

# FLORIDA GRANTOR

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

## June 2016

- 2 *President's Letter*
- 3 *The Able Trust Welcomes A New Board Chair*
- 3 *Neil Romano Joins The Able Trust Board of Directors*
- 4 *The 2016 Ability Awards*
- 5 *2016 Ability Award Winners*
- 9 *The Able Trust is "Granted" by Disney*
- 10 *The Able Trust Salutes Richard L. Cole, Jr.*
- 11 *Grant Awards*
- 11 *YLF 2016*
- 12 *Grant Update*
- 13 *Make A Donation to The Able Trust*
- 14 *Florida High School High Tech: Tiny House Project-Based Learning*
- 14 *2016 Florida High School High Tech Speech Contest*
- 15 *Able Trust Alumni Association Elects Officers*
- 15 *Alumni Corner: Whitney Harris*
- 16 *Upcoming Events*

## *Congratulations To The 2016 Able Trust Ability Award Winners!*



*Read about each of the 2016 Ability Award winners in this edition of The Florida Grantor.*

(from left) **Ken Ledbetter and Ron Wilson**, Innisfree Hotels; **Heather Barta, LaKysha Perkins, and Sue Belford**, Ability 1st; **Nancy Watson**, Boca Raton Resort & Club; **Holly Bernado**, Ability 1st; **Jason Nicholson**, Innisfree Hotels; **David Winialski (in place of Representative Erik Fresen)**, **Richard L. Cole, Jr.**, The Able Trust; **Anthony LaCava**, The Able Trust Alumni Association; **Jody Ellis and Dennis Haas**, ARC Broward; **Kathleen Wright and Angela Hendrieth**, City of Tallahassee; **Kerry Anthony and Susan Machemar**, Fairpoint Communications; **Julie Price**, ARC Broward



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

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair

Karen B. Moore, Tallahassee

### Vice Chair

Richard L. Cole, Jr., Esq., The Villages

### Treasurer

Marcy P. Benton, Lakeland

### Secretary

Bridget R. Pallango, Miami

Leslie D. Goldman, Tampa

Jeff Hurst, Orlando

Scot Laferté, Orlando

Arlene S. Shackelford, Juno

Anne Marie Taglienti, Ft. Lauderdale

## AMBASSADORS

Jeannie Amendola, Orlando

Eladio Amores, Sarasota

Joseph G. Blanton, St. Petersburg

Bob Bromberg, Miami

Robert A. Butterworth, Esq., Ft. Lauderdale

Nancy Kline, Ft. Walton Beach

Neil Romano, Celebration

Pamme Taylor, Tampa

## STAFF

### President & CEO

Dr. Susanne Homant

### Senior Vice President

Guenevere Crum

### Vice President, Youth Programs

Allison Chase

### Director of Communications & Florida YLF

Ray Ford, Jr.

### Director of Finance

Michelle Young

### Manager, Internship & Mentoring Programs

Joseph D'Souza

### Assistant Director, Donor Services & Administration

Mary Jo Hatala

### Administrative Assistant, Grants Program

Antoinette Barber

### Assistant to the President & CEO

Rachael Moulton

## PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

### Legislative Consultant

Mike Cusick

### Financial Advisor

Bruce Hagan

### Development Consultant

Angela Fortunas

### Florida High School High Tech Consultant

Donna Mundy

### Florida Youth Leadership Forum

Carolyn Pardue

## A Message from the President



### Summertime!

Often described as a time to vacation, relax, enjoy the warmer weather and just take a break from the busyness of life, summertime is actually a very busy time for the high school students that are served through the Able Trust's High School High Tech (HSHT) program. Many of the 1800 HSHT students with disabilities that we met and worked with in our HSHT program this year are working at summer internships, helping Florida's businesses with their seasonal tasks and learning more about the world of work and specific industries of interest. Some have begun to consider post-secondary options while others are more intently reviewing or visiting technical schools, colleges and universities that are possible options after high school. The HS students that are a part of HSHT are encouraged to pursue activities like this that are difficult to pursue during the school months, due to time constraints.

HS students are becoming increasingly aware that the jobs of today are not necessarily the jobs of the future. In fact, there are good and current economic studies that project over 50% of today's jobs will not exist by 2030, a change in a business environment that speeds up every year. In addition, the majority of those new jobs will require some post-secondary education. Many of those jobs of the future will not demand a four year degree after HS, some will require more than that. The students' significant tasks are to begin to identify their niche in the world, based on what they want to do with their work lives and where they feel their skills will best fit. A daunting task, indeed.

For those who are actively pursuing post-secondary education, the related costs are not only of consideration, but for some very limiting. Obtaining information on how to finance post-secondary education is complex and full of options that can vary from student to student. Interestingly, in a study conducted by researchers at the University of Florida, **HS graduates who failed to complete the requisite application for free federal financial aid cumulatively missed out on over \$100 million in Pell Grants during the 2012-13 school year**, the last year a study was completed. In Florida, only 55% of HS graduates have completed the documents to qualify for a Pell Grant, the federal pot of money (not a loan, and does not have to be repaid) which can make college affordable for that 50% of HS graduates who live in low income families. We encourage our HSHT students to study college financing like Pell Grants very carefully and take advantage of the options available to make sure that funding does not become a barrier to the right career and independence. Information on application materials can be found on the US Department of Education website and through high school and college counseling and advising departments.

We hope the many HS students who are enrolled in the Florida HSHT program, as well as their fellow students will take advantage of the time summer gives them to learn about the world they are inheriting and review their post high school options. Our message to all our delightful students is to enjoy your summer, but also use this extra time to grow and learn more about your future.

Kind regards,

Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA

## *The Able Trust Welcomes A New Board Chair*



**T**he Able Trust is pleased to announce the election of Karen B. Moore as the new Board Chair.

Moore is an acknowledged leader in the media relations, public relations, crisis communications and public affairs arena. She is the CEO and Founder of Moore Communications Group, an innovative marketing communications firm with offices in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Miami, Washington D.C.; one of the largest independently-owned PR firms in the nation.

Moore has published numerous articles, and is a frequent public speaker, having facilitated strategic planning sessions for more than 50 state and national organizations. She has also conducted media training sessions for Fortune 500 companies, elected officials, and the British Olympic Team. Recognition for her work has brought numerous honors including: the Silver Medal Award by the Advertising Federation, the Stan Tate Award for Lifetime Excellence and Achievement by the Public Relations Association, Distinguished Leader Award by the National Association of Community Leaders, Leadership Tallahassee's Pacesetter Award and the Tallahassee Chamber's Past Chairman Award.

The Able Trust is also pleased to announce Governor Rick Scott's re-appointment of three Board members.

**Richard L. Cole, Jr., Esq.**, a self-employed attorney, has served on The Able Trust Board of Directors for nearly a decade. Joining the Board in 2007, Cole was named Vice Chairman in 2008, and eventually assumed the role of Chair in 2010. He termed out as Chair this year and will continue to serve on the Board as Vice Chair.

**Jeffrey Hurst**, Senior Vice President of Finance at Florida Hospital, has been a member of The Able Trust Board since 2014. Hurst has worked at Florida Hospital for more than 14 years and has served in various roles, including Vice President of Revenue Management, Director of Patient Financial Services, Director of Ancillary Financial Services, and Director of Finance.

**Arlene S. Shackelford**, HR Advisor, Compliance & Management at NextEra Energy (Florida Power & Light) headquartered in Juno Beach, joined the Board in 2013. Arlene is a human resources professional with over 25 years of experience in the airline, banking, and utility industries. Arlene earned her bachelor's degree from Florida Memorial University and a master's in Human Behavior and Conflict Management from Columbia College of South Carolina. ■

---

## *Neil Romano Joins Able Trust Board of Directors*



**A**t its Board of Directors meeting on June 17, The Able Trust unanimously approved the appointment of Neil Romano as an Ambassador and member of its advisory board.

Considered one of the nation's leading authorities in the field of media and public advocacy, Romano has dedicated his career to the marketing of ideas and messages to help save lives and promote public policy. He founded Romano & Associates Inc., which produced highly visible, and effective public awareness programs, as well as America's Strength, a not-for-profit organization that works to promote the importance of hiring individuals with disabilities.

In 2007, Romano was nominated by President George W. Bush to be the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy and was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate. As head of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Romano advised the Secretary of Labor and worked with all DOL agencies to lead a comprehensive and coordinated national policy regarding the employment of people with disabilities in the United States. He has served as a member of the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, and presently serves on a number of diverse national boards of directors. He has advised the Association for People in Supported Employment, the U.S. Business Leadership Network, and other disability employment groups that use a "business to business" approach to promote the imperative of hiring people with disabilities.

A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Romano currently resides in Celebration, FL, with his wife, Barbara, and his daughters, Bianca and Christina. ■

# The Able Trust 2016 Ability Awards

by Ray Ford, Jr.

The Able Trust believes in the inherent right of all citizens with disabilities to have the opportunity to pursue the highest level of independence possible. On Friday, June 17, 11 individuals, employers, and organizations were recognized for their support of that goal at the 2016 Ability Awards luncheon at Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club in Tallahassee.



Keynote speaker Whitney Harris at the 2016 Ability Awards.

“Today we come to the end of a year-long celebration of 25 years of service to Floridians with disabilities. And I am proud to say that in that time we have helped thousands and thousands of Floridians with disabilities find jobs,” Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant said. “We look forward to another 25 years of the same service.”

In that span of time, The Able Trust has provided support to organizations in all 67 Florida counties. Successful youth programs such as Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) has helped thousands of high school students with disabilities identify and pursue STEM careers and postsecondary career paths.

Keynote speaker Whitney Harris captured the spirit of the day in her address. Born without a right arm and leg, she recalled a time in her youth when she did not see herself any differently from anyone else. She affirmed that despite the fact that her “normal” is different from everyone else’s doesn’t mean it’s any worse. Everyone has obstacles to overcome in pursuit of life goals and aspirations.

“I learned how to do things the same way everyone else learns to do things. You can say that it’s challenging because it’s different to you, but it is normal to me,” Whitney said.

Whitney has been working for the Florida Chamber Foundation as Special Projects Administrator and Assistant to the Executive Vice President since January 2016. One of those projects is an internship program, where The Chamber will work with other chambers across the state, offering member organizations a reimbursable rate for hiring people with disabilities. The idea is that by encouraging businesses to take this first step – seeing that a person with a disability, properly matched with the right job can do the job – will open the door for more.

Research conducted by The Able Trust and Florida Chamber found that an estimated 700,000 Floridians who have a disability are not in the workforce. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is three times the national average.

“I have many accomplishments, but I couldn’t have accomplished anything without simply seeing my disability as a part of me, rather than letting it define me,” Whitney concluded. “No different than my hair color; just a normal part of who I am.” ■

## What is an Ability Award?



Each Ability Award is a unique glasswork piece created by the students of Renaissance Learning Academy in West Palm Beach, Florida. The Academy is a public charter school which opened in 2009. Its mission is to provide students with autism spectrum disorder intense, comprehensive educational programs based on scientifically-validated principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis and evidence-based instructional techniques, and therapy services. Students design and sell glasswork as a school-based micro-enterprise.



## 2016 Ability Award Winners



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left), Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. and Chair Karen B. Moore (far right) present ARC Broward (represented by Julie Price, David Haas, and Jody Ellis) with the Beverly Chapman Award.*

### **Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program**

*ARC BROWARD*

*SUNRISE, FLORIDA*

The staff at ARC Broward is known for their leadership in creating employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In 2015, the organization received a three-year Strategic Grant from The Able Trust for the Center for Financial Stability. In just one year, the program has assisted more than 175 individuals with disabilities, providing financial literacy and career development to more than 70 individuals gaining employment. ARC Broward's sharp focus, providing guidance on economic realities means that participants obtain and maintain employment with the on-going skills that allow them to become financially stable. Financial stability consists of familiarity with banking institutions, knowledge on how to pay bills, and other financial decisions that support individual goals. The long-term engagement approach that ARC Broward has taken allows participants to earn, keep, and grow assets while remaining employed, taking them out of poverty and into a life of self-sufficiency. Though these are lofty goals to achieve, ARC Broward staff is known for doing "whatever it takes" to make it happen. ARC Broward's model of short and long-term support seeks to build upon the strengths and abilities of program participants, allowing each one to find and maintain their job of choice.



*(left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Board Chair Karen B. Moore, and Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. (far right) present Dennis Haas with the Dr. George Spelios Award.*

### **Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award**

*DENNIS HAAS, PRESIDENT & CEO*

*ARC BROWARD*

Dennis Haas has served as President & CEO of ARC Broward since 1996. His passion and commitment has helped ARC Broward establish a statewide reputation for leadership in job training and employment services for people with disabilities. His innovative thinking has enabled ARC Broward to establish such mission-based enterprises as the ARC Broward Culinary Institute, and ARC Broward IT Asset Recovery. His leadership was instrumental in the creation of the ARC Broward Center for Financial Stability, and transition programs that provide impressive outcomes in helping individuals with disabilities pursue career paths and financial literacy. Haas is an active member of many state and local community boards, including the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Special Needs Advisory Committee, United Way of Broward, Broward Chamber of Non Profit Organizations, and the Autism Grants Council, among other endeavors. He has been instrumental in the passage of legislation to enhance resources, awareness, and opportunities for individuals with disabilities. His pursuit in developing unique educational and business enterprises at ARC Broward has made him the kind of leader that Dr. Spelios – a former Chairman of The Able Trust – sought in communities to create meaningful and long-term change for individuals with disabilities.



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left), Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr., and Board member Anne Marie Taglienti (far right) present Anthony LaCava with the Adult Leadership Award.*

### **Adult Leadership Award**

*ANTHONY LACAVA  
MARIETTA, GEORGIA*

Anthony LaCava is a dedicated and strong advocate for the rights and opportunities that should be available to people with disabilities, evidenced by his 17-year service as a volunteer at The Able Trust's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). He first attended YLF as a high school student in 2000, and has returned each year since to mentor new students. Anthony is an IT professional with over 10 years' experience, currently working at Onepath of Atlanta, GA. He has extensive expertise with project management, training, networked computer services, deployment of new technology, and IT security issues. He brings that knowledge to his role at the YLF each year.

Over the past year, Anthony has also willingly taken on a new role, accepting the position of Chair of the Able Trust Alumni Association, a new initiative of the Able Trust Board of Directors. He has worked with the Alumni Association organizational committee to develop start-up activities and long term strategies for the Alumni Association, which will be of great value to The Able Trust in maintaining contact with individuals who have benefitted from all Able Trust programs and projects.

Anthony has never refused a volunteer job or task that The Able Trust has assigned, and voluntarily keeps in touch with many of the YLF participants year after year, examples of his leadership and dedication. Originally from the Broward County area, he obtained his AS in Network Administration from Broward College in 2008, and has obtained multiple certifications from Apple, Cisco, Google, and Hewlett Packard. Anthony has continued his education and is scheduled to graduate with a BAS in Computer Information Systems from Florida State College at Jacksonville in 2017.



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left), Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. and Board member Arlene Shackelford (far right) present Boca Raton Resort and Club (represented by Nancy Watson) with the Employer of the Year Award.*

### **Employer of the Year Award**

*BOCA RATON RESORT AND CLUB  
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA*

The Boca Raton Resort and Club has been a partner of the Palm Beach High School High Tech (HSHT) and Project SEARCH program for more than three years. The partnership has exceeded expectations in every aspect, resulting in many employment opportunities for students. Staff at all levels – from the President to the online workers – have embraced the program, and are involved with mentoring and teaching the skills needed for their onsite work rotations and internships. Students are treated as if they are any other employee, and are included in workplace activities from department celebrations, to eating lunch with their department mentors and co-workers. Work rotations are provided in Human Resources, Banquet Services, Storeroom, Laundry Services, Lobby Attendants, Stewarding, and the Spa. In addition to the daily training and work development program, the Boca Raton Resort and Club hosts annual Disability Employment Awareness Month events. They provide a hands-on experience in the hotel industry, and teach students about culinary arts, nutrition, and exercise.

The Boca Raton Resort and Club has hired eight students into full-time positions over the past three years, and many more have obtained employment in the community due to their experience at the resort.



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left), Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. and Board member Les Goldman (far right) present Fairpoint Communications (represented by Kerry Anthony and Susan Machemar) with the Employer of the Year Award.*

### **Employer of the Year Award**

*FAIRPOINT COMMUNICATIONS  
PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA*

The Port St. Joe office of FairPoint Communications has been a partner of the Gulf County High School High Tech (HSHT) program for more than a decade. They provide leadership and support on the Gulf HSHT Business Advisory Council (BAC) through student workshops on workplace expectations; participating in DEAM events and the annual career fair; attending all BAC meetings; providing job shadowing and summer internships; and sponsoring the annual HSHT golf tournament which provides funding for summer internships. FairPoint has been a partner with Florida HSHT of Gulf County since the program began. Over the course of 10 years, FairPoint has provided at least two internships each year, including field technician positions, customer service, and office assistants. FairPoint works closely with HSHT to ensure students have an understanding of work expectations, and provide ongoing feedback to the students and program managers for future learning. Student interns are provided the same new staff orientation and training as regular new hires. Several students have gone on to successful employment with FairPoint upon high school graduation. FairPoint is a major force in promoting the HSHT program, and the value of employment for people with disabilities within the Gulf County community.



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left) and Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. (far right) present Innisfree Hotels (represented by Ken Ledbetter, Ron Wilson, and Jason Nicholson) with the Employer of the Year Award.*

### **Employer of the Year Award**

*INNISFREE HOTELS  
GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA*

Innisfree Hotels in Gulf Breeze, Florida provides a hands-on industry certification program in hotel maintenance for high school youth with disabilities who are incarcerated. This opportunity is part of the Escambia County High School High Tech (HSHT) program. Innisfree Hotels brings years of experience in the hospitality industry to the classroom and the facility-based training. Youth are able to experience the world of hospitality maintenance first-hand, while developing the skills needed to become employable in today's workforce. As a result, youth served through HSHT and the Innisfree Hotels hospitality maintenance credentialing program have achieved a recidivism rate of 27%, which is well below the state average of 44%. The Able Trust commends Innisfree Hotels for its dedication and innovative programming in making employment opportunities available in their community.



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant and Sarah Goldman (left) present Representative Erik Fresen (represented by David Winialski) with the Representative of the Year Award with Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. and Board member Les Goldman (far right).*

### **Representative of the Year**

*REPRESENTATIVE ERIK FRESEN  
MIAMI, FLORIDA*

Representative Fresen has been a longtime supporter of The Able Trust at the state legislative and local level. He represents HD 114, a densely-populated section of the greater Miami area, and supports many of The Able Trust's grantees in that area, even outside of his role as legislator. Elected first in 2008 then re-elected subsequently, he has always been a supporter of the education needs of Florida's young citizens. He chaired the Education Appropriations Committee, always protecting the annual appropriation for HSHT, which allows the HSHT program to add programs each year, annually expanding its successes to more areas of the state. He also serves on the Education Committee, the K-12 Subcommittee, the Joint Legislative Budget Commission, and the Appropriations Committee. Last year he took a lead role in increasing pre-K spending by over \$1 billion, helped to pass significant reforms in higher education, and hired an individual with a disability to assist in reviewing legislation. Representative Fresen is a land use consultant, graduating with a BS degree from FSU. He serves on the Board of the Beacon Council and the Children's Home Society, among others. He and his wife have three children and reside in the Miami area.



**Representative of the Year**

*REPRESENTATIVE MARLENE O'TOOLE  
LADY LAKE, FLORIDA*

Representative Fresen has been a longtime supporter of The Able Trust at the state legislative and local level. He represents HD 114, a densely-populated section of the greater Miami area, and supports many of The Able Trust's grantees in that area, even outside of his role as legislator. Elected first in 2008 then re-elected subsequently, he has always been a supporter of the education needs of Florida's young citizens. He chaired the Education Appropriations Committee, always protecting the annual appropriation for HSHT, which allows the HSHT program to add programs each year, annually expanding its successes to more areas of the state. He also serves on the Education Committee, the K-12 Subcommittee, the Joint Legislative Budget Commission, and the Appropriations Committee. Last year he took a lead role in increasing pre-K spending by over \$1billion, helped to pass significant reforms in higher education,

and hired an individual with a disability to assist in reviewing legislation. Representative Fresen is a land use consultant, graduating with a BS degree from FSU. He serves on the Board of the Beacon Council and the Children's Home Society, among others. He and his wife have three children and reside in the Miami area. Representative O'Toole's award was presented to her in her district on June 27, 2016.



**Senator of the Year**

*SENATOR ANDY GARDINER  
ORLANDO, FLORIDA*

Perhaps no legislator in recent history has been more focused on improving the education and independence of Floridians with disabilities than Senate President Andy Gardiner. Motivated by his own personal experiences, Senator Gardiner has worked diligently and collaboratively with the full legislature to pass meaningful bills that improve quality of life for people with disabilities. Issues that have had his full attention and support include the Employment First initiative, more state funding to assist special needs children, the creation of a center for students with disabilities, financial literacy training, and recognition of businesses that hire workers with disabilities. He is known throughout Florida as being one of the Legislature's strongest and most effective advocates for children with disabilities. Senator Gardiner's political career began as an elected Representative, serving in the House from 2000-2008. He was then elected Senator in 2008, and re-elected subsequently. He represents parts of Brevard and Orange counties. In 2014 he was elected by his Senate peers to serve a term as the Senate President. He is the VP of External Affairs and Community Relations at Orlando Health, and serves on several local Boards. Senator Gardiner resides with his wife and three children in the Orlando area. Senator Gardiner's award will be presented to him in his district.



**High School High Tech Program of the Year**

*ABILITY 1ST  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA*

Under the direction of organization leaders Dan Moore and Holly Bernardo, and through the talented work of site coordinators Heather Barta, Sue Belford, and LaKysha Perkins, the Ability 1st 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. Ability 1st ensures that students in Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla counties experience the depth and breadth of career and youth development through hands-on workshops, leadership development opportunities, and exposure to real-world employment situations. Ability 1st has shown innovation through its student recruitment efforts, hands-on STEM-based workshops, youth leadership opportunities, and engagement of the Business Advisory Councils. Over the past five years, 100% of active seniors have graduated from high school. As a result of successful community and business partnerships, a majority of Ability 1st HSHT students participate in a paid summer internship by graduation. The Able Trust commends Ability 1st for creating and sustaining a highly successful program in Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla counties.

*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left), Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. and Board Treasurer Marcy Benton (far right) present Ability 1st (represented by Sharon Scherbarth, LaKysha Perkins, Sue Belford, Heather Barta, and Holly Bernado) with the High School High Tech Program of the Year Award.*





*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left) and Vice Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. (far right) present The City of Tallahassee (represented by Angela Hendrieth and Kathleen Wright) with the Public Employer of the Year Award.*

### **Public Employer of the Year**

*CITY OF TALLAHASSEE  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA*

For more than a decade, the City of Tallahassee has offered a variety of career development experiences to young job seekers with disabilities. The City has hosted numerous summer internships for local High School High Tech (HSHT) students in many city departments: the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Human Resources, Planning, and Administration. The city opens its doors during Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) to provide a range of career exploration experiences. This year, one student job shadowed Mayor Andrew Gillum for a day, and groups of students toured behind the scenes of the city's airport and hydroelectric dam. From the top down, the City of Tallahassee recognizes the importance of educating young people about the many career opportunities in municipal services, and including people with disabilities as part of a robust and diverse workforce.

---

## *The Able Trust is "Granted" by Disney*



*Walt Disney World Exec Belinda Wilson and Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant celebrate The Able Trust being Granted-by-Disney.*

The Able Trust was the recent recipient of a \$15,000 sponsorship from Walt Disney World Resort. A long-standing supporter of The Able Trust, in 2010 Disney was recognized as the first Corporate Champion for its commitment to the mission of the organization.

The Able Trust's Corporate Champion Award honors Florida corporations that recognize the importance of implementing and sustaining a diverse workforce, particularly for citizens with disabilities. Some of Florida's top corporations comprise the list of past recipients, including Publix Super Markets, Darden Restaurants, and Wells Fargo.

These companies have provided a direct, positive impact on the lives of thousands of Floridians with disabilities, doing their part in dispelling myths and tapping into an under-used workforce. Corporate Champions are selected based on their commitment to pro-

mote diversity in all its forms, echoing the mission of The Able Trust to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. ■

## *The Able Trust Salutes Richard L. Cole, Jr. Former Board Chairman and 2016 Volunteer of the Year*



Richard Cole moved to Florida from Pennsylvania in 2004, and immediately looked for a way he could continue his personal mission of public service to people with disabilities. He is an attorney, and served for six years in the administration of Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh as the Chief Counsel for the Department of Labor and Industry, where a part of his responsibility was to serve as counsel to the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Disability Determination. Shortly after his arrival in Florida, he contacted then-Governor Jeb Bush and requested appointment to the Board of The Able Trust, hoping to bring his knowledge and expertise on disability matters to his new home state. While awaiting his appointment, Richard lost much of his right leg to a motorcycle accident and was indeed required to learn to live and succeed at his endeavors with a disability.

Governor Bush appointed Richard to The Able Trust Board of Directors in September 2006, and he has served continuously on the Board since then, having been reappointed three times. During that time, he has held the officer position of Vice-Chair, and was elected and re-elected Chair of the Board of Directors for the past six years. He also serves as Chair of the Legislative Committee. During his tenure, Richard has been a passionate and convincing supporter of the mission of The Able Trust. He has given freely of his time, sometimes extensive, especially in his Legislative Committee role. He has presided over many Board events, and willingly carries the message of the mission to other organization events as requested. He strongly supports the Able Trust Youth Programs and frequently talks about the lives The Able Trust is changing for the positive. In addition to the gift of his time, Richard and his wife donate freely to the work of The Able Trust, supporting with both time and checkbook. Chair Cole also donates considerable time to counseling people who have experienced amputations, working with the central Florid Amputee Coalition. He is a Certified Peer Visitor for that organization.

Mr. Cole earned his law degree at Villanova University School of Law, and entered into private law practice in 1987. He resides with his wife Barbara in The Villages, and is very proud of his daughter Maria, who lives and works in New York. Although his term as Chair of the Board is term-limited this year, Richard will continue his work with The Able Trust as a member of the Board, maintaining his role with legislative issues and, we are certain, will continue to perform as requested whenever possible. He is the best example of volunteerism and all of the Able Trust family is lucky to have him working here in Florida to better the lives of people with disabilities. ■

## Recent Grant Awards

The Able Trust is pleased to announce two recent awards for the Three Year Strategic Employment Placement Initiative:

- Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center in Broward County will receive \$249,365 for the REAP Program, which will assist individuals with Drug/Alcohol addiction and co-occurring disabilities of learning, mental health, and developmental disabilities gain employment with the assistance of a Career Specialist and After-Care Career Specialist to support their success.
- WorkNet Pinellas in Pinellas County will receive \$250,000 for the Ability Initiative Training Program, which will assist individuals with physical disabilities gain employment in manufacturing positions by providing training, certifications, and placement for machinist and soldering employment in the St. Petersburg/Tampa region.

Additionally, two recent grant awards were made for the One-Year General Support for Employment Placement:

- Key Clubhouse of South Florida in Miami-Dade will receive \$65,000 for the Employment Initiative, to support the job skills training, placement, and support for individuals living with severe mental illness.
- Quest, Inc. will receive \$65,000 for their Osceola County based Project SEARCH at Florida Hospital, to expand the internship and job placement program to young adults with developmental disabilities, epilepsy, learning, mental health disabilities, and traumatic brain injuries.

The Able Trust has awarded more than \$36.2 million to grantees across the state of Florida, enabling Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.

---

## YLF 2016: July 20 - 24

by Ray Ford, Jr.



*YLF participants learn about the political process and the importance of leadership and citizenship from Mayor Andrew Gillum of Tallahassee during the annual "Day at the Capitol" event.*

This July, The Able Trust will host the 17th annual Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) in Tallahassee, welcoming more than 40 high school students with disabilities from across the state to participate in five days of leadership and social training. Event highlights will include a STEM career exploration and networking luncheon, business and formal etiquette training, a mock legislative session at The Florida Capitol, independent living round tables, and seminars on various disability resources. Thanks to the support of a host of corporate and community organizations, all travel, food, lodging, and other event costs are free to all YLF participants.

"My experience as a kid with autism has been rough," Joel of St. Augustine said. "At school I have a hard time fitting in because of people's biased thoughts and cruel words. I want to participate in YLF 2016 because it will be a good opportunity to learn new skills, and maybe make new friends."

"All my life I've been told that I'm a leader," Ashley of Labelle said. "YLF 2016 will give me the opportunity to learn even more about leadership." ■



Upcoming grant opportunities with The Able Trust are the General Support for Employment Placement (July 2016), and the Strategic Employment Placement (November 2016).

The General Support for Employment Placement Programs accepts grant requests for programs that support employment placement for participating individuals with disabilities, placing an emphasis on employment at 20-plus hours a week. Requests 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. There are two opportunities to apply for this type of grant. The first annual deadline is July 5th for a decision at the Fall Board Meeting, and the second opportunity is April 5th for a decision at the Summer Board Meeting. Awards in this category range up to \$65,000 for a one-year grant period.

*by Guenevere Crum*

The Strategic Employment Placement Initiatives is a major granting strategy of The Able Trust that allows qualified organizations to seek a grant up to \$250,000 in a multi-year structure. The application instructions have recently been updated, so any organization planning to apply should be sure to have the most up-to-date guidelines in their possession before proceeding. Applicants for this type of grant should be prepared to move forward with an employment placement program in a strategic manner, fully engaging the education opportunities and employers unique to their particular Florida community. Applicants are expected to have an active Board of Directors committed to the specific proposed program, and 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 is November 10th. 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 Board Meeting in the early Summer of 2017.

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, eight attributes have been adopted by The Able Trust as constituting a definition of employment for the grant-giving program, and they are:

1. Length/Retention: 6-8 months for a first placement, (for placements which are not designed as an internship or similar) and last 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 hours per week, with 60% working 30 or more hours per week by the end of the first year of employment.
4. Position: An entry-level position is ok, but should have some room for advancement.
5. Employed 1 year: At least 70% employed one year later. At least 70% employed two years later; can change jobs/employers.
6. Competitive: At least 80% must be competitive positions (not lingering in supported or transitional).
7. Integrated: At least 90% are integrated positions – working with diverse workforce.
8. Transitional: No more than 20% of jobs can 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](http://www.abletrust.org). For answers to grant questions, send an email to [info@abletrust.org](mailto:info@abletrust.org), or call 850-224-4493. ■



## *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 \_\_\_\_\_
- For a special occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card CSV: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please add me to The Able Trust's  email list  mailing list (check one or both).

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 \$36 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, 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.

# Florida High School High Tech: Tiny House Project-Based Learning

by Allison Chase

The Able Trust is excited to launch a new pilot project through a grant to the Brevard Schools Foundation. During the 2016-2017 school year, Brevard Bayside High School High Tech students will follow a project-based learning model, a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge...in this case the construction of a Tiny House!

The typical small or Tiny House is between 100 and 400 square feet, and enables simpler living in a smaller, more efficient space. The Brevard Bayside Tiny House project will incorporate various construction features which make the space more accessible for individuals with physical impairments (i.e. access ramp, wider doors, bathroom grab bars, etc.) as well as energy efficiency features.

Students will participate in the design, construction, and presentation of the Tiny House, and will be exposed to various careers in the construction industry. Students will work side-by-side with construction professionals from project conception to completion. The project will provide ample opportunities for students to work in groups, take positions of leaderships, advocate for ideas, and engage in presentations, all of which contribute to developing leadership skills in youth.

The Able Trust will provide viewing opportunities upon completion, and the Tiny House will be featured at various construction trade and education events during the spring and summer of 2017. ■



*Brevard Bayside HSHT Students with Florida Gov. Rick Scott*

---

## 2016 Florida High School High Tech Speech Contest

This past spring, The Able Trust Florida High School High Tech Program (HSHT) launched a statewide speech and research contest. Participants competed at the local/site and state levels, and winners advanced all the way to a final contest held in early March. Three finalists (Isaac Reyes, Danetha Scott, and De'Adria Stewart) expounded on quality of life, water quality, and compensation for college athletes. The Able Trust congratulates Isaac Reyes, the 2016 HSHS Speech Contest winner, and commends the efforts of all participants in this inaugural event. ■



*Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (far left) and past Chairman Richard L. Cole, Jr. (far right) congratulate (from left to right) Danetha Scott, contest winner Isaac Reyes, and De'Adria Stewart.*

## *The Able Trust Alumni Association Officers Appointed*

At this past quarterly meeting of The Able Trust Board of Directors, three new officers were appointed to lead The Able Trust Alumni Association. Chairman Anthony LaCava, Vice-Chairman Joseph Murray, and Secretary Sarah Goldman will oversee the development of this initiative, geared toward graduates of Able Trust programs such as Florida High School High Tech, The Florida Youth Leadership Forum, and grantee organizations benefitting from Able Trust financial awards.

The Able Trust Alumni Association – established by the Able Trust in 2015 – was created to increase communication between past program participants and the Able Trust. It was organized to help past participants stay in touch with each other, reach out to others in the program, and increase awareness of the activities of the Able Trust. More information can be found on The Able Trust website. ■



*Anthony LaCava*



*Joseph Murray*



*Sarah Goldman*

---

## *Alumni Corner: Whitney Harris*

*by Rachael Moulton*

Whitney Harris is an inaugural member of the newly formed Able Trust Alumni Association. She serves on the Alumni Association Planning Committee. She has been active with The Able Trust programs since 2007 when she first attended the Youth Leadership Forum. In 2008 she began serving as a YLF group facilitator for several years and she now oversees the training of YLF facilitators. On a national level she is currently the secretary for the Association of Youth Leadership Forums. Whitney is an active volunteer, and serves as co-Chair on the Youth Steering Committee for the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living. She is also a troop leader for the Girl Scouts of the Florida Panhandle.

Professionally, Whitney is a Special Projects Administrator and Assistant to the Executive Vice President for the Florida Chamber Foundation. She holds a Bachelors of Applied Science in Orthotics and Prosthetics from St. Petersburg College and is a Certified Prosthetist by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Pedorthics.

Whitney recently gave the keynote speech during the 2016 Ability Awards, speaking to The Able Trust Board of Directors, Award winners and guests. “The programs of Able Trust opened my eyes to the disability community,” Whitney said. “Those first few days participating in YLF inspired me to become a leader and advocate for myself and other people with disabilities. I can truly say that I would not be where I am in my life today without the experience these programs gave me.” ■



# FLORIDA GRANTOR

The Able Trust  
3320 Thomasville Road, Suite 200  
Tallahassee, FL 32308-7906  
(850) 224-4493 Voice or TDD

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit #390  
Tallahassee FL

850-224-4493

## 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 20-24, 2016**

*Youth Leadership Forum  
Tallahassee, FL*

### **September 22, 2016**

*Able Trust Board of Directors  
Reception  
5:30 – 7:00 PM  
Lowes Portofino Resort,  
Orlando FL*

### **September 23, 2016**

*Able Trust Board of Directors  
Meeting  
8:30 AM – Noon  
Lowes Portofino Resort,  
Orlando FL*

### **October 2016**

*Disability Employment Awareness  
Month*

### **November 2016**

*Hire A Veteran Month*

### **December 9, 2016**

*Able Trust Board of Directors  
Meeting*