could remain at work. The State Attorney's office of the 4th Judicial Circuit in Jacksonville was the first state attorney's office to participate in the program, and has been a model for other state attorney's offices that now participate in obtaining funds for the James Patrick Memorial program, supporting many working people with disabilities, allowing them to keep on working and contributing to their communities. With seven state attorneys' offices throughout Florida that are participating in this important program, many individuals with disabilities have benefited, and the program continues to grow in funds available and people served.

## Volunteer of the Year



*(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole with Bob Bromberg, Able Trust Vice Chair Bridget Pallango, Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida's Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins, and Able Trust President & CEO Susanne Homant.*

Bob Bromberg hails from Miami, Florida and is a well-known consultant in corporate human resource management. He became interested in helping people with disabilities many years ago, inspired by a relative with a disability. Mr. Bromberg has served The Able Trust as an Ambassador since 2001, and has had an even longer term on the Board of Goodwill Industries of South Florida. He also serves on the Board of the Everglades Association. As a volunteer, Bob became the founding president of the Miami-Dade Business Leadership Network in 2004, a group of influential business people in Miami who are working together to help in the employment of people with disabilities. This network was the first local Business Leadership Network (BLN) to form in Florida, and remains one of the strongest Florida BLNs to this day. He also created and marketed the "Look at My Ability" campaign, which has been used effectively within and outside of Florida to promote the hiring of people with disabilities. During his tenure with the Miami-Dade organization – now called the Miami Dade Employability Network – it has funded over 75 paid internships, with permanent placement for a number of the interns. For all of his many contributions, The Able Trust is proud to recognize Bob Bromberg as Volunteer of the Year.

## Grantee Spotlight: Key Clubhouse of South Florida

In today's difficult economy, finding employment at any skill level and in just about any field is challenging. A grant presented in Miami Tuesday will give a much-needed boost to persons with mental health disabilities who are already working to overcome barriers in their path to independence.

The Key Clubhouse of South Florida is a membership-based community where people living with persistent mental illness come to rebuild their lives. The Miami-based nonprofit will use the \$32,5000 grant provided by the Able Trust to support Clubhouse activities including a staff member to assist Clubhouse members in reintegrating into the workforce through a variety of skill-building services.

"Our primary mission at The Able Trust is to help create employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Florida," said Dr. Susanne Homant, President and CEO of The Able Trust. "The \$32,500 grant we are providing to Key Clubhouse for this model program was a natural fit for The Able Trust. They have been enormously successful in helping to prepare persons with mental health disabilities to live a life without limits and experience the highest degree of independence—which includes reintegrating them into the workforce."



*Key Clubhouse will use the funding provided by a grant from The Able Trust to create vital skill-building activities that will make clubhouse participants more marketable as they enter the workforce.*

The Key Clubhouse provides an accepting place to spend the day, participate in valuable work that supports the Clubhouse operations, socialize with friends and co-workers and gain access to transitional and supported employment within the community.

"We are extremely grateful for this grant from the Able Trust," said Stephanie Solovei, Executive Director of Key Clubhouse of South Florida. "It will enable us to really help persons with mental health disabilities complete the process of learning to live independently. Preparing them with the proper training and skills is one thing; ensuring that they actually get hired is another. And that's what we plan on doing with this program."

Employment for persons with disabilities is much lower than for persons without disabilities. A 2010 Harris Interactive survey titled "The ADA, 20 Years Later," the Kessler Foundation and the National Organization on Disability (NOD) found that only 21% of persons with disabilities aged 18–64 are employed full- or part-time, far below the 59% reported for persons without disabilities. The model program will help open doors and improve job opportunities for people with disabilities who have armed themselves with the education and skills required to succeed as professionals. Ensuring that the underrepresented disability community can find employment appropriate to their background and skills is a top priority of the Able Trust. ■

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## Grant Awards for 4th Quarter 2012

The Able Trust Board of Directors recently met in Tallahassee and made five grant awards totaling \$111,000.

- **Beacon College** in Leesburg, Florida received \$50,000 for the *More Than a Paycheck Program*, which will provide for expansion of its current career placement activities of the Transition Life Coach for its students and alumni.
- **Florida Lions Conklin Centers for the Blind** in Daytona Beach, Florida received \$50,000 for its *Supported Services for Independent Living and Employment Program*, which will support individuals who are visually-impaired with significant co-occurring disabilities, helping them become independent and employed individuals.
- **Miami Lighthouse for the Blind** in Miami, Florida was awarded \$2,836.98 for *Services for Individuals with Macular Degeneration*, from the McKeon Family Ability Fund administered by The Able Trust.
- **New Vision for Independence** in Leesburg, Florida was awarded \$2,836.98 for *Services for Individuals with Macular Degeneration*, from the McKeon Family Ability Fund administered by The Able Trust.
- **University of Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, McKnight Vision Research Center** in Miami, Florida received \$5,326.04, for *Research on Macular Degeneration Eye Disease*, from the McKeon Family Ability Fund administered by The Able Trust.

## Grantee Spotlight: St. Petersburg College



*St. Petersburg College will use its \$200,000 grant award from The Able Trust to train and place graduates with disabilities in professional positions in line with their fields of study.*

College graduates are having a tough time finding employment in their chosen career field these days. A \$200,000 grant presented in St. Petersburg today will give a much-needed boost to graduates who have demonstrated the ability to achieve, overcoming the barriers standing between them and their goal of independence.

St. Petersburg College Foundation is the recipient of a large grant award to implement a model program helping new graduates with disabilities enter the workforce. The nonprofit Foundation will utilize the three-year grant from The Able Trust to assess, prepare and place college graduates with disabilities in professional positions in their field of study.

“Our primary mission at The Able Trust is to help create successful employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities,” said Dr. Susanne Homant, President and CEO of The Able Trust. “The grant we are providing to the St. Petersburg College Foundation for this model program was a natural fit for The Able Trust. With these funds, they will be able to put into place programs that will help prepare college students with disabilities to live a productive life and experience the highest degree of independence—which includes integrating them into the workforce.”

The Student Employment Project is a collaborative team effort of staff resources at St. Petersburg College to work with 60 students and to assist at least 30 of them to gain employment that matches their career goals and education over the three years of the grant. The program will create a Job Placement Specialist who will work to develop employment opportunities, coach students in workplace behaviors, resume development and job interview skills. The program will have a team of expert staff to further assist with job placement including the Disability Resource Office, Men Achieving Excellence program, Women on the Way program, the Veteran Services Coordinator and the Internship Coordinator. Support groups, transportation assistance and financial planning will also be made available to participants of the program.

“We are extremely grateful for this grant from The Able Trust,” said Frances Neu, executive director of the St. Petersburg College Foundation. “It will enable us to help persons with disabilities complete the process of learning to live independently. Preparing them with the proper training and skills is one thing; ensuring that they actually get hired is another. And that’s what we plan on doing with this program.”

Employment for persons with disabilities is much lower than for persons without disabilities. A 2010 Harris Interactive survey titled “The ADA, 20 Years Later,” the Kessler Foundation and the National Organization on Disability (NOD) found that only 21% of persons with disabilities aged 18–64 are employed full- or part-time, far below the 59% reported for persons without disabilities. The model program will help open doors and improve job opportunities for people with disabilities who have armed themselves with the education and skills required to succeed as professionals. Ensuring that the underrepresented disability community can find employment appropriate to their background and skills is a top priority of The Able Trust. ■

# Partners Making A Difference - The Choma Family

by Kathryn McManus

Antonio Nicholas Choma stood out among his peers – not for his disability, but for his natural leadership skills.

“His teacher at Ave Maria School (in Myakka City) told us if Tony came to school in just his underwear, all the other kids would do the same.” Tony’s parents recalled with a smile.

It was this unique trait that led the school administration to select Tony when he was a junior to represent the county as their sole delegate at The Able Trust’s Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) in Tallahassee. He joined other students with disabilities from around the state to learn more about leadership, self-advocacy, community service, college life, careers, and business etiquette. Tony’s parents, Richard and Linda, were amazed at how much Tony grew from his experience. They noticed how much more assertive he had become, able and willing to stand up for himself. As a result of Tony’s increased leadership skills in and out of his home, he was invited to return to YLF in subsequent summers as a junior staff member, assisting other students like himself. His passion was helping the new kids who were like him when he first arrived.

Tragically, Tony was lost in an automobile accident at the age of 20, leaving a void that is felt by all who knew him. When his birthday came around, Richard and Linda decided to make a gift to something that Tony felt was important – YLF. Every year since, they have made contributions to The Able Trust in his memory. They believe supporting programs that make kids with disabilities feel whole and loved, developing their self-worth and independence, is even more important now in times of shrinking government resources.

“Those who can’t speak for themselves are being pushed into the background, and we need to stand up and fight for them,” Linda said.

The Able Trust and the YLF team are proud to have had Tony Choma as part of our family, and very much appreciate his parent’s commitment to helping other youth with disabilities. ■

For more information about ways to support and invest in The Able Trust, please contact Chief Development Director Kathryn McManus at [Kathryn@abletrust.org](mailto:Kathryn@abletrust.org) or 813-240-1527.



*The Chomas yearly support of The Able Trust not only keeps the memory of their son, Tony, alive, but their gift benefits others who strive to overcome the same obstacles he faced.*

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## The 2012 Florida Youth Leadership Forum

On July 18, nearly 70 students with disabilities from across the state will participate in the 2012 Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). This four-day event hosted by The Able Trust will hone the leadership and social skills of its participants, creating leaders and advocates in their home communities. Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families & Florida’s Chief Operating Officer David Wilkins will be the keynote speaker at the annual Mentors’ Luncheon on Friday, July 20 at the Tallahassee/ Leon County Civic Center. He will be one of many dignitaries addressing YLF participants on the importance of education and employment.

“One experience I had with my disability was standing up for myself,” Skylar Kickligter said. “A person told me I couldn’t go to college for what I want to be. I told them I was going to get a degree and a minor. I’m going to prove them wrong!”

Skylar will join 48 other students this July as they explore STEM careers, participate in a mock session at the State Capitol, learn proper business and dinner etiquette, and discover the various resources available to them that will ensure that they attain the highest level of education and independence possible.

“I am Victoria Abreu, and I am dyslexic. An important experience for me was when my chemistry teacher was not going to allow me into the chemistry honors class,” she told us. “I was able to convince him to let me in, and if I did badly on the first chapter, I would go back to the regular class. Not only did I do well, but I ended up with one of the highest grades on the chemistry honors test.”

YLF 2012 will take place from July 18 - 22 in Tallahassee. ■



## *Make A Difference With Your Donation to The Able Trust!*

There are many ways you can support The Able Trust's programs to make successful employment available to Floridians with disabilities, and a gift of any amount will make a difference. For general contributions in support of our youth, mentoring and grant programs, you may click the "Make a Donation" button on our website, [www.AbleTrust.org](http://www.AbleTrust.org), or mail your gift with the form below to:

*The Able Trust, 3320 Thomasville Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, Florida, 32308-7906*

Tax Deductible Donation Amount (\$): \_\_\_\_\_

Cash, Check or Credit Card Donations are Accepted. Please make checks payable to The Able Trust.

Is this donation (*please check one*):

- To honor someone
- In memory of someone
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Please add me to The Able Trust's  email list  mailing list (please check one or both).

Do you have questions about Able Trust giving opportunities, corporate sponsorships, or endowment and planned giving? Please feel free to contact Chief Development Director Kathryn McManus at [kathryn@abletrust.org](mailto:kathryn@abletrust.org) or 850-224-4493 x151. Thank you for your support!

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities successful opportunities for employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$29 million in grants to nonprofit agencies throughout Florida for employment-related purposes, enabling thousands of Florida citizens of all ages with disabilities to enter the workforce each year. The Able Trust youth programs provide career development and transition for thousands of students with disabilities since its beginnings, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school.

**For more information about The Able Trust visit [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org).**

The Able Trust is recognized as exempt from federal income taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code and eligible to receive tax deductible contributions. Federal ID: 59-3052307. The Able Trust is registered with the Florida Division of Consumer Services as required by the Solicitation of Contributions Act (#CH957). A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free in Florida: (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.

# Partners Making A Difference: Walt Disney World® Resort

by Kathryn McManus

*Editor's note: This is the first of a new series highlighting companies which support The Able Trust, and actively hire people with disabilities. We appreciate all they do!*

When many people think of Florida, the first thing that comes to mind is *Walt Disney World*® Resort, a magical place where dreams come true. What many do not know is that *Walt Disney World*® Resort also makes dreams come true for its employees – particularly those with disabilities. Jeannie Amendola, an Able Trust Board member and 22-year veteran of *Walt Disney World*® Resort, is one of them. She recently shared her career challenges and successes with guests at The Able Trust's Ability Awards luncheon in Tallahassee. Her low vision has not kept her from becoming a respected senior executive administrative assistant, and earning their prestigious lifetime-achievement "Partner in Excellence" award. Jeannie also became the first person with a disability to be named a *Walt Disney World*® Resort Ambassador, representing the company and its tens of thousands of cast members at worldwide events.



Furthering its commitment to employ Floridians with disabilities, *Walt Disney World*® Resort has established "CastABLE", a group of supporters and advocates of Cast Members with disabilities in the workplace. The group – on which Jeannie served as president for five years – has become an important business resource in the recruitment and retention of employees. *Walt Disney World*® Resort has also demonstrated their support over the years with generous financial contributions to The Able Trust and its mission. They have put their time, treasures and talents into action, promoting employment for people with disabilities, and honoring cast members like Jeannie as inspirations for others. The Able Trust salutes *Walt Disney World*® Resort for recognizing the good business practice of hiring people with disabilities, and the example they have set for other businesses across the state in making dreams of equal employment come true. ■

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## Florida High School High Tech Expands Services to Youth in Foster Care

by Allison Chase

This spring, the Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) Program had the opportunity to expand services to youth with disabilities in foster care through a pilot program in the Orlando area. The goal of the pilot is to provide youth with disabilities in foster care with focus and support for success in education, work, and personal life. In addition to the traditional HSHT programming, the pilot emphasizes development of caring support networks, connections to physical and mental health services, connections to housing and income support programs, and personal finance training.

Fifteen youth have already participated in tours of businesses and education institutions in high-tech fields including the University of Central Florida, ITT Tech, Full Sail University, and an aquaponics farm. Plans for the summer include a service learning project and paid summer internships for every student!

The HSHT Foster Care Pilot is provided for by an Able Trust grant to Community Based Care of Central Florida. HSHT is jointly funded by The Able Trust and the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Other participating organizations in the HSHT Foster Care Pilot include the Florida Department of Children and Families and Public Allies of Central Florida. The Able Trust is proud to have the opportunity to expand services to a population which can greatly benefit from such an effective program. ■



*The Able Trust recently gave foster care students in Orlando the gift of technology, awarding them with fully-loaded laptops.*

## Grantee Spotlight: Stand Among Friends

The Able Trust recently made a grant award to an organization in South Florida committed to help college graduates find jobs in their chosen career field. A grant presented in Boca Raton will give a much-needed boost to graduates who have already proven their ability to overcome barriers in their path to independence.

Stand Among Friends is the recipient of a large grant award to implement a model program helping new graduates with disabilities enter the workforce. The Boca Raton-based non-profit will utilize the three-year grant from The Able Trust to assess, prepare and place college graduates with disabilities in professional positions in their field of study.

“Our primary mission at The Able Trust is to help create employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Florida,” said Dr. Susanne Homant, President and CEO of The Able Trust. “The grant we are providing to Stand Among Friends for this model program was a natural fit for The Able Trust. They have been enormously successful in helping to prepare persons with disabilities to live a life without limits and experience the highest degree of independence—which includes reintegrating them into the workforce.”



*Stand Among Friends received a \$200,000 grant from The Able Trust to provide employment services to 60 recent graduates, ensuring that they receive the proper training as they prepare to enter the workforce.*

The Career-Ability program will use a three-phase approach for transitioning college graduates with disabilities into the workforce: vocational rehabilitation registration; soft skills assessment and training; and career assessment and development. Additionally, program staff will provide communication and professional skills training, identify employment opportunities, conduct onsite job coaching and provide disability training for prospective employers. The \$200,000 grant from The Able Trust will fund services for 60 recent graduates who will be referred to the program by the student disability offices at their universities. The program will leverage existing employer relationships to introduce program candidates for employment with a goal of placing at least half of the graduates in professional positions commensurate to their education and experience.

“We are extremely grateful for this grant from the Able Trust,” said Shawn Friedkin, Executive Director of Stand Among Friends. “It will enable us to really help persons with disabilities complete the process of learning to live independently. Preparing them with the proper training and skills is one thing; ensuring that they actually get hired is another. And that’s what we plan on doing with this program.”

Employment for persons with disabilities is much lower than for persons without disabilities. A 2010 Harris Interactive survey titled “The ADA, 20 Years Later,” the Kessler Foundation and the National Organization on Disability (NOD) found that only 21% of persons with disabilities aged 18–64 are employed full- or part-time, far below the 59% reported for persons without disabilities. The model program will help open doors and improve job opportunities for people with disabilities who have armed themselves with the education and skills required to succeed as professionals. Ensuring that the underrepresented disability community can find employment appropriate to their background and skills is a top priority of the Able Trust. ■

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## Memorial Gifts

There are many ways for you to make a gift in remembrance of someone special that will have meaningful significance for years to come. Here are a few options to consider:

### *Make a Deductible Gift and Receive Life Income*

You may wish to make a memorial gift while providing current life income for yourself. If your memorial gift is made to fund a charitable remainder trust, you can receive income monthly, quarterly or annually. You receive a charitable deduction for your gift this year and avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale of your appreciated assets. The remainder passes to us as a gift in memory of your loved one. Please contact us for more information on charitable trust plans.

### *A Memorial Gift of Cash or Property*

A gift of cash is one of the simplest ways to remember your loved one or

friend. You receive a tax deduction for the value of your gift to The Able Trust. Please designate the person you wish to remember and the best way that we can honor them. If you are making a memorial gift of appreciated stock or real estate, your deduction may depend on the type of property gifted. Please call us to discuss the treatment of your gift and the best way to transfer your property to us.

## PLANNED GIVING

Please feel free to contact The Able Trust at 850-224-4493.

You may also visit our planned giving website at [www.myabletrust.org](http://www.myabletrust.org).

## Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

**July 18 - 22, 2012**

*2012 Florida Youth Leadership Forum*

**Tallahassee, FL**

**September 27, 2012**

*Able Trust Board of Directors Board Reception*

**Miami, FL**

**September 28, 2012**

*Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting*

**Miami, FL**

**October 2012**

*Disability Employment Awareness Month*

**December 7, 2012**

*Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting*

*Contributions are deductible according to applicable IRS guidelines. The Able Trust is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and in compliance with the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act.*