

FLORIDA GRANTOR

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Congratulations To The 2014 Able Trust Ability Award Winners!



Fourteen awardees were recognized at the 2014 Ability Awards. Read about them in this edition of The Florida Grantor.

(back row, from left to right) **Connie Smith**, Wells Fargo – *Corporate Champion*; **Scott Hilton**, Wells Fargo – *Corporate Champion*; **Julianne Frain**, Stand Among Friends – *Beverly Chapman Award*; **Representative Ed Hooper** – *Representative of the Year*; **Christine Barbuto**, Brevard Schools Foundation, Bayside High – *Florida High School High Tech Program of the Year*; **David Darm**, Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities – *Public Employee of the Year*; **Eladio Amores**, Corporate Consultant for the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – *Volunteer of the Year*

(front, from left to right) **Drew Davis** – *Young Adult Leadership Award*; **William Kennedy**, Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida – *Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award*; **Corina Larsen**, Stand Among Friends – *Beverly Chapman Award*; **Dianne Thomas**, Assistant General Manager of Marriott Global Reservation Sales & Customer Care – *Employer of the Year Award*; **Pamme Taylor**, WellCare Health Plans Inc. – *Adult Leadership Award and Employer of the Year Award*; **Mark Boswell**, Southeastern Uniforms – *Employer of the Year Award*

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

A Proven Route to Employment – Early work experiences



For the past two years, The Able Trust has been studying the routes to successful employment as an important part of its efforts to identify the most efficient and productive career paths for the talented people with disabilities that it serves. Such a study is critical for two reasons: it will direct The Able Trust and its Grantees to the activities that are most effective in advancing its mission of successful employment, and it will help in directing young job seekers with disabilities to a career that will contribute to the growth of Florida by providing businesses with workers that are equipped to fill the available jobs.

A very recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce concluded that by 2022 (a mere eight years from now) the United States will have 11 million fewer “necessary workers” with post-secondary education; 6.8 million will be needed with bachelor’s degrees, and another 4.3 million with other post-secondary degrees, some college credits, or vocational certificates. So although the country is just recovering from a brutal recession and high unemployment, it is facing another potential crisis where demand for the appropriately trained workers may far exceed the supply. Florida will be very much a part of this issue, as Florida is on stage to become the third largest state in population very soon. Every worker trained for the jobs of the present and future will be necessary to continue the economic recovery of Florida and to assure that growth is desirable and effective.

An analysis of several studies on the value of work experiences such as mentoring, job shadowing and internships tells us that such activities are not only effective, but necessary in directing all job seekers to the right career path, and perhaps even more necessary for job seekers with disabilities, because of the misperceptions in the workplace related to hiring people with disabilities. Studies such as that done by NACE, the US News Report, the University of Washington, and The Able Trust show that internships are particularly important. NACE concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between student internships and the increased probability of a full time job offer (although not necessarily at the internship site). US News reported that University officials and employers almost universally maintain an internship before graduation is integral to finding meaningful employment. The U of Washington stated that internships can “jump-start” a career, and apply classroom learning to the actual world of work. The Able Trust research concluded that internships for people with disabilities provides individuals with a much better idea of where their skills fit, while at the same time acclimating businesses to accepting and welcoming the talents of the workforce of people with disabilities.

Continuing research so widely supports the value of work experiences at such a high level that The Able Trust Board of Directors has committed significant resources to the expansion of internship opportunities for job seekers with disabilities, and is working with businesses and other Foundations to make that happen on a larger scale. The effort will require some training of businesses on setting up and implementing an internship program, to make sure the internship has value to both the intern and the business – both should gain from the experience. The Able Trust has a full time staff member and a consultant who will both be working on regional training for interested businesses in the fall of 2014, with a goal of at least four regional trainings by year-end. A collaborative effort with other organizations is being organized, to create actual internships with businesses over the next several months, subsequent to the training. In addition, The Able Trust has added legal documents to its website to help businesses properly structure an internship to eliminate any risk, and to make it valuable to all involved.

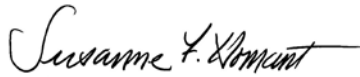
The value of work experiences to businesses is significant: they learn about the capabilities of people with disabilities (did you know that people with low vision or who are

blind are incredible listeners, and have excellent memories? That a person with physical limitations often reads more than average, developing analysis and speaking skills that may also be above average?) They also learn that working with a person with a disability is the same as working with anyone else. Workers with disabilities learn about the world of work and the many opportunities within a particular industry or business of interest. They also learn what is needed to be a welcomed staff member and what additional education they will need to grow in a particular career path. And all without long term obligation to employment – that’s the beauty of an internship, as it has a start and end point.

And a final comment from one successful former intern with disability, where the business benefitted from the addition to its workforce, but also became a teacher: “My internship woke me up to the reality of having a job. I realize it’s nothing like going to school, it is much harder. Always be on time, do not be rude or you will get fired, play nice with others or you will not get hired. These were true life lessons that influenced me.”

The Able Trust will be announcing the location and dates of its internship training sessions on its website by the end of September. Check www.abletrust.org for more information, and have a great summer!

Kindest regards,



Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA
President & CEO

The Able Trust Welcomes A New Ambassador!



At its Board of Directors meeting on June 20, The Able Trust unanimously approved the appointment of Joe Blanton as an Ambassador and member of its advisory board. Joe is Vice President of Investments for Raymond James & Associates, St Petersburg, FL, and has been with Raymond James for the past 28 years. Born in Orlando, FL, he is a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in Finance. He has a long and admirable history of charitable activity, including work with the Florida United Methodist Children’s Home, the Florida Orchestra, Religious Community Services, and currently serves as a trustee of the St. Petersburg Community Foundation. Joe has a special interest in education, and personal experience working with people with disabilities and helping them succeed.

Joe and his wife of 45 years have 3 children and 6 grandchildren. The Able Trust welcomes Joe Blanton to its governance family. ■

The Able Trust Board of Directors Meet

by Susanne Homant

The Board of Directors of The Able Trust met on June 19-20, 2014 in Tallahassee, FL, and also convened the Annual Meeting of the Corporation. The Directors participated in an afternoon of discussion on Thursday, June 19 related to the 12 principles of Exceptional Boards, and engaged in a rewarding discussion on identifying those issues and ideas the Board should be addressing, and at what level they need to be addressed to advance the mission of The Able Trust and be of true service to the employment needs of Floridians with disabilities. During the afternoon, issues such as the need for collection of more outcome data over time, the identification of issues projected for the future that would affect employment overall, and the need to continue with and ramp-up business relationship building activities were discussed, with an emphasis on what the future is projected to bring and what that means in steering The Able Trust.

During the Board Meeting on Friday morning, the Directors adopted a budget for FY 2015, appointed Joe Blanton of Clearwater, FL as a new Ambassador, and approved recommendations of Committees. At the Annual Meeting, also on Friday, the Directors elected officers for the next two years. Unanimously elected were Richard L. Cole, Jr as Chairman of the Board, Bridget Pallango as Vice-Chair, Jeannie Amendola as Secretary, and Marcy Benton as Treasurer. The Officers will serve through June 30, 2016. The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for September 19 in the Jacksonville area. ■

The Able Trust 2014 Ability Awards

by Ray Ford, Jr.

On the afternoon of June 20, 14 individuals and businesses from across the state were recognized for their impact on the lives of Floridians with disabilities at the annual Able Trust Ability Awards. Public Employee of the Year award recipient David Darm expressed great appreciation for what the award signified.

“I see this award as a symbol of the work that we do as a whole,” he said. “The biggest reward is that we’ve done such good work. It’s not just the work of one person or organization, but all of us trying to help people with disabilities find work.”



Keynote speaker Sarah Goldman shared her personal story of persistence, inspiring the audience during the 2014 Ability Awards.

State Representative Ed Hooper knows first-hand what teamwork can accomplish, and how critical it is to have the members of that team share the same vision.

“Thanks to the efforts of The Able Trust, we are reminded every day why this is important, what a difference it makes in people’s lives,” he said. “Thank you for making us – who sometimes don’t – understand that this is important.”

Keynote speaker Sarah Goldman inspired the crowd of 100 with her personal story of resilience in the face of opposition. Born with cerebral palsy, Sarah’s muscles are very rigid, seriously limiting her mobility.

“When I was growing up, doctors always told my family what I would not be able to do. They said I’d never write, hold a pencil, or even cut with scissors. But over the course of my life I’ve overcome every one of those obstacles and more.”

An accomplished athlete, Sarah has won gold medals and set national records in paralympic competition. She has even represented the United States as an ambassador during the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Accessibility issues made college a challenge. But through perseverance and patience Sarah eventually found a home at the University of Central Florida where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Social Work this past May. She also served as a peer mentor for the UCF Student Disabilities Resource Office. Sarah will now pursue a master’s degree in Clinical Social Work at Florida State University this fall. She credits The Able Trust and its Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for her success.

“I would not be where I am today without the support of The Able Trust,” she said. “Before I attended YLF, I honestly believed that I would live at home forever. I never knew there were resources to help me live independently away from home; that I could go away to college just like everyone else. Eight years ago I came to YLF with little hope for my future. And who would have thought that eight years later I’d be going to Florida State to graduate school?” ■

The Able Trust Salutes 2014 Corporate Champion Wells Fargo



Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant and Board Chairman Richard Cole (far right) recognize Wells Fargo (represented by Scott Hilton and Connie Smith) as the 2014 Corporate Champion.

The Able Trust created an award category of “Corporate Champion” five years ago, to recognize those businesses that support the mission of The Able Trust through workforce inclusion policies, through welcoming people with disabilities as customers and employees, and through financial support that exceeds \$100,000 over the years. Wells Fargo and its former sister corporation, Wachovia, have been strong supporters in all categories of a Corporate Champion since 2003. The company’s commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce that includes workers with disabilities, and supporting organizations like The Able Trust has been constant and substantial. Wells Fargo has been a dedicated supporter of Able Trust Youth Programs, not only with funding but with volunteers that help young job seekers understand the world of finance and the types of careers that require financial skills. Wells Fargo is a leader in Florida’s business community because of commitments like its support of the mission of The Able Trust. Their annual support has resulted in participants at the Youth Leadership Forum fine tuning their continuing education plans, career futures and decision-making ability. Wells Fargo has invested in Florida’s leaders of tomorrow through donations to The Able Trust of over \$100,000 dollars. As a Corporate Champion, they join an elite group that includes Publix, Walt Disney World, and Darden. The Able Trust is proud to recognize Wells Fargo as a Corporate Champion.

Our 2014 Ability Award Winners



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant present Stand Among Friends (represented by Julianne Frain and Corina Larsen) with the Beverly Chapman Award, with Board Member Arlene Shackelford.

Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program

STAND AMONG FRIENDS

SHAWN FRIEDKIN, FOUNDER; DAWN HICKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; JENNY BENITEZ, VOCATIONAL EVALUATOR

BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

Stand Among Friends (SAF) is a non-profit organization that helps college students and adults with disabilities prepare for, seek, and secure employment. Founded in 1997 by Shawn Friedkin, SAF formed a partnership with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) a decade later and opened The Disability Center on the Boca Raton campus. This flagship location has provided SAF the opportunity to assist college students with disabilities who lack resources as they approach graduation and are ready to begin their careers. In 2012, The Able Trust held a grant competition for Florida organizations to address the need for professional career placement assistance for individuals with disabilities, and SAF was one of the winners. SAF has used the grant award to advance its employment placement program with additional staffing and outreach to both students and employers. Rewarding results in the first two years of their grant, SAF has provided career services to more than 100 students, with more than 30 being placed into their career starts. This dedication and commitment to personal service by all the staff has made the difference to the students served and the employers they work with. The Able Trust congratulates Stand Among Friends for the hard work in making careers possible for individuals with disabilities.



Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (far right) present William Kennedy with the Dr. George Spelios Award, with his wife Lenny (second from left) and Vice President Guenevere Crum.

Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award

WILLIAM KENNEDY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Mr. William Kennedy has been the Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida since 2000. The Center is a non-profit organization that provides a variety of services to individuals with disabilities in a 16-county area in North Central Florida. During his tenure, the organization has seen its budget triple in size, has purchased and renovated a headquarters building in Gainesville, and expanded its staff and resources to meet the needs of individuals in the various counties it serves. William has dedicated himself to rehabilitation services and counseling, obtaining his undergraduate and graduate degrees in these fields from the University of Florida. He has led by example in his early work as an Employment Services Manager, and as an Advocacy Director at the Center prior to being hired as the Executive Director. William is known as a leader among all of the Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) Executive Directors around the state. The Center's growth of the HSHT program has provided nearly 2,000 participants with disabilities guidance, encouraging them to pursue internship experiences, achieving their post-secondary collegiate goals, and ultimately employment in areas that include science, math, and technology careers. Dr. Spelios, one of the founding directors of The Able Trust, prized those leaders and CEO's of organizations that deftly held both a current and future vision of their organization's mission, and The Able Trust is proud to honor that ability in William Kennedy.

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Media Representative Award

EVE SAMPLES,
STUART, FLORIDA

Mrs. Eve Samples is Stuart's premier columnist on the Treasure Coast of Florida. Her column runs three days a week in TCPalm, providing unique insights to the Treasure Coast area of South Florida. Eve is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and has covered an array of topics during her career such as business, local government, the arts, and crime. Eve has been a volunteer on the Board of Directors of The ARC of Martin County since 2011. She has written articles on many different issues facing the developmentally disabled community that highlight with a warm touch the individuals, their families, and their life goals. Most recently, Eve was the spokesperson for The ARC Martin County's successful Great Give on May 6th to fund a multi-sensory playground project. Her leadership in creating the script, filming and production of the resulting digital story used as a centerpiece for the Great Give, was the lead tool in providing information and garnering the support of area donors. The Able Trust honors Eve Samples for being a professional and positive force in media today.



Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (far right) present Pamme Taylor with the Adult Leadership Award.

Adult Leadership Award

PAMME LYONS TAYLOR
TAMPA, FLORIDA

Mrs. Pamme Lyons Taylor is the Vice President of Advocacy and Community-Based Programs at WellCare Health Plans, Inc. Her team is responsible for overseeing the Diversity & Inclusion Program, as well as the CommUnity Liaison team and the Health *Connections* Model that Wellcare supports. The CommUnity Liaison program launched in 2013 with six people, and is projected to employ approximately 40 employees by September 2014. Pamme is hearing impaired and has earned several graduate degrees in healthcare and business. She was awarded an Advancing Public Health Excellence scholarship through the American Public Health Association as she pursues her Ph.D. in Public Health. Pamme serves The Able Trust as an Ambassador, committing her time and company's resources to advance The Able Trust's mission. She is active in her community, serving on the board of Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, and is a graduate of Leadership Florida.



Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (middle-right) present Drew Davis with the Young Adult Leadership Award, with Director of Communications and Florida YLF Ray Ford, Jr. (far right).

Young Adult Leadership Award

WILLIAM "DREW" DAVIS
LITHIA, FLORIDA

Mr. William "Drew" Davis provides leadership by example through his many volunteering and employment successes. Drew was a 2006 delegate to the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), and has been invited back each year as a volunteer. He took his initial experience at the YLF and leveraged it into making a difference in his home community by creating a Youth Leadership Club at his high school, Newsome High.

"The Newsome Youth Leadership Club is a club where students with and without disabilities can come together and form new friendships, work together and go out and perform community service projects in the Brandon, Florida area." Drew described.

Drew graduated from Hillsborough State College in 2010, and has worked for both the YMCA and the School District of Hillsborough County. He is currently relocating to the Atlanta area, and while the community of Brandon will miss him, The Able Trust looks forward to Drew returning to YLF this summer as a volunteer.



Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (far right) recognize WellCare Health Plans, Inc. (represented by Pamme Taylor) as Employer of the Year.

Employer of the Year Award

*WELLCARE HEALTH PLANS, INC.
TAMPA, FLORIDA*

In 2012, WellCare Health Plans, Inc. (WellCare) established a Diversity & Inclusion Program to: a) strengthen its interconnectivity with its culturally diverse communities, b) improve the representation of these diverse cultures within its workforce, and c) establish a network of cultural brokers both within the company and within its communities. The CommUnity Liaison program was created as a part of this Diversity & Inclusion Program. WellCare created the CommUnity Liaison program to hire individuals through workforce incentive programs. This corps of community liaisons identifies social safety net organizations and loads them into a centralized database to use in connecting members to services. WellCare is a leader among employers and has demonstrated its willingness to hire and retain good employees, including those with disabilities.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant present Marriott Global Reservation Sales & Customer Care (represented by Dianne Thomas) with the Employer of the Year Award, with Board Member Jeff Hurst.

Employer of the Year Award

*MARRIOTT GLOBAL RESERVATION SALES & CUSTOMER CARE
DIANNE THOMAS, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
MIAMI, FLORIDA*

Marriott Global Reservation Sales & Customer Care is recognized for its proactive leadership in hiring individuals with disabilities for employment. The collaboration with The Able Trust grantee Miami Lighthouse for the Blind has resulted in 18 graduates of The Job Readiness Program in obtaining employment. Marriott has shown leadership in a thoughtful and responsive way, accommodating requests that have allowed employees to be successful. Marriott has shown exemplary leadership in supporting its employees to be the best they can possibly be, equipping them to deliver the quality service that Marriott extends to its customers. The Able Trust is proud to recognize this commitment to a diverse workplace.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant and Board Chairman Richard Cole present Southeastern Uniforms (represented by Mark Boswell) with the Employer of the Year Award, with Manager of Internship & Mentoring Programs Joey D'Sousa.

Employer of the Year Award

*MARK BOSWELL, SOUTHEASTERN UNIFORMS
PLANT CITY, FLORIDA*

Southeastern Uniforms was nominated by the Hillsborough High School High Tech (HSHT) program at the Career and Technical Education department of The School Board of Hillsborough County. Their HSHT Program Coordinator works with a large number of Tampa-area businesses creating internship and employment opportunities for her students, but chose to nominate Southeastern Uniforms because of its commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities. HSHT intern candidates from the Hillsborough program have been exposed to a variety of job opportunities at the business, receiving support in their workplace environment. CEO Mark Boswell and Co-Partners Judy Kent, Christ Kent, and Jacque Latour have set a great example as career mentors, assisting students during their internship experience. Mark has an understanding of the importance of mentoring and coaching the whole student, from his 17-year career as a teacher prior to founding Southeastern Uniforms. He has worked in partnership with the Hillsborough HSHT program to encourage all students to reach their full potential and achieve their employment goals.

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Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left) and Board Chairman Richard Cole (right) present Representative Ed Hooper with the Representative of the Year Award.

Representative of the Year

*REPRESENTATIVE ED HOOPER
CLEARWATER, FLORIDA*

Representative Hooper became a new friend and supporter of The Able Trust during the 2014 legislative session, taking the time to learn about its mission, opening his door to meetings with Able Trust representatives, and recognizing the benefit to Florida's economy through encouraging the workforce diversity that The Able Trust champions. As Chair of the Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Committee, he agreed to include restoration funds for The Able Trust in that committee's budget, which launched the eventual approval of such restoration in the final state budget. Representative Hooper was amazing in his support, and went out of his way to direct staff to the right people to assure movement of the request through the legislative process. During that time, The Able Trust learned that he was extremely well-liked and respected by legislators in both Chambers. Representative Hooper served the City of Clearwater as a Fire Lieutenant for 24 year prior to his service in the Florida House, graduating with a degree in Fire Science and Emergency Medicine Services from St. Petersburg College. He has represented District 67 in Pinellas County since 2006. He will be leaving state public office due to term limits, and is currently running for Pinellas County Commissioner. He and his wife, Lee, are proud of their four children and especially their five grandchildren.

Senator of the Year

*SENATOR AARON BEAN
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA*

Senator Bean has long been a supporter of the mission of The Able Trust, working to help assure that Florida remains a model for inclusiveness and diversity throughout his legislative career. He served the state of Florida as a Representative from 2000 – 2008, and was elected as Senator in 2012. He has a passionate interest in providing good health care and excellent education for all Floridians. Senator Bean helped The Able Trust to restore funds to its High School High Tech (HSHT) program during the 2013 legislative session, and was recognized as Senator of the Year in 2013 for that much-needed support. During the current session, he again stepped up to the plate and helped restore lost endowment funding from civil penalties. Senator Bean had many issues to address; he could have skipped our requests for help, but did not. He is the only legislator ever to receive back-to-back awards from The Able Trust. He is a true friend of the Foundation; always responsive and supportive. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Finance from Jacksonville University, and he and his wife, Abby, are the proud parents of three sons. He serves the Senate District of Duval and Nassau counties. *(Senator Bean will be honored in Jacksonville in September, 2014)*



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant and Board Chairman Richard Cole award Bayside High School High Tech (represented by Christine Barbuto) as the Program of the Year, with Vice President of Youth Programs Allison Chase.

High School High Tech Program of the Year

*BREVARD SCHOOLS FOUNDATION - BAYSIDE HSHT
CHRISTINE BARBUTO, HIGH SCHOOL HIGH TECH PROGRAM MANAGER
PALM BAY, FLORIDA*

Under the leadership of co-coordinators Christine Barbuto and Aaron Mitchell, and through the talented work of teachers Peggy Dowling and Robert Querry, the Bayside High School High Tech (HSHT) team exemplifies dedication, commitment, and expertise in furthering the education, leadership, and career preparation of students with disabilities – the core intent of the HSHT program. Bayside HSHT ensures that students experience the depth and breadth of career and youth development through hands-on workshops, leadership development opportunities, and exposure to real-world employment situations. Bayside HSHT has shown innovation through its student recruitment efforts, officer election process, public speaking program, organizational skills through technology training, and leadership workshops. In the last five years, 100% of Bayside HSHT seniors graduated from high school – all of whom went directly to post-secondary training or employment. As a result of successful community and business partnerships, a majority of Bayside HSHT students participate in an internship by graduation. The Able Trust commends Bayside HSHT for creating and sustaining a highly successful program in Brevard County, Florida.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chairman Richard Cole and President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant present David Darm with the Public Employee of the Year Award.

Public Employee of the Year

DAVID DARM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FLORIDA COMMISSION ON JOBS FOR FLORIDIANS WITH DISABILITIES

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Mr. David Darm serves as the Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities, and as a Policy and External Affairs Consultant with the Florida Division of Blind Services. David was born legally blind due to a birth defect, but has not let that limit his pursuit of excellence in his work and his contribution to his home state of Florida. He has been a strong and focused supporter of creating successful employment for people with disabilities, and an excellent role model. His background in public policy enhances the impact of his work, making businesses more effective which, in turn, makes Florida a great place to locate and grow – for all Floridians. He is a tireless advocate, working long hours with the help of friends, especially his guide dog, "Ranger". In his role as Executive Director of the Governor's Commission, he informs the Governor and his staff about the employment challenges and benefits for people with disabilities and their employers. David earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Florida, and his master's degree from Florida State University. His public service also includes appointment to the Florida Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged.



Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Board Chairman Richard Cole and Vice Chair Bridget Pallango (far right) present Eladio Amores with the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Volunteer of the Year

ELADIO AMORES, CORPORATE CONSULTANT

DEPT. OF EDUCATION: DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Mr. Eladio Amores has been a volunteer with The Able Trust since 2000. Beginning with an appointment to the Board of Directors, after a decade of service he was nominated and accepted as an Ambassador in 2010. Eladio has earned several bachelor's and master's degrees in Sociology, Urban Studies, and Public Administration in Human Resources from Southern Connecticut State University, University of New Haven and the University of California. He has worked as an Executive Director and a Director of Vocational Services in community-based organizations in South Florida, California and Connecticut. He has most recently worked as a Corporate Consultant for the Florida Department of Education Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, educating companies on how to enhance their Diversity and Inclusion programs in Florida. Eladio is now moving back into community employment as Director of Employment Services at Manasota Goodwill in Sarasota. His education and experience have helped shaped the programs of The Able Trust, making them the successes they are today through his dedicated service as Director and Ambassador, marked with rich discussion, ideas, and humor. The Able Trust is proud to recognize the long volunteer service of Eladio Amores.



by Guenevere Crum

Upcoming grant opportunities with The Able Trust are:

- the General Support for Employment Placement Grant (due July 5, 2014), and
- the Strategic Employment Placement Grant (due September 5, 2014).

The **General Support for Employment Placement Program** is a grant opportunity that will be the most familiar to organizations around the state, as it resembles the past grant application process. For this program, requests should result in employment placement for participating individuals with disabilities, and could encompass such things as equipment and/or staffing, needs of an applicant organization to expand an existing program in a new way, or the creation of a new program during a single grant year. The biggest change for this program will be the two deadlines associated with it. Applicants meeting the first deadline (**July 5th**) will have their proposals considered at the First Quarter Board Meeting (September 2014), and applicants meeting the second deadline (**April 5th**) will have their proposals considered at the Fourth Quarter Board Meeting (June 2015). Awards in this category range up to \$65,000 for a one-year grant period.

The **Strategic Employment Placement Initiative** is a major granting strategy of The Able Trust that allows qualified organizations to seek a grant award up to \$250,000 in a multi-year grant structure. To qualify, applicants must be prepared to move forward with an employment placement program in a strategic manner, fully engaging the educational opportunities and employers unique to their Florida community. Applicants are expected to have an active Board of Directors committed to the specific proposed program, along with developed community resources of both financial and intellectual capacity to carry out the program under consideration. The multi-year grant opportunity provides an applicant organization the stability to implement a program with long-term vision that is coupled with goals and results for each of the grant years. It is the intent of The Able Trust that funded Strategic Employment Placement grants will result in significant numbers of individuals gaining employment, ultimately in career path employment with the wages to match. The annual deadline to apply and begin the qualifying process is **September 5th**. Organizations selected to advance in the qualifying and interview processes will be notified, and a final decision of grant selections will be made by The Able Trust during the Third Quarter Board Meeting in the Spring of 2015.

Important to both grant opportunities outlined above is awareness of what successful employment means to The Able Trust. After much discussion by the Board of Directors, there are eight attributes that The Able Trust has used to create a definition of employment:

1. Length/Retention: Six to eight months for a first placement, (for placements which are not designed as an internship or similar) and lasts for at least a year.
2. Pay should be at least minimum wage, with potential for raises.
3. Hours/Week: Should be at least 20, with 60% working 30 or more hours/week by the end of the first year of employment.
4. Position: Entry level is ok, but should have some room for advancement.
5. At a common benchmark such as looking back one year, at least 70% of individuals placed should be employed one year later, even if they might be working for a different employer.
6. Competitive: At least 80% must be competitive positions (not lingering in supported or transitional).
7. Integrated: At least 90% should be integrated positions – working with diverse workforce.
8. Transitional: No more than 20% of jobs should be transitional/supported employment.

All of the grant deadlines and guidelines on how to apply can be found on The Able Trust website www.abletrust.org. For answers to grant questions, send an email to info@abletrust.org or call 850-224-4493. The Able Trust is looking forward to receiving proposals and hearing about the employment placement strategies organizations are working on. ■

Recent Grant Awards

The Able Trust Board of Directors recently met in Tallahassee and are pleased to announce the following grant awards, totaling \$261,112.

Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Inc. (Miami) – received \$65,000 for the *Rehabilitation and Employment Project* that will provide staffing to expand the goals of the employment placement program, and provide for inclusion of veterans with visual disabilities.

North Florida School of Special Education (Jacksonville) – received \$35,000 for *Berry Good Farms On the Go*, that will support a micro-enterprise skills training in urban gardening, food prep, retail, and support for a first-job placement program in Duval County.

Brooks Health System (Jacksonville) – received \$64,841 for Phase Three of the *Brooks Clubhouse Vocational Integration Program*, a vocational integration program that will support employment skills training, placement, and follow-up for individuals living with a traumatic brain injury.

Susan B. Anthony Center, Inc. (Pembroke Pines) – received \$46,200 for *The REAP Program (Readiness for Employment and Placement)*. Funds will provide a Career Transition Program to assist individuals recovering from drug and alcohol addiction (with some co-occurring disabilities) in gaining employment and comprehensive social skills enabling them to be successful on the job.

ARC Gateway (Pensacola) – received \$40,071 for *Valuing Employment Coaches*, to provide for salary assistance for an Employment Specialist/Job Coach position that will work to provide placement and support in a two-county area of Northwest Florida.

Independence for the Blind West Florida (Pensacola) – received \$2,500 from the McKeon Family Ability Fund to provide services to those individuals with macular degeneration for independent living skills and other support.

Center for the Visually Impaired (Daytona Beach) – received \$2,500 from the McKeon Family Ability Fund to provide services to those individuals with macular degeneration for independent living skills and other support.

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute; University of Miami Health System (Coral Gables) – received \$5,000 from the McKeon Family Ability Fund to support the eight researchers at Bascom Palmer's McKnight Vision Research Center working on the conditions of Retinal degeneration, Macular degeneration – both dry and wet – along with other related eye conditions that lead to sight impairment and, or blindness.

YLF 2014: A Life-Changing Challenge

by Ray Ford, Jr.

Their reasons for attending are as diverse as their backgrounds.

“I live with my disability every day, and going to YLF will give me the chance to meet with other people with disabilities to talk about how to make things better,” Ben Harris of Bloomingdale High School said.

They will come from all parts of the state. Many of them venturing from home for the first time ever. That in and of itself will be a challenge.

“At first I didn't apply because it was different and I was kind of afraid to try something new. This will be the first time I have ever been away from my family. Now, I think I can do this. I think I can make friends, have a good time, and learn to be more independent,” Haley Clifford of Naples High School admitted.

But they all share the same determination, a deep inner drive challenging them to push their limits in search of a higher level of self-confidence and worth. The 2014 Florida Youth Leadership Forum will begin on July 16. Soon, talented teens representing every corner of the state will come to Tallahassee to participate in a life-changing event. 2012 Delegate Tyler Von Harten has been selected to serve as a group facilitator this summer. He hopes to instill the same hope and inspiration that he received not very long ago when he was in the same position as the students he'll be mentoring.

“YLF was one of the most life-changing and awe-inspiring events of my life. It gave me the tools I need to succeed in life and the inspiration to push harder and be the best that I could be. I wanted to pay it forward.” ■

Florida High School High Tech: Growing Strong

by Allison Chase

As a result of substantial growth in state revenues, the legislative appropriations bill for fiscal year 2014 increased to more than \$74 billion. A portion of the funds went toward education programs, with sustaining funds also allocated to The Able Trust Florida High School High Tech Program (HSHT). The restored funding allowed The Able Trust to add four new HSHT programs in Collier, Dade, Lake, and Polk counties, bringing the total number of sites to 39 throughout the state. Also during this year's session, the legislature committed new funds to HSHT for the 2015 fiscal year, allowing for expansion into two additional counties.



FY 2014 Expansion Site Highlights

Collier HSHT

Collier HSHT, operated by Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, has served nearly 30 students this year. The program has established many relationships with community and business partners in the Naples area, including Dress for Success and the Collier Building Industry Association. Students have toured the local technical and state colleges, attended a Discovery Education STEM exhibition, and participated in the "Hour of Code", an experience designed to increase awareness and spark student interest in computer science and programming careers. The site received a \$2,500 grant from Volunteer Florida to support stipends for six summer internships. Three Collier HSHT students will attend The Able Trust Florida Youth Forum (YLF) this summer in Tallahassee.

Lake HSHT

The Lake HSHT Program is a new and unique model to Florida HSHT. Operated by Beacon College, a private institution for students with learning disabilities, the program provides a window into post-secondary education for Lake HSHT students through shadowing experiences of Beacon College students in the classroom and on campus. Students also receive details regarding financial aid, admissions, accommodations, and technology. SunTrust Bank Security Offices in Orlando and Cutrale Citrus Industries in Leesburg are two of the businesses that have opened their doors to the Lake HSHT for tours and job shadowing experiences. Lake HSHT anticipates even further growth in its second year, with a trip to Kennedy Space Center and the addition of a HSHT co-coordinator in July.

Polk HSHT

Polk HSHT, operated by the Center for Independent Living of Central Florida, kicked-off the year with a check presentation by Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant at George Jenkins High School in Lakeland. Also in attendance were Senator Kelli Stargel and Representative Seth McKeel. Other highlights of Polk HSHT included an active parent group that met over dinner each month to engage in program development and support; a \$1,000 Darden Community Grant and another from the Community Foundation of Greater Lakeland; and six paid summer internships in the following career areas: two in engineering, two in graphic design, and two in medical and early childhood education. The program anticipates expanding to a second Polk County high school in the coming school year.

Dade HSHT

The Center for Independent Living expanded the HSHT program in Dade County to serve students at Miami Beach Senior High School, where the focus has been on the development of soft skills, personal leadership, and civic responsibility. As a result, Miami-Dade HSHT was awarded a grant from the SHAPE (Students Helping Achieve Philanthropic Excellence) Program of Miami. The mission of SHAPE is to empower high school students to achieve personal and professional success by providing philanthropic, leadership, career, and civic opportunities. This site has also developed a relationship with the Toshiba Corporation which participates on the local HSHT Business Advisory Council as well as provides site tours and job shadowing experiences for the students. ■



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, 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
- For a special occasion

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Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

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Credit Card Expiration Date: _____ Credit Card CSV: _____

E-mail: _____

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 us at info@abletrust.org or 850-224-4493.

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$31 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. The Able Trust youth programs provide career development and transition for thousands of high school 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.

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.

Grantee Spotlight: WestCare GulfCoast Inc., Florida

by Guenevere Crum



Thanks to grant funding from The Able Trust, programs like Westcare can offer the quality job preparedness that gives clients like Rodney a chance to attain successful employment.

Funding from The Able Trust allowed WestCare to have an additional staff member to support the existing Vocational/Employment Department. This additional staffing has resulted in individualized time and attention placed on clients as they strive to be successful in overcoming their barriers. WestCare serves individuals recovering from drug and alcohol addictions that often began between the ages of 11-16, along with existing learning disabilities and mental health issues. Coupled with an average first arrest age of 18, the need for strong staffing is ever present. Funds from The Able Trust allowed for one-on-one job coaching, assistance in job seeking, and essential case management tasks such as assisting clients with out-of-state birth certificates, legal documents, social security cards, Photo ID's, and discounted bus passes. Additionally, the employment staff meets with the all the employers on a quarterly basis to continue building an on-going rapport with the employer, as well as visiting employers they are not currently working with to discuss future employee opportunities with WestCare programs. Funding from The Able Trust provided support to individuals like Rodney, who is making a successful new path for himself.

“Rodney came into the Program as one of our youngest clients,” Counselor Jacqueline MacCarthy said. “He expressed a desire to live a substance-free lifestyle, obtain his GED, and learn job skills. During his time in the Program, Rodney was able to accomplish all three of those goals.

He demonstrated a cooperative attitude, worked hard on all of his assignments, and attended and participated well in all the required groups and individual sessions. He studied hard and earned his GED, and was able to find permanent employment at Southwest Staffing. Rodney performs his job duties extremely well at his place of employment, and has maintained his employment since graduating from the FOCUS Program in March 2014.”

“We have watched Rodney grow, learn, and adjust to the world that was new to him,” Southwest Staffing owner Debbie Meza said. “He began answering the phones, taking applications, dealing with customers; had direct hands-on contact with everyone. What a difference a few months made in Rodney. Everything Rodney does, he does it with a wonderful attitude. He never loses his cool, and is always so positive. He has changed his way of thinking and matured into a wonderful young man. We know that Rodney will only continue to make positive life decisions.” ■

A Big Thanks to All 2013 Florida DEAM/DMD Partners

by Joseph D'Sousa

From late August 2013 to early March of 2014, more than 2,700 career experiences for people with disabilities occurred during the Disability Employment Awareness Month/Disability Mentoring Day (DEAM/DMD) season. The huge success of this program was due in no small part to the many businesses and organizations that graciously opened their doors and minds, who in addition to welcoming people with disabilities also served as statewide sponsors.

Almost all industries were represented in Florida DEAM/DMD, ranging from small owner/operator businesses, to Fortune 500 companies, and all levels of government. On behalf of the many Floridians with disabilities whose lives were impacted by your support of Florida DEAM/DMD, The Able Trust thanks all businesses and organizations that participated. ■



- Florida Power & Light
- Darden Restaurants
- Publix Super Markets
- TD Bank
- The Dan Marino Foundation
- The Florida Chamber Foundation
- WellCare
- Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs

Partners Making A Difference - Gloria Moss

by Zoltan Karpathy



Charitable donors like Gloria Moss help support the mission of The Able Trust in being a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.

Gloria Moss has lived in Sarasota for 57 years, most of those years with the love of her life, Marty. She has studied dance and acrobatics since age three. In 1948, she was a substitute dancer in the famed Copacabana Nightclub in New York City.

Today, at age 90, she hasn't slowed down a bit. Gloria is involved in more than 30 philanthropic organizations.

"I made up my mind many years ago that I wasn't going to get old," the former Copacabana showgirl said. "Age is just a number."

Eight years ago, Marty passed away and Gloria went back to her showgirl roots, becoming involved with the Community AIDS Network's "Dancing with the Stars" event. She has won ballroom dance competitions from Vienna to Los Angeles. At one Naples, Florida competition, she danced 100 times over 2 days and won 75 1st place awards.

"You dance in your age category, and how many at my age are dancing competitively?"

Gloria is a consummate volunteer and philanthropist. She advocates for philanthropy by being a substantial donor, attracting dozens of others into donor and volunteer roles, leading by example and mentoring along the way. She understands the nonprofit mission; has a commitment to meet community needs; and works closely and cooperatively with administration to achieve strategic goals. Always outspoken, Gloria acts when she believes in something. Often, when

attending fundraisers for causes she believes in, she is the one who starts the fundraising ball rolling, challenging the crowd to match her lead gift.

"You can't just say there is a need so be nice and give; it doesn't work that way."

Most recently, Gloria put up a \$5,000 lead challenge gift to be matched by donors and friends in The Able Trust's first 24-hour Giving Challenge fundraiser. As a result, the fundraiser exceeded its goal.

Gloria's message to Grantor readers is a simple one.

"If you agree that persons with disabilities deserve the opportunity for meaningful, successful work, then do as I do, give!" ■

"If you agree that persons with disabilities deserve the opportunity for meaningful, successful work, then do as I do, give!"

- Gloria Moss, Able Trust Donor

FLORIDA GRANTOR

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 non-cash property, your deduction may depend on the type of property proposed for gifting. Please call us to discuss the treatment of your gift and the best way to transfer your property to us.

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.

Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

July 16-20, 2014

*Youth Leadership Forum
Tallahassee, FL*

September 9-11, 2014

*Florida High School High Tech
Annual Training
Orlando, FL*

September 19, 2014

*Able Trust Board of Directors
Meeting
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL*

October 2014

*Disability Employment Awareness
Month*

November 2014

Hire A Veteran Month

December 12, 2014

*Able Trust Board of Directors
Meeting*