

FLORIDA GRANTOR

Official Publication of The Able Trust • www.abletrust.org

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Able Trust High School High Tech Students Build a Tiny House and Learn A Huge Lesson About Careers



(from left to right) Tonia Groff, Bryce Watson, Senator Debbie Mayfield, Brandon Bright, and Gloria McCollum



(from left to right) Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Brandon Bright, Bryce Watson, and Senator Dorothy Hukill

For 20 years, The Able Trust High School High Tech (HSHT) Program has given high school students with disabilities access to training that prepares them for life after high school through real-world experiences. HSHT activities include career workshops, industry & campus tours, summer internships, community service projects, and leadership development for students ages 14-22. Over the past two years, Brevard-Bayside HSHT has been involved in a unique project; the building of a tiny house.

The tiny house was constructed at Bayside High School in Palm Bay. The goal of the project was to teach teamwork, and explore a learning model called Project Based Learning (PBL). PBL is 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.

On February 14, 2018, project participants Bryce Watson and Brandon Bright were accompanied by instructors Tonia Groff and Gloria McCollum as the tiny house was displayed in the courtyard of the Florida Capitol. Several individuals stopped to examine the marvel and compliment the students who helped construct it, Senator Dorothy Hukill and Senator Debbie Mayfield among them.

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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



So What Is Leadership?

Bernard Bass, in the highly respected "Handbook of Leadership" stated that "Leaders are agents of change." Businesses, be they for profit or not-for-profit, large or small, seek leadership skills or potential in those they hire because they want to keep making their businesses better – to make positive change. James Powell in his "Pathways to Leadership" agrees, stating that "... the most effective leaders are able to induce or extract the maximum amount of change that their organization can sustain; less effective leaders accept the diminished role of protector of the status quo."

The Able Trust has long been devoted to helping young people with disabilities develop leadership qualities and a leadership mindset, so that they can advance personally and help to advance the role of people with disabilities in the business world and in their communities – helping them become agents of change for other aspiring young people with disabilities. Wikipedia defines Youth Leadership as a theory of youth development in which young people gain skills and knowledge necessary to lead civic engagement, education reform, and community organizing activities. The Able Trust has a focused mission to help youth with disabilities apply that theory to career pathway discovery and development, as we have learned that leadership training that does not address getting to employment at the highest level possible is not only a disservice to those we serve, it is "protecting the status quo"

Programs of The Able Trust that have addressed youth leadership training include its High School High Tech program, its Youth Leadership Forum, and specific grantee programs that work with young adults with disabilities in post-secondary institutions or certification programs. As we have reviewed these programs, and in the light of a rapidly changing environment, we determined that it is important to host a Leadership Planning Retreat this year, to learn more about the leadership skills necessary for career development from young job seekers and workers. We will be convening a small group of "graduates" from our programs at the end of June in Orlando in a think-tank setting to learn what we can do better to train those we serve to be as fully integrated as possible into their communities and the economy. This two-day retreat will be followed by meeting with a group of business leaders to determine what training Florida's businesses feel young people with disabilities need, to effectively compete for jobs. Businesses will also be asked to help identify personal characteristics that they feel contribute to leadership, which may include adaptability, ability to set priorities, risk taking capacity, and a sense of humor, among many others. The results of these two planning sessions will be used to improve or redesign leadership programs that The Able Trust will support in the future. We do not want to be, nor can we be, a status quo organization.

I look forward to sharing the results of our leadership research and especially the changes we expect will be a part of our programmatic development for future youth leadership programs. Those changes will be critical that will be necessary for the advancement of employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities in the current and future work world.

Kindest regards,

Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA

Grantee Spotlight: The Haven

by Guenevere Crum

The Haven in Sarasota, Florida was the recent recipient of a Strategic Employment Placement Grant from The Able Trust for its *Careers Without Limits* program. This is an employment initiative which provides higher education students with disabilities the necessary supports to gain employment in their chosen career fields. Operating at the State College of Florida, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, and Suncoast Technical College, the program coordinates career supports with the respective Disability Resource Coordinators at the schools to meet the needs of graduating students and area employers.

Graduates like Brendan and Katelyn have recently found employment thanks to the efforts of this program. Brendan, who has autism, has always dreamed of working with aquatic marine animals. He obtained his degree in marine biology, and obtained volunteer and internship positions working with birds, turtles, and dolphins. After graduation and numerous interviews, he landed a position as a zookeeper. He describes this position as “a great stepping stone” towards acquiring more hands-on training in land-based zoo-keeping, while keeping his eye on developing his skills to reach his ultimate goal of working with aquatic animals. The Haven’s employment specialist will continue to work with Brendan on the development of his career.

Another *Careers Without Limits* participant is Katelyn, who graduated in December 2017 with her associate’s degree in TV production from the State College of Florida. Thanks to the assistance she received from the grant-funded program, Katelyn recently obtained an internship in TV production, which will build her resume as she continues to interview for a career-track position.



The Able Trust recently awarded a \$230,931 grant to The Haven’s “Careers Without Limits” program. Pictured from left to right: Sean Gast, employment specialist of The Haven; Brad Jones, president and CEO of The Haven; Senator Bill Galvano; Tim Walsh, employee of Snackworks in Bradenton and a client of The Haven; and Dr. Susanne Homant, president and CEO of The Able Trust.

The Able Trust proudly offers other Florida 501(c)3 organizations the opportunity to attain Strategic Employment Placement Initiative grants. This grant award is offered annually, and provides organizations a three-year time frame to design and implement their unique program, providing employment placement for individuals with disabilities. The Able Trust continues to focus on developing career opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and helping Florida’s employers in their quest for finding loyal, competent employees. More information on The Able Trust grant program can be found at www.abletrust.org. ■

2018 Able Trust General Support for Employment Grant Deadline Approaching!

Grant proposals are due no later than Thursday, April 5, 2018.

Visit www.abletrust.org for more information or contact us at 850-224-4493.

(continued from page 1)

“I am so proud of Brandon and Bryce from Brevard County for their accomplishment and selflessness by creating a home for someone in need,” Senator Hukill said. “The Tiny House was beautifully crafted and I enjoyed speaking with everyone involved during their visit to the Capitol. These students are great representatives of their communities and will continue to set the standard. It is truly an honor to represent incredible students like them in Brevard County.”

Senator Mayfield echoed Hukill’s praise of the Brevard-Bayside HSHT and its students.

“What an amazing project put together by The Able Trust,” she said. “Seventy-five students worked together as a team to build this fully-functioning “Tiny House” in order to learn more about the construction industry. Thank you for taking the time to give me a tour of the house!”

THE ABLE TRUST
EMPLOYMENT EDUCATION ENRICHMENT

TINY HOUSE

- 30' long, 14' tall, 8' wide; one-story plus loft
- Kitchenette (microwave & refrigerator)
- Transportable by trailer towed by medium-sized vehicle
- 3/4 bathroom (stand-up shower)
- RV hook-ups for electric, water, and waste

A special thanks to Tallahassee Community College for providing a home for the Tiny House Project while in Tallahassee.

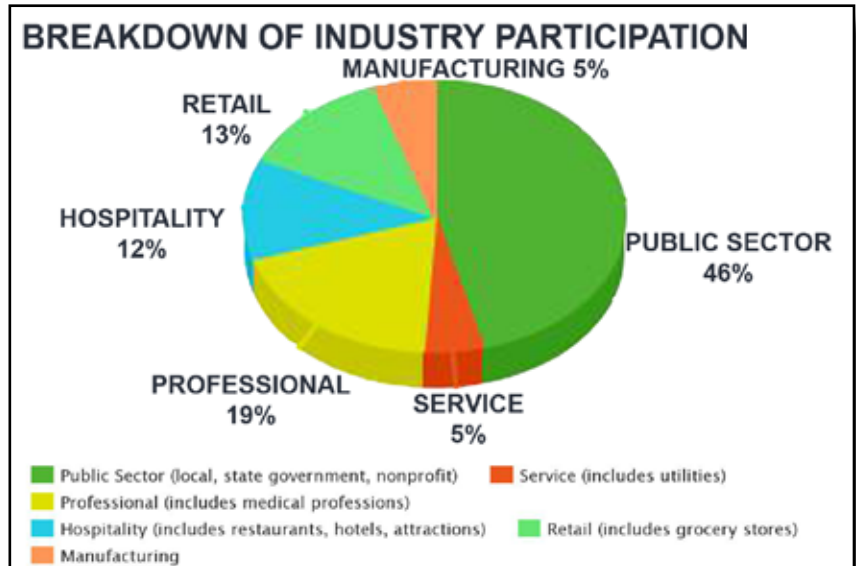
For more information about HSHT and the tiny house project, visit www.abletrust.org. ■

Florida Disability Employment Awareness Month

by Joseph D'Souza

In 2017, The Able Trust’s Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) activities were made possible through the hard work of 80 community liaisons working in 62 counties throughout Florida. Together with over 240 businesses and organization partners, they were able to provide career exploration opportunities to more than 1,500 participants at the time of reporting.

The 2017 DEAM season was launched with a breakfast celebration in Orlando. More than 100 representatives of the business community, government, and public sector came together to show their support for employing individuals with disabilities, and the importance of DEAM. The DEAM launch was highlighted by speakers RJ Curtis from Pasco County High School High Tech, Scot LaFerté of Universal Orlando Resort, and Sherry Reeves of the Central Florida Manufacturer’s Association. Be sure to visit www.abletrust.org for the full 2017 DEAM report this March. ■



Together with more than 240 businesses and organization partners, DEAM provided career exploration opportunities to more than 1,500 participants in 2017.

Donor Spotlight: Joe and Nancy Blanton

by Hans Kairies



Able Trust Ambassador Joseph Blanton is honest, direct, and prides himself on speaking the truth. These traits have undoubtedly served him well in his successful investment career, the last 32 years of which have been with Raymond James Financial.

As part of his commitment to giving back to the community, Joe has served on the board of St. Petersburg College (SPC) Foundation for many years. In 2012, SPC was the recipient of a multi-year Able Trust Strategic Employment Placement grant. The Professional Career Placement Program the grant created helped provide graduates with disability assistance in pursuit of their chosen degree field, with an emphasis on those in SPC's nursing program. The foundation's president, Frances Neu, mentioned to Joe that The Able Trust was looking for an ambassador in the Tampa Bay region, and Joe seemed to have all the right credentials. The rest is history.

Joe and Nancy Blanton's support of programs for people with disabilities goes back some 20 years when they established a scholarship fund at the college. The fund still provides scholarships to deserving students today. With a daughter who has a learning

disability, and Joe overcoming a similar disability himself, the Blantons know full-well what a difference it can make to help people overcome obstacles and put them on a path to success. According to Joe, after that it's the "fire in the belly and the twinkle in their eye" that propels their successes and careers. Their daughter, Amy, has been teaching pre-K students with delayed language development for 14 years.

When asked about his support of and enthusiasm for The Able Trust, Joe said it's the number one organization in Florida, assisting those with any type of disability to find gratifying and fulfilling employment and careers. He points to the winning combination of grant making – like the one to St. Petersburg College that first introduced him to The Able Trust – and effective youth and workforce programs. Joe is a firm believer that an individual's philanthropy can have a profound impact on the lives of others. The Able Trust salutes partners like Joe and Nancy Blanton, and their commitment to empowering Floridians with disabilities through financial support that leads to opportunities for successful employment. ■

The Able Trust Welcomes New Development Director



Hans J. Kairies recently joined The Able Trust staff, and will assume the role of Development Director. Kairies comes to The Able Trust after more than five years as associate director of philanthropy at The Nature Conservancy in Florida. While there, he successfully raised significant funds to further the organization's work in Florida, nationally, and abroad. Kairies also served as director of development for the Orlando Museum of Art, helping to build and cultivate its base of private support while maintaining important public investment in the institution.

Hans holds a bachelor's in English from Brandeis University and a master's in English from the University of Iowa. He resides in Orlando with his wife. His son is a student at the Florida State University College of Law. ■

The Able Trust High School High Tech Program: Guideposts to Success

by Allison Chase

Each year, The Able Trust awards selected sites for outstanding work on each of the Guideposts for Success, which are the building blocks of High School High Tech (HSHT) programming. Selected sites were honored at the HSHT Annual Conference Awards Reception. Presented below are the six recipients of the 2017 Guidepost Awards:

School-Based Preparatory Experiences



In order to perform at optimal levels in all education settings, all youth need to participate in educational programs grounded in standards, clear performance expectations, and graduation exit options based upon meaningful, accurate, and relevant indicators of student learning and skills. School-Based Preparatory Experiences include career assessment (including, but not limited to interest inventories), formal and informal vocational assessment, and school course counseling (including activities to guide youth in the selection of programs of study that are grounded in state, professional, and industry standards, and that provide the educational prerequisites for STEM and other careers).



De Soto

Career and Work Based Preparation



Career preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential in order for youth to form and develop aspirations, leading to informed choices about careers. These experiences often require collaborations with other organizations. Activities may include exposure to post-secondary education through workshop presentations, online research, and tours of postsecondary institutions; industry site visits; job shadowing to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills related to a career pathway; work readiness training designed to improve job-seeking skills, work-place basic skills, computer literacy, and job search proficiencies such as writing resumes, and preparing for interviews; and internships to learn about a particular industry or occupation, and the requisite education and career paths.



Nassau

Youth Development & Leadership



Youth development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them gain skills and competencies. Youth leadership is part of that process. Activities may include adult mentoring (providing role models through guest lectures and mentoring activities), and traditional leadership and youth development activities (including community service, volunteerism, and service learning).



Brevard

Connecting Activities



Youth need to be connected to programs, services, activities, and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school options. Activities may include connections to mental and physical health services; linking youth to transportation options for accessing program, education, and work participation; tutoring; post-program supports such as DOE/DVR services; assistive technology which allows youth with disabilities to maintain or improve their functional capabilities, become more independent, and pursue opportunities for future education and employment;

and financial planning which includes exposure to budgeting, checking/savings accounts, credit card information, identity theft/fraud, and basic financial literacy.



Family Involvement and Supports



Family involvement is about promoting collaborative alliances with families that will increase participation in promoting the social, academic, and occupational growth of youth, leading to improved post high school outcomes. Because of the diversity of family experiences and living situations in the current world, many youth require services and systems that recognize an expanded definition of “family” which includes grandparents, relative caregivers, and other relatives and non-relatives, and takes into consideration unique cultural issues and practices.

Activities may include provision of educational/resource information to families, and opportunities for families to participate in appropriate program activities, including but not limited to: HSHT events, Parent Advisory Councils, and mentoring.



Communication Skills



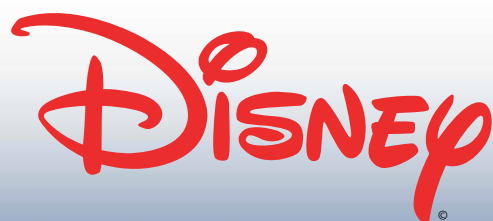
The ability to communicate both verbally and in writing with a wide variety of people, maintaining good eye contact, writing clearly and succinctly, demonstrating a varied vocabulary, and tailoring language according to the audience, are all essential skills that employers seek out. Good verbal and written communication means getting the message across with less chance of misunderstanding. The desired outcome or goal of any communication process is to understand, or to be understood. The development of communication skills should be incorporated into all Guidepost/HSHT activities.

Activities specifically focused on communication skills may include speech, essay, and research trainings/competitions including training provided by other organizations such as Toastmasters, and participation on debate and parliamentary procedure teams; journaling and writing assignments related to HSHT activities; formal and informal presentations related to HSHT activities; electronic, technology, and social media etiquette; technology training including use of technology for school and work; career-based communication training via job shadowing, information interviews, mock interviews, internships, and volunteer experiences; project based learning; service learning; and soft skills workshops.



Able Trust Corporate Champions

The Able Trust created the award category of “Corporate Champion” to recognize those businesses that support its mission through workforce inclusion policies, welcoming people with disabilities as customers and employees, and through financial support that has exceeded \$100,000 over the years. Darden, Publix, Walt Disney World Resorts, and Wells Fargo have exemplified these traits through a strong commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce that includes workers with disabilities, and supporting organizations like The Able Trust as it strives to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. The annual support of these organizations has helped sustain Able Trust grant initiatives and other employment-related programs such as Disability Employment Awareness Month in addition to nationally-recognized youth programs such as Florida High School High Tech and the Florida Youth Leadership Forum. The Able Trust is proud to recognize its distinguished list of Corporate Champions.





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 goal 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.AbleTrust.org, or mail your gift with the form below to:

The Able Charitable Foundation, 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 Charitable Foundation.

Is this donation (*please check one*):

- To honor someone _____
- In memory of someone _____
- For a special occasion _____

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Address: _____

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Credit Card Type: _____ Credit Card Number: _____

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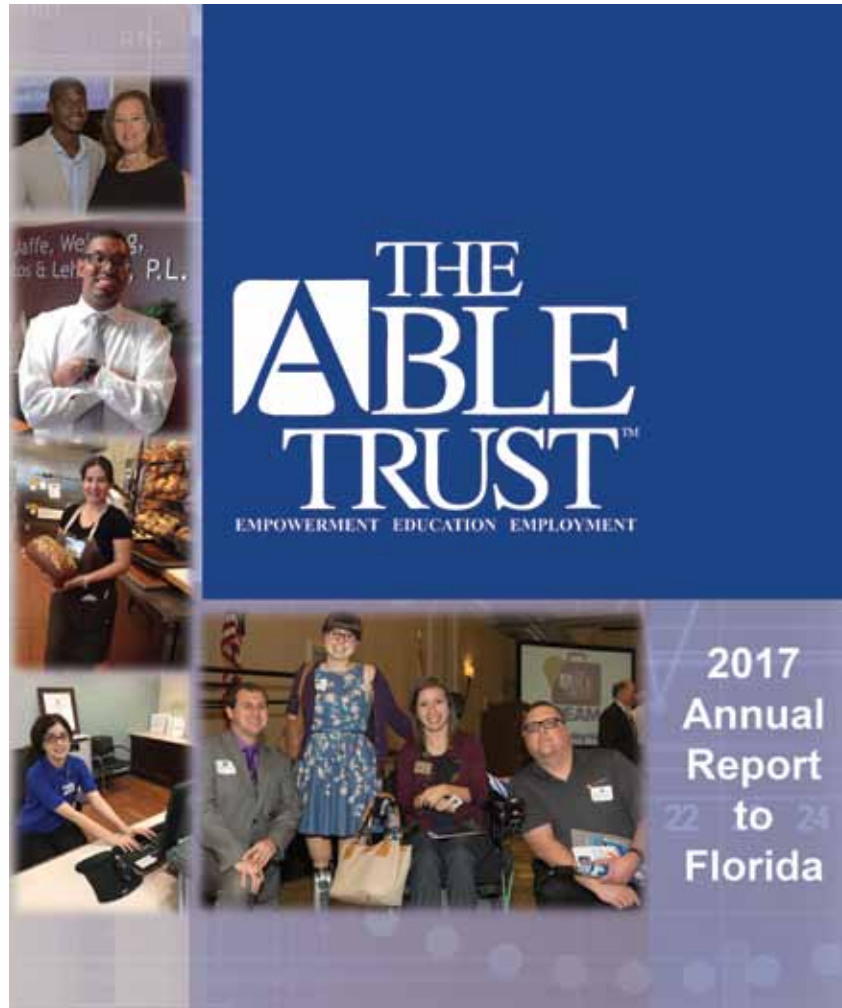
Please add me to The Able Trust's email list mailing list (check one or both).

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 millions of dollars 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.

THE ABLE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION 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: 82-1822897. THE ABLE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION IS REGISTERED WITH THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES AS REQUIRED BY THE SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS ACT (#CH52251). 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.

Visit www.abletrust.org to download the 2017 Annual Report



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- Type “The Able Trust” in your search bar, then click FOLLOW on the bottom-right corner.



Alumni Corner: Joseph Murray

by Ray Ford, Jr.



What makes a good leader?

Confidence? Bravery? Intelligence? Capacity to motivate?

While there are many character traits that can be found in what are considered the most effective leaders, the results of good leadership are often overlooked.

Good leaders inspire others to make positive change.

Good leaders also lead by example, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps, making those around them better, more committed to the programs and goals of an organization.

Joseph Murray is that kind of leader.

He is a 2008 alumnus of the Able Trust's Youth Leadership Forum, and frequent speaker at Able Trust events, advocating for continuing opportunities for people with disabilities in their communities and in the business world. He has shared his story and road to independence with audiences large and small, and with organizations like the Dan Marino Foundation and FIU. Joseph has addressed other young people with disabilities on the subject of disability history and living independently. He has been a remarkable role model and leader for students participating in Able Trust events.

After graduating high school, Joseph attended Gulf Stream Goodwill Life Academy, where he engaged in culinary and hospitality studies. The skills he learned helped him gain employment at the Boca Raton Resort and Club, where he has been employed for the past seven years. Joseph stated, "I enjoy my job in the hospitality industry because

I help others. It's all about doing your best each day."

Joseph's passion and dedication to his job and helping organizations like The Able Trust, along with his humble, helpful attitude have made him a popular volunteer among students and fellow staff members. A strong advocate for students with disabilities, Joseph continues to serve as an example of what hard work and commitment can accomplish.

"Able Trust has taught me to be a strong leader; how to communicate with other people and have the confidence to make decisions," he said. "It also taught me the importance of offering services to others in need."

Joseph is a founding member of The Able Trust Alumni Association, where he and other graduates of Able Trust programs work to actively support the transition of young adults into ever-increasing roles of independence, leading to successful employment with a career path for many. ■

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 Charitable Foundation. 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

March 15

*Able Trust Board of Directors
Community Education Event
Omni Hotel
Jacksonville, Florida*

March 16

*Able Trust Board of Directors
Meeting
Omni Hotel
Jacksonville, Florida*

April 17

*Able Trust High School High Tech
Regional Speech & Research Contest
Tallahassee, Florida*

April 18

*Able Trust High School High Tech
Regional Speech & Research Contest
Orlando, Florida*

April 19

*Able Trust High School High Tech
Regional Speech & Research Contest
Naples, Florida*

June 22

*Able Trust Board of Directors
Meeting
Golden Eagle Golf & Country Club
Tallahassee, Florida*