

# FLORIDA GRANTOR

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## February 2015

- 2 *President's Letter*
- 3 *Partners Making A Difference - The Jelks Family*
- 4 *Successful Strides Toward an Inclusive Workforce: Disability Employment Awareness Month/Disability Mentoring Day 2014*
- 5 *Grantee Spotlight: The Dan Marino Foundation*
- 6 *Florida High School High Tech Partners with FLATE for Manufacturing Experiences*
- 7 *The 2015 Florida Youth Leadership Forum*
- 8 *2015 Ability Awards Nomination Information*
- 9 *Make A Donation to The Able Trust*
- 10 *Coming Up Next for The Able Trust Grants Program*
- 11 *The Able Trust Celebrates 25 Years of Service*
- 12 *Upcoming Events*

## Florida Businesses Learn How Internships Are a Win-Win Situation

by Joseph D'Souza



*Internships are a proven method for entry to the workforce for young job seekers, providing the real-life experiences necessary for success. Young job-seekers like William (left) and Sharmina (right) will gain valuable work experience, preparing them for the future.*

In keeping with its strategic plan, in 2014 The Able Trust launched a new initiative aimed at increasing the opportunities for people with disabilities to gain valuable work experience. Over the past several months, instructional seminars teaching businesses how to develop their own internship programs have occurred throughout the state. A total of 65 businesses, non-profits, and other agencies have participated in these events, gaining valuable information that will help their businesses recruit and retain loyal, competent employees. Participating businesses have gained other benefits, such as learning how to incorporate interns into their workplaces, and how to test skills of potential new employees while reducing the employment costs associated with injecting new ideas and energy. The overarching goal of the internship initiative is to create additional opportunities for people with disabilities, making them more marketable in a very competitive job market.

There are still two more seminars that are scheduled to occur in March. If you, or any business you work with would benefit from the seminar, you are encouraged to attend. Visit [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org) for more information on the event and how to register. ■

## The Able Trust 2015 Internship Program Seminars

March 6 - Palm Beach  
Late March - Fort Lauderdale



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



*As The Able Trust staff continues its dedicated and effective work with young job seekers, we learn daily about the incredible, truly priceless contribution that mentoring and individual support brings to employment opportunities for all job seekers, but especially for people with disabilities. Over the past month I have been privileged to listen to the employment journeys of several young workers with disabilities, and without exception, everyone gave significant credit for the success of their journey to the mentoring and support they received from some adult in their life.*

- *One young man credited his supervisor as his main support system at work - a colleague who helped him learn his job, improve, maintain skills, and get promoted. He has now been employed full time for 14 years.*
- *A young lady spoke of how her early beliefs that she would never have the same education and work opportunities as other family members, severely limited her future plans. Mainly due to the efforts of an adult mentor at a local university, she uncovered her considerable talents, went from shy to outgoing, and now has achievable (and exciting) education and employment goals.*
- *Another individual told of how he was assisted by a fellow student-worker in getting through several work experiences to identify the career path most suited to his skills and desires. His mentor - only slightly older - helped him get a job, and later assisted his move to another, bigger organization using the same skill set. He is delighted with his job and has growth opportunities.*
- *A student who is now working on her master's degree speaks frequently of the mentoring of adults within the Able Trust programs as being instrumental in helping her define education and career goals and proceed with confidence of her success. Not quite through with her degree, she has already been encouraged by organizations to apply for positions within their companies, all due to the networking created by her mentors. We are sure she will be happily employed shortly after graduation.*

*Inspiring, yes. And there are hundreds more such stories of the value of mentoring and just being a friend to someone who needs another perspective of the opportunities that life has for them. With or without a disability, we all benefit from someone in our lives who will see our circumstances, our skills, and will kindly but firmly push us to do more than we believe we can. I would venture that all of our many success stories have a mentor on the journey who just refused to let low expectations win.*

*Regardless of what we do from a legal or policy perspective, regardless of the presence or absence of any number of resources, those we serve still need that very important mentor along the way. So the message to all of our readers is to consider being a mentor to someone with a disability this year. There are many opportunities in all communities – through a variety of charities, through your church or synagogue, boys and girls clubs, through civic groups, in your workplace, etc. If there is an Able Trust High School High Tech program in your area, you might consider being a part of the Business Advisory Council. Whatever mentoring route you take, think of it as a long term friendship that will give back more than you will give. And when you have a great success story – and you will – let us know so we can share with others.*

*Kindest regards,*

*Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA*

*President & CEO*

# Partners Making A Difference - The Jelks Family

by Zoltan Karpathy

What do the following have in common – newborns, *Rhododendrom austrinum*, and The Able Trust Youth Leadership Forum?

Allen and Mary Jelks and the Jelks Family Foundation.

Our world is a little bigger, much more protected, and better prepared to meet future challenges because of them.

Doctors Allen and Mary Jelks, both pediatricians, moved from Allen's congested hometown of Ft. Lauderdale to what was once the wide-open spaces of Southwest Florida; Sarasota to be exact.

That was in the 1960s.

Their practice thrived along with the steady population growth. By their count, they helped bring more than 10,000 newborn Floridians into the world...including 11 Jelks Family offspring!

As their family prospered, the Jelks felt an obligation to protect and preserve Florida's wilderness areas for these new Floridians, and the generations to follow. Among several conservation targets, one involves protecting sections of the Myakka River in Southwest Florida through the establishment of the Jelks Preserve.



*Financial supporters like Allen and Mary Jelks help ensure that the mission of The Able Trust will continue to impact the lives of Floridians with disabilities.*

Allen and Mary also see a need for helping Floridians with disabilities, which is why they are supporters of The Able Trust.

Recent Jelks Foundation gifts to The Able Trust have helped support The Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). The Forum is a four-day leadership event for high school students with disabilities. Each summer, 50 students come to Tallahassee to learn about community and academic resources, disability history, career options, and personal leadership roles to meet Florida's future challenges.

"While some babies are born with disabilities and others develop them, The Able Trust's focus on each individual's abilities is vitally important and deserves support," Allen said. "We are proud to be a small, but dedicated supporter of The Able Trust's youth programs."

The Jelks Family Foundation was created in 1994 by combining their lifetime savings (and those of their parents), creating a family legacy of philanthropy. The foundation's purpose is to promote cultural, educational, environment, historical, and humanitarian programs through charitable giving and active participation. Family members serve in board positions with the Foundation and with many other nonprofit agencies.

Both long retired, Allen and Mary remain active in their community. Mary is an internationally-recognized allergy expert, and still provides daily pollen counts in the Sarasota media. Allen is a community volunteer, philanthropist, and respected leader of the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay, where he has served for 50 years and counting.

The Able Trust is privileged to have The Jelks as faithful supporters in its mission of providing employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities. ■

# Successful Strides Toward an Inclusive Workforce: Disability Employment Awareness Month/Disability Mentoring Day 2014

by Joseph D'Souza

Thanks to the hard work of 80 community liaisons working in 62 of Florida's 67 counties, the 2014 Disability Employment Awareness Month/Disability Mentoring Day (DEAM/DMD) activities held throughout the state were a huge success. Together with more than 150 businesses and organization partners, Florida's DEAM/DMD events provided career exploration opportunities to 2,300 participants.



DEAM/DMD participants attend a career fair in Gulf County.

## Breakdown of Industry Participation

Public Sector (local or state government or nonprofit)	31%
Retail (includes grocery stores)	26%
Hospitality (includes restaurants and hotels)	14%
Healthcare (includes animal health)	10%
Manufacturing	8%
Financial	5%
Other	6%

Florida DEAM/DMD – coordinated by The Able Trust for the past 13 years – is made possible due to many dedicated community liaisons throughout the state. Most importantly, a key factor to this program's long-standing success lies with the businesses and organizations that open their doors to participants. ■



DEAM/DMD activities provided internship and job-shadowing opportunities for Floridians with disabilities across the state. Participants Geisha (left) and Jennifer (right) learned about public safety and healthcare in Southwest Florida.

Promotion and participation in activities, along with financial assistance, was also provided by these 14 supporters. Their involvement was key to the overall success of DEAM/DMD 2014.



## Grantee Spotlight: The Dan Marino Foundation

by Guenevere Crum

The Dan Marino Foundation in Broward County recently received a grant from The Able Trust for its Career Launch Employment Program. This initiative will assist young adults ages 18-28 with developmental disabilities, spinal cord/head injuries, and learning disabilities gain employment. To better assess the needs of its clients and provide the most effective service possible, the Foundation has identified two main hurdles that these young adults typically encounter as they seek employment:

- 1) the loss of established benefits (especially medical), and
- 2) the extended period of supports often required while starting new careers.

Support from The Able Trust has allowed the Foundation – on its newly-created Marino Campus – to train a staff member to become a Certified Work Incentives Counselor. Funding will also provide for an additional Job Coach, whose function will be helping individuals like Michael become more successful on the job.

The Career Launch Program provided critical job coaching for Michael (see photo) that resulted in his hiring as a Shipping Clerk, and allowed him to continue to work on his job skills, further expanding his skill development. Michael has successfully completed cross-training for several different positions within his company, and increased his communication skills in the workplace. Not only is Michael experiencing success on the job, but it's also having an impact on his home life. His parents have noted a rise in his confidence.



*The Dan Marino Foundation's Career Launch Program has helped young adults like Michael (left) gain the self-confidence and independence that comes with employment.*

“We’re so proud to see him leave for work each evening in his uniform,” they said.

Thanks to grant funding and technical support from The Able Trust, the Career Launch Program will positively impact the lives of young adults with disabilities, increasing their employability and bolstering Florida’s workforce. ■

With the financial support of its partners, The Able Trust has worked with many local organizations, providing employment support to thousands of Floridians with disabilities, while awarding more than \$33 million to grantees across the state, enabling hundreds of Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.

# Florida High School High Tech Partners with FLATE for Manufacturing Experiences

by Allison Chase

Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) is excited about a new partnership with the Florida Advanced Technological Education Center (FLATE). FLATE, a National Science Foundation Center of Excellence in high-technology manufacturing, is the go-to organization for manufacturing and advanced technical education, best practices, and resources supporting the high-performance skilled workforce for Florida's manufacturing sectors. FLATE makes efforts to ensure every student is exposed to STEM-based opportunities – be it through the traditional classroom, problem-based, or experiential learning.

FLATE played a significant role during the 2014 HSHT Annual Conference, facilitating an industry tour for HSHT program coordinators at Southern Manufacturing Technologies — a high-tech manufacturer in Tampa. Desh Bagley, outreach manager for FLATE, also gave a presentation about FLATE's statewide STEM-based programs and educational resources that the coordinators could access and incorporate as part of their HSHT teaching experiences throughout the school year.

More than 100 HSHT students participated in 2014 National Manufacturing Day, touring Custom Metal Designs, Correct Craft Maker, Mitsubishi Power Systems of America, and Tallahassee Community College Advanced Manufacturing Training Center. This past fall, (as part of their effort to learn about high-tech industries and opportunities, establish local industry contacts, and chart a plan for future student career-based experiences) several HSHT coordinators toured FABCO Air, Gerda, Budweiser, and Vistacon facilities.

FLATE introduced HSHT to the Toothpick Factory – a hands-on activity set in a manufacturing context – that stimulates discussion and awareness about a wide range of soft skills that are essential in today's work and personal relationships. FLATE generously donated a set as a doorprize at the annual conference.

Florida HSHT recognizes the considerable opportunities in the field of manufacturing in the state of Florida for all students, and looks forward to a growing relationship with FLATE for the benefit of HSHT students. ■

## Learning Skills to Pay the Bills



*Job-shadowing, industry site visits, mentoring, and internships serve as core features of the Florida HSHT program. (left) Gulf HSHT Students tour TCC Advanced Manufacturing Training Center in Tallahassee. (right) Orange HSHT Students tour Correct Craft Maker in Orlando.*

# The 2015 Florida Youth Leadership Forum

by Ray Ford, Jr.

The Able Trust is determined to be a key leader in providing Floridians opportunities for successful employment. This is done by ensuring that Able Trust programs focus on empowerment, education, and employment.

Without the first and second “E”, the third is hard to attain.

Programs like the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) help to instill these vital components in high school students with disabilities. Participants in this life-changing week learn to hone and develop the skills necessary to not only be successful in the classroom, but in their home communities as well. Applicants are nominated by their schools and go through a rigorous selection process. Those selected to serve as student delegates will then represent their schools and communities as they embark on a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

“As a person with a disability, I rarely get the opportunity to experience such opportunities as YLF,” potential delegate Caroline Biggett of Gainesville said. “This is an opportunity to branch out and try something different. Meeting others with disabilities will be an exciting learning adventure.”

“I try not to let my disability define me,” Rickma Timmons of Riverview added. “I like to challenge myself and my abilities as far as I can go. I’m super excited about this opportunity!”

Participants are selected from all areas of the state, and participation costs — including transportation, meals, and lodging — are covered by The Able Trust. ■

## JUST THE FACTS: YLF 2014

- 100% of YLF delegates say that the forum has helped them set goals about life after high school.
- 100% of YLF delegates say they now have a better sense of their career plans.
- 100% of YLF delegates say their self-confidence has increased as a result of attending the forum, and they actively participate in leadership activities.

After attending YLF, **1 out of every 2** delegates is actively involved in disability advocacy in their community.

## YLF 2015 is July 15 - 19 in Tallahassee.

If you know of a student that would like to participate, visit [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org) and select Youth Leadership Forum under the Programs tab to download an application.



YLF participants exhibit public speaking skills during the annual Mentors luncheon.



The annual Career Day is an opportunity for participants to learn of many career and education options.



## 2015 NOMINATION PACKET

The Able Trust's annual Ability Awards recognize individuals, non-profit agencies, employers and other organizations that have made outstanding contributions toward providing employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities. This year's event will be an evening celebration, commemorating 25 years of impacting the lives of all citizens in our state.

The Able Trust Ability Awards ceremony will be held:  
September 17, 2015  
Tampa, FL

The five categories below describe awards given as a result of public nominations. Several additional awards will also be presented at the evening's celebration.

### AWARD CATEGORIES

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

Beverly Chapman was named the 1989 Disabled American of the Year and the Floridian of the Year and is remembered for her advocacy for employment and independence for persons with disabilities. The Beverly Chapman Award provides recognition and high visibility for outstanding job placement programs for persons with disabilities in Florida. This award is presented to a Florida nonprofit disability organization.

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

Dr. George Spelios was a founding director and past Chair of The Able Trust who touched the lives of many through his passion and commitment to serve people with disabilities. As a tribute to his years of dedication and service, this award recognizes the outstanding leadership and advocacy efforts of an executive director or president of a Florida nonprofit disability organization.

#### **Media Representative Award**

Media plays a vital role in the public's perception of individuals, products and services, especially for the disability community. This award honors an individual member of the media or a media organization for excellence in presenting and/or reporting about people with disabilities.

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

Because employers offer valuable resources to Florida's citizens with disabilities, this award recognizes businesses of all sizes that have an exceptional record of disability friendly practices, including hiring persons with disabilities, making reasonable accommodations and demonstrating efforts beyond simple compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended.

#### **Adult Leadership Award**

This award will be presented to an adult over age 21 with a disability. This individual exhibits community and nonprofit leadership, is employed full time or part time and serves in a volunteer leadership position with a local organization. (e.g. nonprofit board member, community committee member, commission council, etc.)

### **NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY Friday June 5, 2015.**

The Able Trust will reimburse reasonable transportation costs (up to \$200 per honoree) to the awards ceremony in Tampa and one night's lodging for the honoree. Honorees and their guests will join The Able Trust Board of Directors, staff and other dignitaries at the luncheon.

For more information contact The Able Trust at: 850-224-4493, by email at [info@abletrust.org](mailto:info@abletrust.org) or visit our website at [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org).



MAKE A DONATION TO



**CLICK HERE to Give Online!**

## *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 (*check if applicable*):

- To honor someone      NAME: \_\_\_\_\_
- In memory of someone      NAME: \_\_\_\_\_
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Add me to The Able Trust's  email list  mailing list

Do you have questions about Able Trust giving opportunities, corporate sponsorships, or endowment and planned giving? Please feel free to contact us at [info@abletrust.org](mailto:info@abletrust.org) or 850-224-4493.

The Able Trust's mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Since its establishment, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$33 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 have provided career development and transition for thousands of high school students with disabilities since its beginnings, helping to reduce the dropout rate and prepare young adults for life beyond high school.

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

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# Coming Up Next for the Grants Program

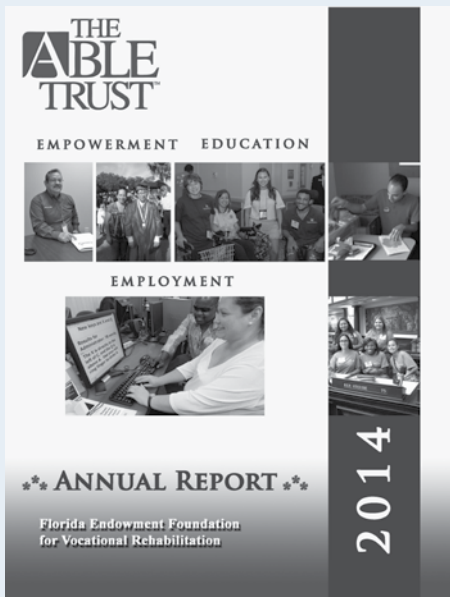
by Guenevere Crum

The next deadline for The Able Trust grant applications is April 6, 2015, when the organization will accept proposals for the **General Support for Employment Placement Programs, with a final selection made in June 2015**. Programs can consist of the expansion of an existing program, or the creation of a new program designed to assist individuals with disabilities gain employment. The grant opportunity will result in awards that range up to \$65,000 for a one-year grant period. Full guidelines can be found in the “Grant Information” section at [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org).

For those organizations that wish to create a multi-year, strategically-directed employment placement program, please take a close look at the guidelines for the **Strategic Employment Placement Initiatives** also in the “Grant Information” section of The Able Trust website. This is the major granting strategy of The Able Trust, and provides support for qualified organizations to seek a grant award of up to \$250,000 over a three-year period. The next deadline to submit an application for the Strategic Employment Placement Initiative is November 10, 2015, with a final selection made in June 2016.

The Strategic Employment Placement Initiative guidelines require the applicants to organize and engage their own training and placement efforts with individuals with disabilities and the established employers in their respective communities, in a strategic manner. It is the desire of The Able Trust that these awards result in significant numbers of individuals gaining employment, ultimately in career path employment, with the wages to match. Applicant organizations are expected to have an active Board committed to the program along with a well-developed network of community resources – both financial and intellectual – to carry out the program under consideration. The multi-year grant structure provides applicant organizations the stability to implement a program with long-term vision that is coupled with goals and results for each of the grant years, hence the name Strategic Employment Placement.

If you need some help navigating the waters of The Able Trust grant procedures, answers can be found on The Able Trust website. There are plenty of organizations that are asking questions, and The Able Trust encourages you to do the same. There are instructions on the website with details on how to apply, in addition to a “Frequently Asked Questions” section on each of the instruction pages. To contact The Able Trust electronically, send an e-mail to [info@abletrust.org](mailto:info@abletrust.org), or call 850-224-4493. The Able Trust is looking forward to receiving proposals and hearing about the employment placement strategies of Florida organizations. ■



## The 2014 Annual Report is now online!

*Visit [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org)  
to download a copy today.*

## DID YOU KNOW???

The Able Trust made its first grant awards in 1992? That year, \$35,000 went toward programs helping several Floridians with disabilities secure employment. In 2015, the largest Able Trust grant was \$250,000!

Since its inception in 1990, The Able Trust has awarded more than \$33 million to grantees across the state, enabling thousands of Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce!

EMPOWERMENT EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT



THE  
ABLE  
TRUST™



25 YEARS

*For the past quarter of a century, The Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation – also known as The Able Trust – has made a positive impact on the state of Florida in tireless pursuit of its mission to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.*

*Visit [www.abletrust.org](http://www.abletrust.org) for the latest news on upcoming events, culminating in a 25th Anniversary celebration to be held this fall!*

## DID YOU KNOW???

The Florida High School High Tech Program began as a pilot program in Brevard County in 1996, and has served thousands of high school students with disabilities across the state.

The Florida Youth Leadership Forum has continuously operated since 2000, providing leadership and training each summer for high school students with disabilities.

# FLORIDA GRANTOR

The Able Trust  
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## Memorial Gifts

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

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

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

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

A gift of cash is one of the simplest ways to remember your loved one or friend. You receive a tax deduction for the value of your gift to The Able Trust. Please designate the person you wish to remember and the best way that we can honor them. If you are making a memorial gift of non-cash property, your deduction may depend on the type of property proposed for gifting. Please call us to discuss the treatment of your gift and the best way to transfer your property to us.

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

## Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

**February 19, 2015**

*Regional Internship Training Seminar*

**Jacksonville, FL**

**March 6, 2015**

*Regional Internship Training Seminar*

**Palm Beach, FL**

**March 13, 2015**

*Board of Directors Meeting*

**Orlando, FL**

**June 12, 2015**

*Board of Directors Meeting*

**Tallahassee, FL**

**July 15 - 19, 2015**

*Able Trust Florida Youth Leadership Forum*

**Tallahassee, FL**