

# FLORIDA GRANTOR

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June 2017

- 2 *President's Letter*
- 3 *The Able Trust Welcomes New Board Member*
- 4 *Thank You 2017 Florida Youth Leadership Forum Sponsors!*
- 5 *Able Trust Grant to Key Clubhouse Increases Job Training and Employment Opportunities for People With Mental Illness*
- 6 *Disability Employment Awareness Month 2017: A Call to Action*
- 6 *Recent Grant Awards*
- 7 *2017 Ability Awards Nominations*
- 8 *Florida High School High Tech Speech & Research Contest*
- 9 *The Able Trust Salutes Its Corporate Champions*
- 10 *Alumni Corner: Ioana Zanchi*
- 10 *The 2017 Florida Youth Leadership Forum*
- 11 *Make A Donation to The Able Trust*
- 12 *Upcoming Events*



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

## *Dan Marino Foundation Strategic Grant Success*



*Participants of the Dan Marino Foundation Career Launch Program are learning valuable employment skills that will give them the competitive advantage in the job market.*

In June of 2016, the Able Trust awarded a three-year, \$250,000 grant to the Dan Marino Foundation (DMF), with the goal of helping the Foundation design and develop its Career Launch Program, which now plays an integral role in preparing its students for employment.

In the three years of the program, 116 individuals have been served (many of those individuals have participated in work experiences), and 43 are now employed. The individuals served have disabilities such as autism, significant learning disabilities, cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities. Importantly, the DMF has opened opportunities for post-secondary education for most of the individuals served, not only at the DMF campus in Ft. Lauderdale, but also at its new program site on the Florida International University campus in Miami. Post-secondary education is critical to learning skills for the majority of the jobs currently open, and certainly for the jobs of the future.

DMF's Career Launch Program, created with the support of the Able Trust, has become a department within the Marino Campus. The ability to use the staff of the program to provide follow-up support and benefits counseling to individuals employed has been critical to the retention of employment for many of those served. Instructors for the courses on campus – Employment Specialists who work with businesses on welcoming people with disabilities to apply for positions, and Job Coaches who help with on-the-job skill development – are vital to program success. The team works with statewide organizations such as The Able Trust and its many partner grantees to address the barriers and misperceptions that make some employers reluctant to provide employees with competitive wages or full-time positions with benefits. There is work to be done, and innovative organizations like DMF are helping The Able Trust to address the goal of a statewide, diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities.

*(continued on page 4)*



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# A Message from the President

## Legislative Session, Board actions, and High School High Tech SuperStars



The Board of Directors of The Able Trust met on June 16 in SE Florida to finish its work of the 2017 fiscal year, noting that the past six months brought challenges of significant concern, opportunities for growth within the Able Trust signature programs, and importantly, the refinement and improvement of needed workforce skills by its High School High Tech students.

During the past legislative session, our organization was faced with the possible closing of its operations per statutes, was working to handle the issue before the legislative session began, work that continued to the end of the regular session. Thanks to a lot of hard work on the part of staff and consultants, and willingness to listen on the part of key legislators, our sunset period was extended and the work of the Able Trust goes on. We are especially grateful for the assistance from Senators Bean, Latvala, and Simmons, and Representatives Killebrew and Bileca, as well as Senate President Negron, Speaker of the House Corcoran, and along with legislative staff, for their efforts to see the mission of The Able Trust as we do.

The final FY 2017 Board of Directors meeting was preceded the evening before by a Community Education Event, sponsored by a grant from Florida Blue. Board members and several young graduates of Able Trust programs met with community leaders and business representatives to share the benefits of a diverse workforce that includes the many skills of people with disabilities. During the Board meeting the budget for FY 2018 was approved, a new Ambassador was welcomed into the Able Trust governance family, and grants were awarded to several non-profit organizations. Strategic Employment grants, which are multi-year grants designed to help enhance or expand an employment program for citizens with disabilities were awarded to two organizations. Vincent Academy of Sarasota received a three-year award, as did Community Haven, also of Sarasota. One-year grants were awarded to the MacDonald Training Center in Hillsborough County, Best Buddies in Orange County, and Bishop Grady Villas Project Search in Osceola County. A number of smaller grants supported by private endowment gifts were made to several other non-profits. For more information on the major grants, see a related article in this Grantor.

The Board meeting ended on a very high note, as the final competition in the statewide High School High Tech Speech and Research contest was hosted by the Board for the four state finalists. This was the second annual contest, initiated to encourage high school youth with disabilities to learn research and speaking skills, knowing that speaking skills and research that allows speech to go beyond just opinion, will be critical skills when these young people enter the workforce. Congratulations to Mackenzie Pugh of the Wakulla County program for winning the grand prize and to the other competitors, Abria Preyer of the Orange County Foster care program, RJ Curtis of the Pasco County program, and Riley Littlefield of the Leon County program. All four contestants reached the finals by winning at the regional level, and all four received a financial award. They were excellent and The Able Trust is pleased to have a role in their growth through its youth programs.

The summer will be busy for all our high school and college students, with the majority of them in paid employment for a good part of their summer break from school. We salute these young people with disabilities and their commitment to be a part of the growing economy of Florida.

Have a great summer, and we ask that business executives remember the skills of the workforce of people with disabilities when they seek a good employee.

kindest regards,

Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA

President & CEO

## *The Able Trust Welcomes New Ambassador*

**O**n June 16, The Able Trust Board of Directors unanimously approved the appointment of Dwayne Ingram as an ambassador.

Ingram is an accomplished CEO, board member, C-level executive, and entrepreneur who has held senior executive leadership positions with IBM and Amadeus for more than 25 years. He has also successfully started and sold two businesses as an entrepreneur. Currently, he serves as CEO of Crimson Consulting, an advisory firm that provides both management consulting and interim C-suite executives for businesses of all types.



Ingram has significant board experience in public, private, charitable, and civic organizations. He has served on several boards, including CareerSource Florida (where he was appointed Chairman by Governor Rick Scott from 2011-2015), the Florida Council of 100 (top CEOs/business leaders in Florida), Enterprise Florida, National Cyber Partnership, the Board of Governors for the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Trustees for the Florida Chamber Foundation, and the Board of Directors for Florida TaxWatch among others. Ingram also has a passion for children and adults with special needs, having served as a member of the Board of Directors for United Way Tampa Bay, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, and working with people with disabilities in his personal life.

Ingram is a graduate of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, with a Bachelor of Science in Management and Communications. He resides in Tampa with his wife Bonnie. They have three adult children.

## *The 2017 Able Trust Ability Awards Ceremony will be held Friday, September 22 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort*



(continued from page 1)

Examples of success include **Michelle**, diagnosed with autism, who worked hard to earn an Administrative Assistant certification. She worked part-time at DMF for three years, and is now a full-time mailroom clerk at Universal Property and Casualty Company, saving for a car and her own apartment. In March, she participated in the International Games in Austria and won two silver medals for skiing.



**Aaron** was a student at DMF in 2014, and his expertise in computer skills was discovered. He excelled in class and obtained his first internship at Planned Growth. He performed well and was offered a full time job with the digital marketing company. In addition to his job, he is now pursuing a bachelor's degree in computer science at Miami-Dade College. Aaron is diagnosed with autism.



**Christopher** participated in the DMF transitional programming, and as a result earned industry certification from the American Hotel and Lodging Association. During his childhood he struggled with various learning challenges, but was determined to overcome and succeed. After his certification, he was offered an engineering position at The Embassy Suites Hotel and has worked there for over three years.



The Able Trust is honored to work with the Dan Marino Foundation on the mission of successful employment for people with disabilities. ■

## *Thank You 2017 Florida Youth Leadership Forum Sponsors!*

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Timothy Shellabarger & Angela Fortunas

## *Able Trust Grant to Key Clubhouse Increases Job Training and Employment Opportunities for People With Mental Illness*

The Able Trust recently presented the Key Clubhouse of South Florida with a \$65,000 grant to connect people living with mental illness with job training and help in finding employment. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control, 15% of Miami-Dade residents report suffering from poor mental health. That equates to 2.1 million being affected by significant mental health issues.

The mission of Key Clubhouse is to help people diagnosed with mental illness reintegrate back into the community through employment. Dr. Susanne Homant, president and CEO of The Able Trust, explained this strategy aligns with her organization's purpose.

“Our primary mission at The Able Trust is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment,” said Dr. Homant. “The \$65,000 grant we are providing to the Key Clubhouse of South Florida is a natural fit for The Able Trust. Key Clubhouse has been enormously successful in helping to prepare persons living with the disability of a mental illness to live a life without limits and experience the highest degree of independence—which includes returning to the workforce.”



Since last summer, Key Clubhouse has assisted 118 members with preparing to enter the workforce, find employment and receive on-the-job training.

“We are grateful to The Able Trust for supporting our mission,” said Key Clubhouse executive director Debra Webb. “This recovery through work stabilizes our members and prepares them for getting to work everyday by providing routine and the opportunity to work with others – all critical to building confidence to rejoin the workplace.”

Key Clubhouse has partnered with TJMaxx, Crowne Plaza Hotel and Career Source for employment opportunities.

Key Clubhouse member Alexander Lasa, 47, has found work with the organization's assistance.

“I'm thankful for the ‘recovery through work’ philosophy,” explained Lasa. “Key Clubhouse breaks the isolation that many of us feel in living with mental illness. I feel I'm getting a second chance.”

Key Clubhouse serves 90 adults over 18 years old. Members connect with the organization through psychiatric referrals. ■

# Disability Employment Awareness Month 2017: A Call to Action

by Joey D'Souza



October begins Disability Employment Awareness MonthS (DEAM) activities. DEAM activities in this month will kick off a season of job shadowing and career exploration opportunities for people with disabilities. During the DEAM season, several Floridians with disabilities will participate in this employment initiative: high school students, college students, out-of-school youth, and other job seekers. The goal of DEAM is engagement, career exploration, and education. In 2016, nearly 2,200 Floridians with disabilities participated in DEAM. This would not have happened without the network of businesses, agencies, and community partners that work in their local communities. Their efforts helped in large part to make these opportunities available to DEAM participants.

For businesses that missed DEAM 2016, now is a great time to begin thinking about participating in 2017. While DEAM does help participants, it also helps the partners that participate. DEAM can serve as a great introduction to the employment of people with disabilities, breaking down stereotypes and providing organizations with vital facts that will lead to a loyal, productive pool of talent for a diverse workforce. Businesses that would like to participate in DEAM 2017 should contact The Able Trust to get connected. ■

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## Recent Grant Awards

by Guenevere Crum

The Able Trust is pleased to announce two recent awards for its three-year Strategic Employment Placement Initiative:

**The Haven** in Sarasota County was awarded \$250,000 for the *Careers Without Limits* program. This grant will assist current students and alums with disabilities attending State College of Florida - Sarasota/Manatee, University of South Florida - Sarasota/Manatee, and Suncoast Technical College, helping them gain career path employment opportunities in their field of expertise.

**Vincent Academy** in Sarasota County will also receive \$248,000 for the *Recovery Through Work* program, which will assist individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses to gain experience through transitional employment, leading to competitive employment opportunities.

Additionally, three recent grant awards were made for the one-year General Support for Employment Placement Initiative:

**Best Buddies Florida** will receive \$65,000 for their Orange County-based *Jobs, Central Florida Expansion*, which will expand the job placement program for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities in Orange, Seminole, and Osceola counties.

**Bishop Grady Villas** will receive \$34,740 for the Osceola County program, *Project SEARCH*, to support and expand the Project SEARCH program at the local Marriott location for individuals with disabilities seeking to gain employment experience and jobs.

**MacDonald Training Center, Inc.** in Hillsborough County was awarded \$65,000 for the *HEAR (Hearing Education Advancement and Recruitment)* program, which will create and implement an employment placement program for individuals with hearing impairments in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.

The Able Trust has awarded more than \$37 million and provided technical assistance to grantees across the state of Florida, enabling Floridians with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.



## 2017 NOMINATION PACKET

*The Able Trust Ability Awards ceremony will be held Friday September 22, 2017 in Orlando, FL.*

*The Able Trust, also known as the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, is a 501(c)(3) foundation established by the Florida Legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.*

### **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.)

**[WWW.ABLETRUST.ORG](http://WWW.ABLETRUST.ORG) TO DOWNLOAD A NOMINATION FORM**

**NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY Thursday August 24, 2017.**

Forms can be submitted by mail, fax or email to:

The Able Trust, 3320 Thomasville Rd., Suite 200, Tallahassee, FL 32308

Fax: 850-224-4496 ~ Email: [info@abletrust.org](mailto:info@abletrust.org) ~ For questions, call 850-224-4493.

# Florida High School High Tech Speech & Research Contest

by Allison Chase

The Florida High School High Tech (HSHT) program is based on the nationally-recognized *Guideposts for Success* developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, and adapted by The Able Trust. The Guideposts provide programmatic framework that focuses on high expectations and successful outcomes for youth with disabilities. In 2016, The Able Trust developed and implemented a sixth guidepost, *Communication Skills*. Whether applying for a new job or looking for a promotion, good communication skills are important. 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. Good verbal and written communication means getting the message across with less chance of misunderstanding.

For a second year, The Able Trust has hosted a statewide HSHT Speech and Research Contest to promote the development of effective public communication skills among HSHT students. The goals of the contest are to develop research, public speaking, and communication skills of students, which are critical to successful employment and self-advocacy. The contest also serves as an introduction for students to policy topics relevant to all Floridians.

The contest has three levels of competition: local, regional, and state. The winner of each regional contest advanced to the state competition held this June at The Able Trust Board of Directors meeting, with the directors acting as contest judges.

The Able Trust congratulates the 2017 Florida HSHT Speech & Research Contest Winners! ■

(all awardees are joined by Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant (left) and Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore (right)).



**1st Place:**  
**Mackenzie Pugh,**  
**Wakulla HSHT**

**Topic: Increasing Civic  
Participation Among  
Floridians**



**2nd Place:**  
**Abria Preyer,**  
**Foster Care HSHT**  
**Orange County**

**Topic: Bullying in  
Schools and the  
Workplace**



**3rd Place:**  
**RJ Curtis,**  
**Pasco HSHT**

**Topic: Encouraging  
Adoption from the  
Foster Care System**



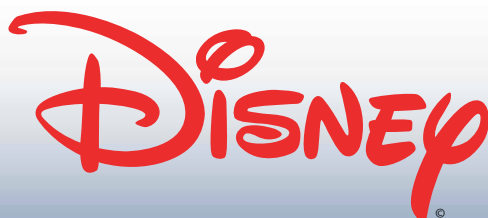
**4th Place:**  
**Riley Littlefield,**  
**Leon HSHT**

**Topic: Increasing  
Civic Participation  
Among Floridians**



# 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, Disney, 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.



## Alumni Corner: Ioana Zanchi

by Rachael Moulton



Ioana Zanchi is a member of the Able Trust Alumni Association and serves on the planning committee. She has been an active participant in Able Trust programs since 2011 when she first attended the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). She currently volunteers with YLF as an adult staff member. Ioana and her parents moved to America from Romania when she was just a child.

“I come from a place where arms were not open wide to me,” she said. “Unfortunately I would not have had the same opportunities had I stayed. Romanian runs through my veins, but the American Dream runs through my spirit.”

Ioana credits YLF for exposing her to resources, ideas and possibilities for her future; ideas she had not realized before.

“Though I already had a sense of wanting to enter the legal profession before my first Forum, YLF further crystallized my passion and strong intentions of wanting to be that helping hand in my own community.”

Ioana states that while she has had good luck with her past employment situations, she still sees hiring barriers for people with disabilities because not all employers take the time to get to know the candidate.

“There are still discrepancies between what my resume and intellect show, and the image of me rolling into a job with my wheelchair. I could be a great candidate for a job, but that does not necessarily mean that place of employment’s first instinct is to accommodate me,” she said. “My hope for the future is to not have that be an issue when people with disabilities are applying for jobs. I hope one day it will be recognized that we are living the human experience just like everybody else, with the same hopes, goals, and need for accomplishment.” ■

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## YLF 2017: July 19 - 23

by Ray Ford, Jr.

Every adult can relate to the awkwardness of adolescence and the steady transition to adulthood and independence. Imagine how much more difficult that transition is when you have a disability.

“I want to be a delegate because I believe that once I learn how to lead, I will be able to lead others,” Lynsey from Greenville said. “When I was younger, people looked down on me because of my size. Now that I’m older, people are coming to me for guidance, and I want to be able to do a good job.”

Thanks to Able Trust programs such as the Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), high school students with disabilities have a safe place to not only learn about themselves, but about the various entities statewide that can help them as they move toward graduation.

This July, nearly 70 participants will come to Tallahassee for five days of leadership and social training. Event highlights will include college/university campus tours, STEM career exploration site visits, networking luncheon, business and formal etiquette training, a mock legislative session at The Florida Capitol, independent living round tables, and seminars on various disability resources. Thanks to the support of a host of corporate and community organizations, all travel, food, lodging, and other event costs are free to all YLF participants.

“I used to be scared to go to school because I thought I wasn’t smart enough, and afraid that people would make fun of me because of my anxiety issues,” Catherine from Miami said. “But I realize now that I am a fighter and that I will always pull through. I believe coming to YLF will help me learn and grow as an individual, and teach me how to cope so that I can teach others.” ■



*Not only is YLF an opportunity for students to meet new friends, but it is also a chance for them to build their self-esteem through self-awareness activities in the form of leadership training and knowledge about disability resources that can help them get into college, or develop successful employment skills upon graduation.*



## *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*

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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 \$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](http://www.abletrust.org).**

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# FLORIDA GRANTOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Upcoming EVENTS & MEETINGS

### **July 19 - 23**

*Florida Youth Leadership Forum  
Tallahassee, FL*

### **September 5-7, 2017**

*Florida High School High Tech  
Program Managers Annual  
Training  
Wesley Chapel, FL*

### **September 7, 2017**

*Able Trust Alumni Association  
Steering Committee Meeting*

### **September 21, 2017**

*Able Trust Board of Directors  
Meeting  
Rosen Shingle Creek  
Orlando, FL*

### **September 22, 2017**

*Able Trust Ability Awards  
Ceremony & Disability Employment  
Awareness Month Launch  
Rosen Shingle Creek  
Orlando, FL*