

FLORIDA GRANTOR

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November 2018

- 2 *President's Letter*
- 3 *The Able Trust 2018 Ability Awards*
- 4 *Disability Employment Awareness Activities (DEAM) 2018*
- 6 *The Able Trust 2018 Ability Award Recipients*
- 10 *Governor Reappoints Five to The Able Trust Board of Directors*
- 10 *The Able Trust Board of Directors Reappoints Six Ambassadors*
- 10 *The Able Trust Board of Directors Appoints Douglas Hilliard as its Newest Ambassador*
- 11 *Donor Spotlight: Jessica and Bryan Miller*
- 12 *Success Stories: Best Buddies*
- 12 *Recent Grant Awards*
- 13 *Make A Donation to The Able Trust*
- 14 *High School High Tech: 2017-18 End of Year Data*
- 16 *Upcoming Events*

Disability Employment Awareness Season 2018!



Senate President-designate Bill Galvano



Arlene Shackelford



Melisa Lewis

October may be Disability Employment Awareness Month, but in Florida it has long since expanded to become a “season” of career experiences for students and job seekers with disabilities. The 2018 - 2019 DEAM season is shaping up to be one of the best ever. Dedicated community liaisons and businesses have been working hard to provide people with disabilities various career exploration activities.

This DEAM season began on September 21 with a celebration at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. The audience heard compelling stories from the event’s keynote speakers: Senate President-designate Bill Galvano; Arlene Shackelford, Human Resource Advisor, Compliance and Management at NextEra Energy, and The Able Trust Board Member; and Melisa Lewis, Florida High School High Tech Alumnus, and Registered Nurse at Halifax Health Medical Center. All three speakers stressed the importance for people with disabilities to have career exploration experiences while choosing a career path.

There is a large pool of talented individuals with disabilities that are just waiting for the opportunity to help businesses in Florida. These individuals have the knowledge and skills to be excellent employees; they just need a chance to show it. DEAM is a great jumping off point for businesses to learn more about this underutilized group and the benefits of including people with disabilities in their organization.

(See page 4 for more DEAM information)



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



Perhaps the most frustrating reality that The Able Trust and its volunteers and grantees must deal with is the number of disincentives in the public system that prevent or stagnate career growth. There has been a renewed interest in Florida on the number of jobs that don't pay a "living wage", on poverty in spite of full time work, and the fear that earning too much can, for many workers, mean a loss of assistance that significantly and negatively affects the well-being of a worker and his or her family. The United Way's ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) Report studies the number of households that struggle to afford basic necessities. In Florida, that is about 35% of all households, a number that increased during the study years 2007 – 2012.

Public assistance, although very much needed for survival for many individuals and families, is limited in scope, and at certain minimal income levels, disappears. This affects availability of child care assistance, education support, health care, and other needs. For workers with disabilities the potential loss of benefits can stagnate career advancement for a lifetime. Many workers with disabilities spend a part of their working lives with health care subsidized or paid for through Medicaid, knowing that after they reach a certain income level, the subsidies end. Many also collect SSDI – federal income assistance – but only if they work at part time jobs. Workers with disabilities are thus faced with a horrible lifetime decision – do they grow in their careers and become more valuable to their employers, taking the risk of survival without income and health care assistance, or do they give up and accept their fate of employment and a life below their capabilities. Clearly a choice no one wants to make, but one that is being made daily. In Florida and indeed the country, people with disabilities are at least twice as likely to be poor as people without disabilities. Choosing to be poorer for a long time while growing a career is the fate of many workers with disabilities, a choice that few can make.

The Florida Chamber Foundation recently published a report entitled "Less Poverty More Prosperity" that stated there are 944,415 individuals under age 18 that are living in poverty. Other studies report that 13-20% of these children have a disability that may provide some employment challenges, and by the time they are considering employment, they are already aware of the disincentives to career advancement. Thus the path to poverty or a life of economic struggles is set far too early in life.

Several employers have indicated to us their frustration with their inability to advance a good worker with a disability – something that is good for their companies – because the worker cannot take a full time job without losing many thousands of dollars of needed help. The answer is not to eliminate the assistance, but to make the transition softer, for both the business community and the worker.

Clearly, and for many reasons, the community that serves the number of people with disabilities in Florida needs to work on solutions to these issues. We look for a public leader that will take on this task, and The Able Trust is here to help.

Kind regards,

Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA
President & CEO

The Able Trust 2018 Ability Awards

by Todd Schimpf

The Able Trust honored the recipients of its 2018 Ability Awards at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando on September 21, 2018. The Ability Awards recognized select individuals and organizations from throughout the state for their contributions to the mission of The Able Trust. The Able Trust and its partners have helped put thousands of people with disabilities to work throughout Florida, and this annual celebration allows The Able Trust to thank some of the very important colleagues who work with The Able Trust in achieving the critical mission of assisting Floridians with disabilities in finding successful employment.

“The Able Trust is honored to have worked with these individuals and organizations on the mission of employment for people with disabilities,” said Dr. Susanne Homant, president and CEO of The Able Trust. “Along with our Board, Ambassadors, and staff, they work very hard to make sure that a job, and for many a career, are viable options for Floridians with disabilities. We are proud to call them partners in this mission.”

This year’s event featured three keynote speakers, Senate President-designate Bill Galvano, High School High Tech Alumnus and Registered Nurse, Melisa Lewis, and Arlene Shackelford, Human Resource Advisor, Compliance and Management, NextEra Energy and a Board Member of The Able Trust.

Senate President-designate Galvano has been a staunch supporter of The Able Trust and its mission, and was recognized as Legislator of the Year.

“Thank you to The Able Trust for naming me their ‘Legislator of the Year,’” said Senate President-designate Galvano. “The Able Trust’s work connecting job seekers with businesses through community organizations has resulted in the employment of thousands of people with disabilities. I have known The Able Trust for many years and have long supported its successful efforts to make sure people with disabilities are a part of Florida’s workforce. The Able Trust is an organization that I am proud to support.”

The Able Trust presented a total of 12 awards at the celebration to partners from all around the state, including Legislator of the Year, the Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program, the Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award, Employers of the Year, and many others. A complete list of award recipients is displayed on pages 6-9 of this newsletter.

In addition to the DEAM launch and announcing the recipients of the 2018 Ability Awards, The Able Trust displayed its Tiny House Project, which was constructed at Bayside High School in Palm Bay by students with disabilities. The goal of the project was to explore a learning model called Project-Based Learning, a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex problem. Seventy-five students, 40 percent of whom were students with disabilities, worked together as a team to build this fully functioning “Tiny House” in order to learn more about the construction industry.



*Back row: Cary Ombres, Best Buddies; David Quilleon, Best Buddies; Nathan Polete, Pitney Bowes; and Justin Shea, City of Gulfport
Front Row: Michael Radel, Madison HSHT; Terri Davis, Pitney Bowes; Karenne Levy, MacDonald Training Center; Ronderik Curtis, Student;
Lucy Mohs, Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Christine Onderick, Caribe Royale Resort Orlando;
Coleen Agner, Madison HSHT; and Jim Zboril, Tavistock Development Company*

Florida Disability Employment Awareness Activities

by Todd Schimpf



Featured on the cover of this year's brochure and poster is Melisa Lewis. Melisa was a participant The Able Trust's High School High Tech (HSHT) program for four years and was able to have numerous career exploration opportunities as a result of HSHT and DEAM. Melisa used those experiences to solidify her decision to enter the medical field where she is a highly successful RN in the Halifax Hospital System.

in numerous other ways, including helping set career goals and taking the steps to realize them; using personal contacts to help young people network with industry professionals; finding internships, and locating possible jobs; introducing young people to resources and organizations they may not be familiar with; and developing skills for seeking a job, interviewing for a job, and keeping a job.

Learning doesn't just take place in the classroom — participating in workforce experiences can provide individuals with a wealth of other benefits, including the chance to apply classroom learning in a professional environment, establishing critical networking connections, and gaining coveted work experience.

Job seekers are not the only ones who benefit from the presence of workforce experiences. Employers also encounter a number of unique advantages when they open their doors to potential employees, including an expanded pool of qualified applicants, ability to evaluate up-and-coming talent, exposing potential employees to their business, and positively influencing job seekers.

Workforce experiences can also benefit the communities which they serve, including the opportunity to enhance economic growth and development, a reduction of public support dollars, and a contribution to the development of productive citizens.

Work experiences of every kind are a win-win-win for the mentor, mentee, and community, and are strongly supported by The Able Trust.

Disability Employment Awareness Months (DEAM) activities are opportunities for business to get a first-hand look at an untapped pool of talented individuals. Research from the Florida Chamber Foundation's Research, *Quantifying the Unemployment Rate*, shows that only 30 percent of Floridians with disabilities are in the workforce. A recent study by the Kessler Foundation and the University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability (UNH-IOD), *Striving to work and overcoming barriers: employment strategies and successes of people with disabilities*, showed that more than 68 percent of people with disabilities who responded to the survey are striving to work. This means there are thousands of talented individuals just waiting for the opportunity to help companies fill their employment needs.

Studies show that the fastest path to meaningful employment is through work experiences such as internships and mentoring. DEAM activities, including internships, job shadowing, and mentoring opportunities, are designed to give businesses the chance to connect with individuals with disabilities and discover the many talents they offer.

Research confirms that quality mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on young people in a variety of personal, academic, and professional situations. Ultimately, mentoring connects a young person to personal growth and development, and social and economic opportunity. Yet one in three young people will grow up without this critical asset. By preparing young people for college and careers, mentoring helps develop the future workplace talent pipeline. (Mentoring: At the crossroads of education, business and community, 2015). Mentoring also help mentees

"Thousands of Floridians with disabilities want to work and are looking for the opportunity to showcase their skills and talents to potential employers. The DEAM program gives them an opportunity they might not otherwise get. I know my internships were invaluable in helping me achieve my career goals and I thank The Able Trust for all that they did to help me succeed,"

- Melisa Lewis, Registered Nurse, Halifax Health Medical Center



Thank You To Our Sponsors



The Able Trust is working to provide opportunities for successful employment for Floridians with disabilities. Business and community leaders around Florida can help create more employment opportunities by participating in DEAM activities, including internships and mentoring. As Florida prepares for the future, it will be faced with the retirement of substantial numbers of baby boomers, a changing economy, and the addition of up to 6 million new residents by 2030. These changes call for mobilizing and training workers for an expected job growth of 2 million jobs. It is important to know as much as possible about each component of the current and future Florida workforce. One segment of the workforce that should provide substantial opportunities for Florida employers is persons with disabilities.

For more information on the many data points that define Florida, visit <https://thefloridascorecard.org>. A service of the Florida Chamber Foundation, the scorecard is updated at least monthly.

DEAM's flexibility, no risk atmosphere makes it a great Florida-wide program. Participating in DEAM helps businesses connect with their community and develop relationships to sources of potential new hires. Hiring people with disabilities offers many benefits to businesses, including added diversity in the workforce, increased employee retention and reduced turnover. However businesses choose to take part, they will be playing an important role in fostering a more inclusive workforce, one where every person is recognized for his or her abilities.

"All good things come when we are all working together in creating jobs in our communities: when everyone who wants a job can get a job."

Mark Wilson, President & CEO, Florida Chamber Foundation

If your organization is interested in being a 2018 - 2019 DEAM participant, there is still time to get involved, either as a community liaison, or as a business hosting participants. Visit www.abletrust.org or call 850-224-4493, ext. 227 for more information.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Senate President-designate Bill Galvano, and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Legislator of the Year

*SENATOR BILL GALVANO (R-BRADENTON)
SENATE PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE
DISTRICT 21
BRADENTON, FLORIDA*

Senate President-designate Galvano has long been a champion of affordability and access to education for all Floridians, and has supported all the efforts of The Able Trust to assure that individuals with disabilities get the same opportunities for education as Floridians without disabilities. Early in his legislative career, he provided strong support for the establishment of Florida's Community-Based Care system for foster care students. During the 2018 session he took the lead role in the passage of the Florida Excellence in Higher Education Act, which provided a permanent expansion of bright futures scholarships, expanded the 1st Generation matching grant program to include community college students and addressed other scholarship expansion. He was also a prime player in the passage of SB 7026, the "School Safety Bill", designed to address the MSD shooting and protect Florida's students from any repeat incidences. He plans to bring school safety issues into his upcoming Senate leadership role, stating "I am committed to making sure our re-examination of school safety policies does not end here. Some issues simply must transcend politics. The safety of our children is one."



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Able Trust Secretary of the Board, Bridget Pallango; David Quilleon, Shane Collins, and Cary Ombres of Best Buddies; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program

*BEST BUDDIES
DEAVID QUILLEON, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
ORLANDO, FLORIDA*

The staff at Best Buddies Florida saw a need for expanded employment assistance in central Florida and rose to the occasion. They have established themselves as a valuable resource for both individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as the business community. Over the last year, individuals have gained positions in a variety of businesses across the central Florida counties of Orange, Seminole, and Osceola. The Jobs program has focused on incorporating people with intellectual disabilities in inclusive job environments such as data entry, filing, operating office equipment, answering phones, taking supply inventories, customer service, and other responsibilities not historically seen as positions of employment for people with disabilities. Many individuals work in law firms, financial institutions, and other office settings where Best Buddies' Jobs program offers continual outreach and support to both individuals and the employers to help sustain success. Best Buddies prides itself on never "closing a case" but following up on the lifelong journey of participants in becoming long-term employees, self-supporting and successful in their choices. For their dedication and success in providing quality employment opportunities for people with disabilities,



(from left to right) Able Trust Ambassador Dwayne Ingram; Able Trust President and CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Terri Davis and Nathan Polet of Pitney Bowes; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Employer of the Year

*PITNEY BOWES
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA*

The Pitney Bowes facility in Jacksonville has committed itself to a culture of excellence that includes people with disabilities and encourages their professional growth. Currently 18 percent of the employees at the facility are individuals with a disability. Pitney Bowes is able to achieve this by adopting an inclusive cultural philosophy, which allows all of their hires to achieve their full potential and grow. The company has expanded their inclusive hiring strategies in multiple locations. The company works closely with local disability service nonprofits to strengthen the company's ability to recruit and accommodate employees with disabilities.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Able Trust Board Member Arlene Shackelford; Karenne Levy of the MacDonald Training Center; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award

*KARENNE LEVY
PRESIDENT & CEO
MACDONALD TRAINING CENTER
TAMPA, FLORIDA*

Karenne Levy began the position of President & CEO at the MacDonald Training Center in August 2016 and promptly began to expand the services and programs offered. Her leadership has brought new educational opportunities for individuals on the Autism Spectrum, including programs like EXCEL, Excellence in Computer Education and Learning, a new high-tech pathway to employment with industry-recognized certificates of ability, as well as a new summer program for youth aged 14-21 that provides for continued skill development over the school summer break. They also established the HEAR Program to assist individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing with employment assistance. This program has distinguished itself in offering tri-lingual interpretation in American Sign Language, English and Spanish. Employment outcomes have doubled, leading to an increased number of individuals that have gained new independence. Her leadership has brought about outstanding partnerships with major employers in the greater Hillsborough County area, including Moffit Cancer Center, Tampa General Hospital, and Bay Care. Dr. Spelios, a founding Director and past Chair of The Able Trust, valued and sought out innovative leaders making a difference and The Able Trust is proud to recognize Karenne Levy as such a leader.



Richard Herring

Volunteer of the Year

*RICHARD E. HERRING
ATTORNEY
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA*

Richard Herring serves The Able Trust as a volunteer member of its Legislative Committee, bringing his vast range of experience and expertise to the important work of that Committee. Now retired from the state of Florida, Mr. Herring dedicated 35 years to state government work, which includes 16 years in Senate and House Appropriations. He is an expert on Florida Statutes, and has been extremely helpful to The Able Trust as its statutes have been changed over time. Those who have worked with him over the years say he has written amendments to nearly every part of the Statutes at one time or another. He is a caring and helpful individual, always ready to provide The Able Trust with his analysis of regulatory issues that affect the mission. He does that quietly, never asking for personal credit or accolades. His personal bio states that he has learned that individuals, not structure or organization, are the key to making things happen. He is a good friend of The Able Trust and deserving of the Adult Volunteer award.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Member Les Goldman; Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Shane Collins, Jim Zboril, Debbie DeMars, and Heather Isaacs of Tavistock Development Company; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Employer of the Year

*TAVISTOCK DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
ORLANDO, FLORIDA*

Tavistock Development Company is a diversified real estate firm operating in the Central Florida area. They work to better the community through their projects and strong community involvement, notably with Best Buddies. Tavistock and Best Buddies developed a relationship three years ago that has helped to strengthen the supported employment program best known as Best Buddies Jobs. In the three years that Tavistock has partnered with Best Buddies they have successfully placed 21 individuals into employment within the company.



(from left to right) Able Trust Ambassador Eladio Amores; Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Christine Onderick of Caribe Royale Resort; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Employer of the Year

*CARIBE ROYALE RESORT - ORLANDO
ORLANDO, FLORIDA*

The Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando is entering into its third year of partnership with Quest Inc. The hotel has fostered an inclusive environment and its staff has been patient, supportive, and innovative in finding and implementing methods and strategies to support its team members with disabilities. Over the last eight months, the resort has hired three individuals through Quest Inc. Caribe Royale Resort places emphasis on employee growth by encouraging employees to learn new skills in other resort areas. Due to the resort's willingness to encourage staff growth and their welcoming and supportive nature to young adults with disabilities entering the workforce, The Able Trust is proud to recognize Caribe Royale Resort as a 2018 Employer of the Year.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Able Trust Board Vice-Chair Marcy Benton; Lucy Mohs of the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Public Employee of the Year Award

*LUCY MOHS
COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA*

Lucy Mohs, long a supporter of the work of The Able Trust, currently serves as Communications and Public Affairs Director for the Department of Education's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). She is also DVR's legislative liaison, and has over 30 years of experience working in the Florida legislative process, including at the federal level. Some of her many accomplishments include earning her Certified Public Manager certification, which helped direct her efforts as project lead for the creation of the Abilities Work Help Desk. She also directed the creation of the VR Supervisor Succession Training program, which is targeted at VR employees aspiring to become supervisors. For several years, Lucy has been an advocate for all of the Able Trust's programs at the state legislative level, never failing to respond to requests for information, guide the interaction with legislators, explain actions we didn't understand, and always provide good advice on how to positively work with the legislature.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Able Trust Ambassador Nancy Kline; Justin Shea of the City of Gulfport; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Adult Leadership Award

*JUSTIN SHEA
CULTURAL FACILITIES EVENTS SUPERVISOR
CITY OF GULFPORT
GULFPORT, FLORIDA*

Justin Shea is a leader making a difference in Pinellas County Florida. His disability took him by surprise in high school when the popular young football star began to spiral out of control and was eventually diagnosed with schizophrenia. In 2004 he found his way to Vincent House where he began to interact with others and worked on small projects to develop his stamina, self-esteem, and a vision of what he could still accomplish while living with schizophrenia. He gained a part-time job and with the support of Vincent House, it went well. He enrolled in college and found success. Six years ago, Justin was hired as the Cultural Facilities Events Supervisor for the City of Gulfport and oversees the work of 13 staff members. He volunteers on the NAMI Pinellas Board of Directors, is a homeowner, and the father of a beautiful six-year-old daughter named Melody. He still works with Vincent House to emcee events and encourages the current members to achieve all they can.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant; Michael Radel and Coleen Agner of Madison County HSHT; and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Florida High School High Tech Program of the Year

MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

MADISON, FLORIDA

Under the direction and talented work of program leaders, Coleen Agner and Michael Radel, the Madison County School District 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. Madison 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 settings. Madison HSHT has shown innovation through its school-based enterprise programs, student and family engagement efforts, focus on career certifications, and commitment of community partners. Over the past five years, the program has achieved a greater than 99% graduation rate of all seniors served.



Media Award

TIM CROFT

THE STAR

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

Tim Croft, Editor of The Star newspaper in Port St. Joe, Florida, is an outstanding advocate for individuals with disabilities and an exemplary supporter of High School High Tech (HSHT) students in Port St. Joe, Florida. The Star highlights individual students who participate in HSHT summer internships and their volunteer work at community organizations with front page articles and photos. Tim and The Star provide excellent coverage of all program events and promote the fund raising efforts of HSHT. The Star makes every effort to emphasize the strong points and how these students with disabilities are an asset to our community and to our workforce. The Able Trust is proud to honor The Star and Tim Croft for their efforts and dedication to promoting the capabilities of young workers with disabilities.



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Ronderik Curtis, and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore

Young Adult Leadership Award

R.J. CURTIS

LAND O' LAKES, FLORIDA

Ronderik Curtis (RJ) graduated from Pepin Academies in Pasco County Florida this past May. He was an active student leader in the High School High Tech Program (HSHT). He attends Hillsborough Community College and plans to obtain his Associates of Arts degree. His long-term goal is to transfer to a state university in Florida and major in communications and theatre arts. RJ was a finalist in the 2017 Jeannie Amendola Speech & Research Competition and competed at the regional level of the competition in 2018. RJ was one of the keynote speakers at the 2017 The Able Trust Ability Awards and DEAM Celebration event. He shared his experience in the Florida foster care system, finding his forever home with his mother, Tammy Curtis; and the positive impact that the HSHT Program has had on his life and future goals. RJ participated in the 2018 Able Trust Youth Leadership Retreat, providing valuable input about training for young leaders of the future. The Able Trust is proud to recognize RJ Curtis as the 2018 Young Adult Volunteer of the Year.

Five Reappointed to The Able Trust Board of Directors

Governor Rick Scott announced the reappointment of five to The Able Trust's (Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation) Board of Directors. The Board provides leadership for carrying out The Able Trust's mission to be a key leader in providing opportunities for successful employment for Floridians with disabilities.

Marcy Benton, MBA, of Lakeland, is the vice president of human resources at Publix Supermarkets.

Les Goldman, of Tampa, is a product manager for Syniverse Technologies, LLC.

Scot LaFerté, of Windermere, is the senior vice president of human resources at Universal Orlando Resort.

Karen Moore, APR, CPRC, of Tallahassee, is the president and CEO of Moore, Inc.

Bridget Pallango, of Miami, is the senior vice president of Goodwill Industries.

Six Reappointed as Ambassadors to The Able Trust

The Able Trust Board of Directors announced the reappointment of six Ambassadors at its meeting on September 20, 2018. These individuals have been instrumental in providing leadership and support to The Able Trust. Together with the Board and staff, they will continue to strengthen the mission and vision of The Able Trust.

Eladio Amores, of Sarasota, is retired from an extensive career in human resources.

Bob Bromberg, of Miami, is the Managing Partner at Bromberg & Associates.

Robert Butterworth, of Ft. Lauderdale, is an Attorney with Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney PC.

Dwayne Ingram, of Odessa, is an Operating Partner with Morgan Hill Partners.

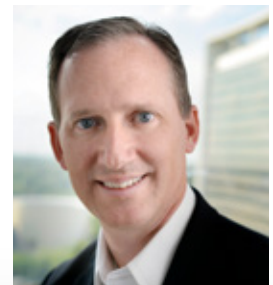
Nancy Kline, of Destin, is the First Vice President, Senior Portfolio Manager, and Financial Advisor with Morgan Stanley Wealth Management.

Neil Romano, of Celebration, is the Chairman of the National Council on Disability.

The Able Trust Board of Directors Appoints Douglas Hilliard As Its Newest Ambassador

The Able Trust Board of Directors has appointed Douglas Hilliard as an Ambassador. Mr. Hilliard is the Chief Financial Officer of Florida Acute Care Services at Florida Hospital. His career with Adventist Health System spans more than 21 years. Doug began his career in 1996 as a Financial Analyst with the Florida Hospital Financial Planning Department. Over the following seven years, Doug assumed several leadership roles within Florida Hospital's financial departments. He was appointed Vice President of Finance in 2007 and Senior Vice President/Senior Finance Officer of the Orlando/Children's campus in 2009.

"Doug is a welcome addition to The Able Trust's leadership team," said Dr. Susanne Homant, president and CEO of The Able Trust. "Doug brings talent and expertise that will augment our already strong team. We are very fortunate to have him helping us as we work to create successful employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities."



Douglas Hilliard

Doug is a Certified Public Accountant and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Southern Adventist University. Doug loves spending time with his wife, Heather, of twenty years, son Cole, and daughters Loghann and Madison.

Donor Spotlight: Jessica and Bryan Miller

by Hans Kairies



Jessica and Bryan Miller

It would be a challenge to find more passionate and committed donors to The Able Trust than Jessica and Bryan Miller. Their consistent and long standing support of The Able Trust's mission stems from years of experiencing how people with disabilities receive life-changing opportunities, witnessing first-hand the results of the Trust's programs, and seeing the dedication of the staff

Jessica was an executive assistant at The Able Trust about five years ago and now is the administrator at a busy OB-GYN practice. Bryan is the chief information officer at Lanigan & Associates, a full-service regional accounting and consulting practice. They still stay in active contact with many of the young people that have been served by The Able Trust. It reinforces for them the permanent value of programs the organization manages outright, like High School High Tech, and partner organizations it supports through its grants program. For Jessica, the three years she worked at the Trust "were a fantastic part of my life."

Bryan said he and Jessica came to fully appreciate the magnitude of the Trust's work and the compassion and focus of the board of directors and staff during that time. They became committed donors and understand the vital importance of private support to the organization. They also value the efficiency of The Able Trust with 85% of its budget going directly to programs that fulfill its mission to be a key leader in creating successful employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities.

An apt analogy was offered by Bryan, "If you see a person who formerly worked at a restaurant go back there regularly to eat, that's a pretty good sign that the place is doing something right. All The Able Trust's efforts ultimately lead back to the community and help to build the economy."

Jessica knows from her family experience how important it is for people with disabilities to be provided with employment opportunities. Her mother, who struggled with a speech disability, was hired by Publix (a proud sponsor of The Able Trust and represented on its board). Her employment at Publix enabled her to prove her abilities and be a productive member of a diverse workforce. "She was provided an exceptional environment with opportunities, Jessica said, "I admire the company for its inclusive hiring practices and the opportunity afforded my Mom."

In Bryan's field of information technology, he also sees positive movement in diversity and inclusion. He recently attended a technology conference sponsored by Microsoft and was heartened by the technological advances designed to assist people with disabilities, including advances in screens and color filters, real-time subtitles, and voice recognition, such as dictation technology.

Jessica and Bryan both perceive of their philanthropy as an integral part of their lives. They initially volunteered with various non-profits and witnessed the beauty of giving back to their communities. For the Millers, "philanthropy is a necessary part of one's life. It's all about getting involved and actually experiencing the positive impact of your philanthropy in people's lives first-hand." Added Jessica, "Philanthropy is crucial to our family. We want to pass on the values of giving back and doing something better than one's self to our son, Gabriel. We work hard and are very blessed therefore we want to help others achieve their own personal and professional goals. The Able Trust's programs and grants do this throughout the state."

In reflecting on the horrific aftermath of the recent Hurricane Michael on Florida's panhandle Bryan said it's important to support efforts to help those severely impacted by natural disasters, but it's equally important to continue to contribute to organizations that one has supported regularly in the past that do good work year in and year out.

Success Stories - Best Buddies Central Florida

by Guenevere Crum

The Best Buddies (BB) Central Florida recently completed an Able Trust grant leading to the expansion of its Jobs Program. Over the last year, individuals participating in the program have gained positions in a variety of businesses across the central Florida counties of Orange, Seminole, and Osceola. The Jobs Program has focused on incorporating people with intellectual disabilities into inclusive job environments with jobs and other responsibilities not historically seen as opportunities for people with disabilities, such as data entry, administrative assistants, and inventory managers,



Shane Collins

Shane, pictured here, participates in the Best Buddies Job Program. He has been involved with Best Buddies programs in high school. Prior to the Best Buddies Jobs Program launching in Central Florida, he attained a position on his own. Unfortunately, his hours were slowly reduced, so Shane started looking for a full-time position with steady hours. Shane was accepted into the Jobs Program and quickly worked to identify a position that allow him to be part of a team, grow professionally, and showcase his attention to detail. The Best Buddies Jobs Program developed a relationship with Tavistock Development Company, which is near Shane's home and was looking to fill an office assistant position. It was a perfect fit for Shane and at his interview they offered him the job. He has impressed his supervisors so much that they recently offered him a full-time position that includes insurance, paid time off, and a retirement fund.

Best Buddies estimates that 81% of adults with developmental disabilities do not have a paid job. Through the Jobs Program, Best Buddies develops partnerships with employers, assists with the hiring process, and provides ongoing support to the employee and the employer to change this statistic. The Able Trust was pleased to provide the grant funds and technical assistance that allowed for an expansion of the program that provides this skillful matching between the talents of qualified individuals with intellectual disabilities and the businesses seeking enthusiastic and dedicated employees.

Recent Grant Awards

by Guenevere Crum

The Able Trust announced two recent awards for the General Support of Employment Programs:

CareerSource Flagler/Volusia was awarded a grant for the continuation of the STARS Program in Flagler and Volusia counties. The \$64,772 grant will provide additional trainers to assist individuals with gaining skills at the Walgreens training site. It will also support individuals with gaining employment at the end of the training.

Autism Pensacola was awarded a grant for the Autism Works for the Community Program in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The \$42,000 grant will provide custom training and employment placement with follow up for individuals with autism and support outreach efforts to area employers.

GRANT UPDATE

The deadline for 2018 Strategic Employment Placement Grant applications has been extended to Monday, December 17, 2018. Visit www.abletrust.org and click Grant Information to learn more.



Make A Difference With Your Donation to The Able Charitable Foundation, the Fundraising & Development Arm of The Able Trust!

There are many ways you can support the goals of making 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.AbleCF.org, or mail your gift with the form below to:

The Able Charitable Foundation, 3320 Thomasville Road, Suite 200, Tallahassee, Florida, 32308-7906

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

Is this donation (*please check one*):

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

The Able Charitable Foundation supports The Able Trust's mission to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$37 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.

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OVERALL GOAL OF PROGRAM

Florida High School/High Tech (HSHT) is designed to 1) improve participation in education, vocational, and employment-related activities for youth with disabilities; 2) increase their enrollment in postsecondary education & training, and 3) increase their high school graduation rate. Florida HSHT provides high school students with all types of disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or postsecondary education leading to technology-related careers.

2017 – 2018 Annual Data & Outcomes

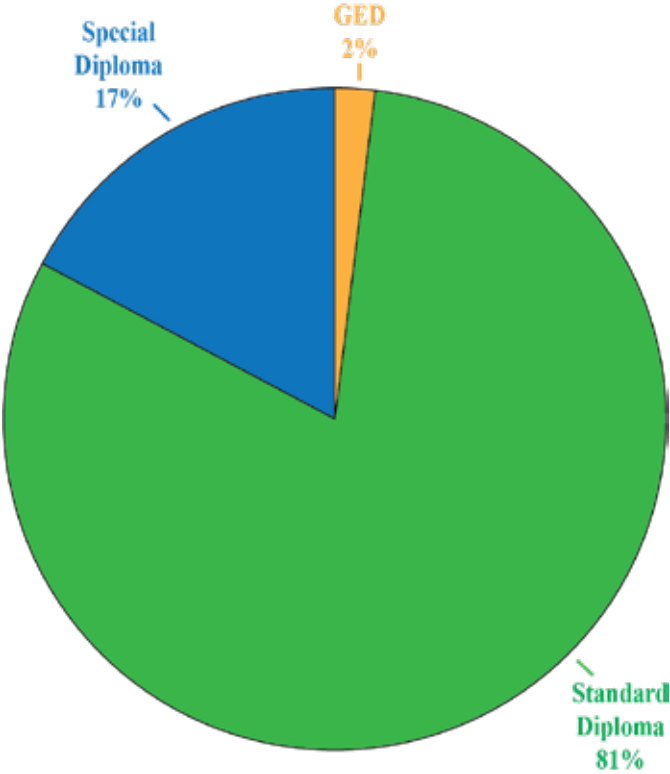
During the 2017-2018 school year, the Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) Program served 1,336 students with disabilities in 40 Florida counties. Students were provided transition services based on the nationally recognized Guideposts for Success: School-Based Preparatory Experiences, Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning, Connecting Activities, Youth Leadership & Development, Family Involvement & Supports, and Communication Skills.

The Florida HSHT Impact:

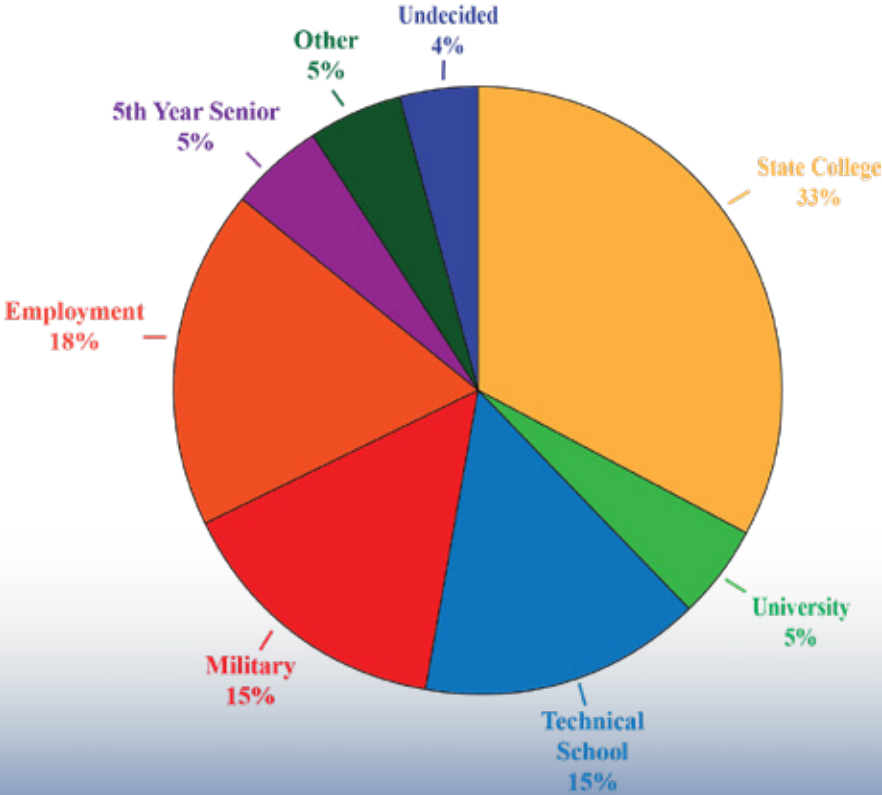
- 307 HSHT students graduated in 2018. The HSHT program achieved a graduation rate of greater than 99% of all participating seniors compared to a 66% graduation rate of other graduates with disabilities in Florida.*
- Services were provided in 137 high schools and alternative education settings including Department of Juvenile Justice facilities.
- 81% of Florida HSHT graduates received a standard diploma compared to 66% of other graduates with disabilities in Florida.*
- 86% of Florida HSHT graduates entered postsecondary education or employment compared to 56% of other graduates with disabilities in Florida.*
- 533 students participated in work experiences paid through a stipend by the employer, the HSHT program site, the local Career Source, Vocational Rehabilitation, or community grant provider.
- Disability diversity of enrolled students includes: autism spectrum disorder, 15%; cognitive impairment, 10%; deaf or deaf/blind 2%; emotional disturbance, 2%; hearing impairment, 1%; multiple disabilities, 1%; other health impairment, 10%; orthopedic impairment, 5%; specific learning disability, 40%; speech or language impairment, 3%; traumatic brain injury, 1%; visual impairment/blindness, 4%.



Florida HSHT Graduation Outcomes: School Year 2017 - 2018



Florida HSHT Graduation Outcomes: July 2018



FLORIDA GRANTOR

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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 Charitable Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and in compliance with the Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act.

Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

November 8

*Development & Marketing
Committee Meeting
Conference Call*

November 16

*Finance & Executive
Committee Meeting
Conference Call*

November 22-23

*Thanksgiving Holiday
Office Closed*

December 14

*Able Trust Board of Directors
Meeting
Conference Call*

December 25

*Christmas
Office Closed*