

FLORIDA GRANTOR

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Congratulations To The 2017 Able Trust Ability Award Winners!



The 2017 Able Trust Ability Awards winners joined by Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore and Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant

(from left, back row) Karen B. Moore - Able Trust Board Chair; **Rep. Sam Killebrew**; **Scot LaFerté** - Universal Orlando Resort; **Randy Wimberly** - Randy's Garage; **Kenneth Bush and France Frazzetta** - Orange County High School High Tech; **Dr. Cecil Bradley** - Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; **Leigh Austin** - Orange County High School High Tech; **Casey Gonzmart, Jr.** - Columbia Restaurant Group; **Dr. Cameron Cannon** - Orange County High School High Tech

(from left, front row) **Shelly Wimberly** - Randy's Garage; **Amy McClellan and Debra Webb** - Key Clubhouse of South Florida; **Virginia Jacko** - Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired; **Allison Shirk** - Daytona Beach News Journal; **Sarah Goldman** - District Secretary for Rep. Kathleen Peters; Dr. Susanne Homant - Able Trust President & CEO;

THE
ABLE
TRUST™



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



How helpful would it be to a student and his or her parents, or to someone planning to re-enter the workforce or change careers, to know the “hot jobs” in Florida, potential earnings, and where to get the education and training? For example, knowing that a person skilled in Network Support Services with a degree from Miami-Dade College is projected to earn \$77,000 the first year; with a 20-year additional earnings potential over HS-only education, of \$1,029,891, even taking into consideration the cost of the degree, which may be a subbaccalaureate degree. How helpful would it be to know the 10 Florida hot jobs categories when deciding

what to do after high school? Or to know the estimated first year statewide average salary of an accountant/auditor is \$42,533, is less than that in Tallahassee, but greater in Tampa?

A new digital tool to provide such career path guidance was launched at the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Future of Florida Forum in late September. LaunchMyCareerFL.org is a free resource that helps students, parents, and others seeking career direction to navigate the employment and related education options available from public post-secondary institutions in Florida. A joint effort of the Florida Chamber Foundation, the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the American Institutes for Research and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, the tool provides a treasure chest of information on jobs, cost of related education at various Florida post-secondary institutions, return on investment, projected beginning salaries and projected future earnings, and skills that can be added to a career choice that would serve to enhance earnings and increase the potential for career advancement. Many of Florida’s hot jobs do not require a four-year degree, and the LaunchMyCareerFL tool includes extensive information on education opportunities for subbaccalaureate degrees as well as information on jobs that demand a four-year degree or better. In addition, the tool reports job and lifestyle satisfaction for different career paths.

Data on the education costs and earnings potential is obtained from records maintained by the state of Florida. Other states with a LaunchMyCareer resource are Colorado, Tennessee and Texas. Florida’s version can be accessed at <https://LaunchMyCareerFL.org>. We highly recommend that all job seekers and their advisors get to know this resource and use it to their full advantage.

We are grateful for the role of the Florida Chamber Foundation and DEO in making LaunchMyCareerFL available free of charge to all Floridians. The Able Trust is pleased to have this tool as a resource for all Floridians, including job seekers with disabilities.

Kind regards,

*Dr. Susanne F. Homant, MBA
President & CEO*

The Able Trust 2017 Ability Awards

by Ray Ford, Jr.

October is Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) in the state of Florida. But thanks to efforts spurred on by The Able Trust, DEAM is no longer a day, week, or even month-long activity.

Meaningful employment opportunities for Floridians with disabilities stem from internships, job-shadowing, and other job-readiness measures that cannot be accomplished in a day. It takes a committed, year-long effort to hone job seekers for the positions they seek to fill. Further, education and dispelling of myths held by many employers is a critical part of opening doors to successful employment for what to this point has been a virtually untapped resource. On September 22, The Able Trust kicked off the DEAM season with an awareness event in Orlando, which was immediately followed by the annual Ability Awards ceremony, where several individuals and organizations from across the state were recognized for their accomplishments in creating employment opportunities.

Senator Jack Latvala has been a staunch supporter of The Able Trust and its mission, going to bat for the organization during the past legislative session. He was recognized as Senator of the Year for his efforts.

“It has been my pleasure to work with The Able Trust for many years,” Latvala said. “There are a lot of needs in Florida. As a legislator, some things we do a good job of; others we need to do more work. Successful employment for Floridians with disabilities is an area that we can do more work in.”

Manufacturing is a growing job sector in the state, and Executive Director of the Central Florida Manufacturers Association (MACF), Sherry Reeves, sees the need for hiring Floridians with disabilities to help her industry continue to thrive.

“Many often ask why hire an individual with a disability?” Reeves remarked. “These employees have high retention rates and are loyal to their employers. The Able Trust and MACF work closely with local schools to invite students with disabilities to participate in tours, engaging them in the pursuit of careers. We put them to work, and give them support.”

Of course, in looking toward the workforce of tomorrow, The Able Trust is investing today in the lives of students with disabilities. R.J. Curtis is one of several hundred students across the state that participate in The Able Trust High School High Tech (HSHT) program. Not only is R.J. a student with a disability, but he was also in the foster-care system where, due to his age and disability, had less than a 5% chance of being adopted before aging out and being on his own. Had this occurred, R.J. would have only been a sophomore in high school, without any guidance or support. Fortunately for him, that was not the case.

“My story could have been very different today,” Curtis said. “I had spent 5,475 days in foster care before meeting my mom. I was small and very shy, and had never completed an entire school year at one school, which led to my disabilities not being addressed. Today, I am an incoming senior at Pepin Academy with a 3.4 GPA and making plans to attend college. I worked at a UPS store this summer and gained valuable work experience. I’ve had a chance to play on a baseball team and get

(continued on page 4)



Disability Employment Awareness Month speakers (top to bottom) R.J. Curtis, Scot LaFerté, Sen. Jack Latvala, and Sherry Reeves expressed the need for and shared successes of DEAM activities in Florida.

(continued from page 3)

my driver's license; common things for kids my age, but not for kids in foster care. I thank The Able Trust for providing a program like High School High Tech that gives me confidence and employment skills.”

Universal Orlando Vice President of Human Resources, Scot LaFerté, shared the importance of diversity and inclusion from an employer's perspective. He echoed the importance of DEAM as a continuing effort to broaden awareness and change organizational cultures, making them more welcoming.

“Diversity allows us to strengthen bonds; not just in terms of teamwork, but provides our guests with a much better experience,” he said. “It is our culture. It's who we are and what we believe. When we invite our guests to come and visit us, we mean ALL guests; not just the ones that look like me.”

Diversity has led to innovation, giving way to new ideas and ways of thinking that would not have been possible otherwise. Universal Orlando has seven diverse Team Member Resource Groups that help ensure that all voices have a chance to be heard. One of those groups is the MyAbilities Network, whose purpose is to value the unique perspective of people with varying abilities in the workplace. The MyAbilities network helps promote awareness, embrace inclusion, and provide education to help break the barriers that sometimes exist for people with varying abilities.

“At Universal, we work to recognize and celebrate the way Team Members stand out for being who they are,” LaFerté added. “We do that by tapping into their unique talents and abilities, cultivating their skills and honoring their differences. Being different and standing out is a part of who we are, it's how we connect. Our Team Members who have a disability do not want to be defined by their disability, but rather want to be recognized for their unique abilities and contribution to the business. Think of your best moments at work. I bet they happen when you work on a diverse team where people come together, being their best selves in truly authentic ways... something The Able Trust knows a lot about.” ■

Florida Disability Employment Awareness Month

by Joseph D'Souza



Featured on the cover of this year's brochure and poster is Michael Napoli. Michael was a participant of two Able Trust programs, a strategic employment grant at Tallahassee Community College, and the internship pilot with the Florida Chamber Foundation. Michael was a marketing intern for a financial planner in Tallahassee, assisting the company with a marketing campaign.

October may be Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), but in Florida it has long since expanded to become a “season” of career experiences for students and job seekers with disabilities. Despite this year's active hurricane season, dedicated community liaisons and businesses have not stopped providing various career exploration activities to people with disabilities.

Bank of America is a new sponsor, and will join the following returners:

Florida Hospital, Florida Power & Light, Dan Marino Foundation, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Universal Orlando Resort, Darden Restaurants, Publix Supermarkets, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Moore Communications Group, Raymond James Mustard Seed Advisors, and Richard L. Cole, Jr. & Barbara Cole

If your organization interested in being a 2017 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 for more information. ■

Partners Making a Difference: Bank of America



Bank of America realizes the power of people, and values their differences — in thought, style, sexual orientation, gender identity, culture, ethnicity and experience. Such an inclusive organizational culture has paid off in not only a successful business model, but a strong, loyal workforce.

Per Bank of America, “Diversity and inclusion are central to our company’s values, and we are proud to be widely recognized for our progressive workplace practices and initiatives that promote inclusion.”

According to the 2017 Disability Equality Index (DEI) — a measure created by the American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD) and United States Business Leadership Network (BLN) — Bank of America is one of only a few distinguished organizations that boasts an EDI 100%. The EDI is a national, transparent, annual benchmarking tool that offers businesses an opportunity to receive an objective score, on a scale of zero (0) to 100, on their disability inclusion policies and practices. It is an aspirational, educational, recognition tool that is intended to help companies identify opportunities for continued improvement, and help build a company’s reputation as an employer of choice.

“Bank of America is committed to attracting, recruiting and retaining top diverse talent from across the globe, and delivering on the promise of being a great place for people to work by creating an environment where all employees feel they have the opportunity to achieve their goals.” Bank of America reports.

The Able Trust proudly salutes Bank of America as a leader in supporting diversity in the workplace, and promoting the mission of providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment. Bank of America is also one of the newest sponsors of Florida Disability Employment Awareness Month. ■



2017 Ability Award Winners



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Debra Webb, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Amy McClellan, and Able Trust Board Treasurer Marcy Benton

Beverly Chapman Award for Outstanding Employment Placement Program

KEY CLUBHOUSE OF SOUTH FLORIDA

DEBRA WEBB, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MIAMI, FLORIDA

The Key Clubhouse of South Florida has been a consistent leader in the Miami area, providing employment opportunities for adults with serious and persistent mental illness find peer support and employment. Led by its Executive Director, Debra Webb, the Key Clubhouse has developed partnerships with more than twenty area employers to create transitional, supported, and independent employment opportunities. The Key Clubhouse provides a work-centered program that has proven to be successful in assisting adults with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, schizoaffective disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) create and achieve employment goals. Successful employment is essential to the well-being of all individuals, and the Key Clubhouse's employment-centered model of support has allowed more than 60 individuals to gain that stabilizing milestone.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Virginia Jacko, and Able Trust Ambassador Bob Bromberg

Dr. George Spelios Leadership Award

VIRGINIA A. JACKO, PRESIDENT & CEO

MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

MIAMI, FLORIDA

Ms. Jacko has served as a visionary leader for the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired for the last 12 years. Under her leadership, the organization has dramatically increased the number of persons served, and programs offered. Adult Education programs – including General Education Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESOL) – have provided 70 visually-impaired adults the opportunity to earn fundamental accreditations necessary for employment. The on-site music program has provided more than 100 blind musicians the opportunity to learn how to work and perform in a sighted world, including sound engineering classes that qualify for specialized positions. The Lighthouse has created two High School High Tech (HSHT) programs for youth in Metro Miami, giving them the opportunity to explore tech career fields with internship opportunities. With The Able Trust, The Lighthouse has also created a Transportation Pilot program that reimburses employed individuals for their transportation costs in an effort to achieve job stability, lateral transfers, and promotions in their career choice.



Senator Aaron Bean

Senator of the Year

*SENATOR AARON BEAN
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA*

Senator Bean's public service officially began when he served as Commissioner and Mayor of the city of Fernandina Beach from 1996-1999. He was originally elected to the state legislature as a Representative from the Jacksonville area in 2000, serving until 2008. He then returned as a Senator, elected in 2012 and re-elected to his current term. He represents Senate District 4, Nassau County and parts of Duval County, and outside of his legislative duties, works for UF Health in Jacksonville. Senator Bean was an early supporter of the work of The Able Trust, especially its youth programs, striving always to provide policy and public support assistance to allow Floridians with disabilities to lead lives of their choosing, to the very highest level of their abilities. Senator Bean has addressed the issues that affect all citizens with disabilities, never failing to praise the work of The Able Trust as it creates and supports programs to make sure that Floridians with disabilities are a part of the Florida workforce and contributors to Florida's economic growth. In 2017, Senator Bean sponsored a bill to extend the work of the Able Trust, and was adamant in his support of the continuation of the work of the organization, in spite of challenges. He was the recipient of Senator of the Year Awards from the Able Trust in 2013 and 2014, and this will be the Senator's third, well-deserved recognition by this organization.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Sen. Jack Latvala, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, and Able Trust Vice Chair Richard L. Cole, Jr.

Senator of the Year

*SENATOR JACK LATVALA
CLEARWATER, FLORIDA*

Senator Latvala represents Senate District 16, which includes parts of Pasco and Pinellas Counties. In his private life he is a successful businessman, and is president of his own printing company. He has a long and stellar history of service to the state of Florida: as a Senator from 1994 – 2002, then returning to public service again in 2010 as Senator, and most recently being re-elected to his current term of office. During his years as a legislator, he has continuously supported the work of The Able Trust, and has been a champion for people with all types of disabilities – mental, physical, young and old, and has received many awards for that advocacy and unselfish support. During the 2017 session, he was steadfast in his support of The Able Trust in his role as Chair of the Appropriations Committee, and the continuation of its work for people with disabilities throughout the state of Florida, in spite of several challenges along the way. In 2012, The Able Trust honored Senator Latvala as Legislator of the Year, and is humbled and honored to present that award again in 2017.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Rep. Sam Killebrew, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, and Able Trust Board Treasurer Marcy Benton

Representative of the Year

*REPRESENTATIVE SAM KILLEBREW
WINTER HAVEN, FLORIDA*

Representative Killebrew arrived in Tallahassee as a newlyelected legislator in 2016, coming out of retirement to work on public and policy issues that affect the families and businesses in Florida. A Navy veteran, Mr. Killebrew has an extensive business background as owner of Killebrew Inc., an underground utility construction company in Florida, and as partner in Florida Strategic Group, LLC. His business background also includes work in manufacturing businesses. Although retired from those business pursuits, he has a number of King Charles spaniel rescue dogs that help to manage his time! His desire to serve the public is apparent in his support of several civic organizations in Florida in House District 41, which includes parts of Polk County. During his inaugural session with the state legislature this year, he sponsored an important bill for The Able Trust, a bill that eventually passed and assured the continuation of Able Trust programs. The road to passage was bumpy, but Representative Killebrew never gave up and was a persistent supporter of the rights of Floridians with disabilities to have a place in the workforce. The Able Trust is honored to thank him for his efforts on behalf of Floridians with disabilities.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, Casey Gonzmart, Jr., and Able Trust Board Member Les Goldman

Employer of the Year

*COLUMBIA RESTAURANT GROUP
RICHARD GONZMART, PRESIDENT
TAMPA, FLORIDA*

Richard Gonzmart and his family operate the Columbia Restaurant Group headquartered in Ybor City, Florida, and proudly claim the rights to Florida's oldest restaurant and the largest Spanish restaurant in the world. The organization got its start in 1905 by Cuban immigrant Casimiro Hernandez Sr, and today all restaurants in the organization are owned and operated by the Hernandez-Gonzmart family. Richard, the 4th generation president of the Columbia Restaurant Group began working for the company at age 12. He was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD in college, and clearly understands the career challenges faced by people with disabilities. Under his leadership, the Columbia Restaurant Group has been a strong advocate for recruiting, hiring and helping employees with disabilities by creating a culture of understanding and acceptance, as they strive for personal and professional success. Mr. Gonzmart and his company have blessed the disability community by being strong supporters of the mission of DEAM activities for many years. Richard Gonzmart and the Columbia Restaurant Group are most deserving of the Business of the Year Award.



**EMBASSY SUITES
HOTELS®**

Employer of the Year

*EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL
DON FRIEDMAN, GENERAL MANAGER
FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA*

Don Friedman and staff at the Embassy Suites Hotel Fort Lauderdale have a proactive partnership with Able Trust grantee Marino Campus of The Dan Marino Foundation. This location of The Embassy Suites has shown leadership in providing job training experiences and employment opportunities to campus participants. Hospitality Program students are able to visit on-site to learn firsthand about future career opportunities, and the hotel offers internship experiences during the summer months. Managers have played an integral role in finding the strengths in their existing employees, and pairing them with program students to create these natural support experiences. The location has hired four graduates of the program, and other participants have used their experiences to build their employment prospects.

Employer of the Year

*RANDY'S GARAGE
RANDY & SHELLY WIMBERLY
LABELLE, FLORIDA*



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

Randy's Garage, Inc. of La Belle, Florida is owned and operated by Randy and Shelly Wimberly, and has been in operation since 1992. Randy's Garage is a full automotive repair and technology business. They have been a partner of the Hendry/Glades High School High Tech (HSHT) program for more than a decade. Randy's is a leader on the Hendry/Glades HSHT Business Advisory Council (BAC), and provides support to the program in many ways: participating in DEAM events; attending and hosting BAC meetings; providing job-shadowing, and summer internships. Over the course of 10 years, Randy's has provided at least two internships each year, serving as a launching pad into post-secondary automotive education and apprenticeships for many students. Randy's works closely with HSHT to ensure students have an understanding of work expectations, and provides ongoing feedback to the students and program managers for future learning. Randy's Garage helps to promote the HSHT program, and the value of employment for people with disabilities within the Hendry/Glades community.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Dr. Cecil Bradley, Able Trust Board Member Scot LaFerté, and Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant

Adult Leadership Award

DR. CECIL BRADLEY

*PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR/DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING, DEPT. OF EDUCATION,
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA*

Dr. Bradley has made it his life's work to advance rehabilitation employment services for Florida's deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens. As the Program Administrator for the state, he has used his talents and skills to level the playing field for individuals with hearing differences. After earning degrees from Gallaudet University and New York University, Dr. Bradley further advanced his skills by earning a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counseling and a Certified Public Manager certificate from Florida State University, all while working full-time. As a state administrative leader, he collaborates with many stakeholders across the state, working together to find the most effective means to prepare vocational rehabilitation customers with hearing impairments for meaningful employment. Dr. Bradley also serves on state and national boards responsible for shaping deaf employment and educational policy, while also teaching college-level American Sign Language (ASL). Dr. Cecil Bradley has been steadfast in his leadership and personal advocacy to create employment opportunities for all.



Commissioner Pam Stewart

Public Employee of the Year Award

COMMISSIONER PAM STEWART

*FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA*

Commissioner Pam Stewart has served nearly 40 years in the field of education, beginning her career as a school teacher, and continuing through the first 20 years of service to students, educators, and families as a guidance counselor, testing and research specialist, assistant principal, and principal at both the elementary and high school levels. In 2004, she was recruited to join the Florida Department of Education's Division of Public Schools as Deputy Chancellor for Educator Quality, where her experience in the school environment resulted in Florida being recognized as a national leader in recruitment, development and performance pay for teachers. Commissioner Stewart has dedicated her life to ensuring Florida's students – including those with disabilities – have access to a high quality education, and has been a champion of the Able Trust High School High Tech Program in pursuit of expanding opportunities for students with disabilities through collaboration of families, professionals, and communities who guarantee the highest expectations and individual success.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Able Trust Ambassador Dwayne Ingram, Cannon Cameron, Kenneth Bush, France Frazzetta, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, and Leigh Austin

The Able Trust High School High Tech Program of the Year

ORANGE COUNTY EAST & WEST

*LEIGH AUSTIN, CANNON CAMERON, KENNETH BUSH
ORLANDO, FLORIDA*

Under the direction of organization leaders Leigh Austin, Cannon Cameron, Kenneth Bush, and through the talented work of 19 classroom teachers, the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) 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. OCPS ensures that students in all 19 Orange County high schools experience the depth and breadth of career and youth development through hands-on workshops, leadership development opportunities, and exposure to real-world employment situations. OCPS has shown innovation through its student recruitment efforts, hands-on STEM-based workshops, youth leadership opportunities, and engagement of the Business Advisory Council. Over the past five years, the program has achieved a greater than 99% graduation rate of all seniors served. As a result of successful community and business partnerships, a majority of Orange County HSHT students participate in a paid summer internship by graduation. The Able Trust commends Orange County Public Schools for creating and sustaining a highly successful program.



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Allison Shirk, Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant, and Able Trust Ambassador Joe Blanton

Media Award

ALLISON SHIRK

DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA

Allison Shirk has written several stories and columns that have heightened community awareness concerning individuals with disabilities. Her articles have chronicled their pursuit of employment, and ways the Daytona community has become actively involved in empowering individuals with disabilities as they live, learn, work, and achieve independence. Stories ranging from a local Project SEARCH program partnering with the community hospital to train and hire students with disabilities, to sharing the joy of a 7-year-old foster child finding his forever home with a family that loves him and understands his special needs are just a few examples. She has also written education stories involving local police training, outlining how to interact with individuals with Autism, and about how a local middle school is using a reading program to improve fluency with students who have learning differences. These stories have not only helped shine a light on solving everyday challenges of living and growing up with a disability, but have also given local citizens the opportunity to better understand their fellow community members.



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

Young Adult Leadership Award

SARAH GOLDMAN

DISTRICT SECRETARY FOR REPRESENTATIVE KATHLEEN PETERS

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

Sarah Goldman continues to make an amazing life for herself and those lucky enough to be around her! Currently serving Representative Peters as her District Secretary, Sarah is actively pursuing her career goal of addressing public policy issues as they relate to providing equal opportunities for people with disabilities. She is a longtime friend of the Able Trust, beginning with her attendance at the Able Trust's Youth Leadership Forum as a young teenager. Since then, she has served as a willing volunteer to the Forum, performing as a mentor to participants and an inspiration to their hopes for a productive life. She is a founding member of The Able Trust Alumni Association, is a frequent speaker on disability issues, and has worked with the Able Trust Board on many matters related to legislation, including delivering critical messages to legislators during the past legislative session. Sarah has also made herself easily available to other young Floridians with disabilities, advising and directing them as requested. Her personal accomplishments include earning her BA at UCF, and her MSW at Florida State University. Born with cerebral palsy, she has risen to heights she has set for herself, and we expect much more from this rising star, who has earned the title of Young Adult Leader for 2017.

The Able Trust Salutes Universal Orlando Resorts & Senior Vice President, Human Resources Scot LaFerté

2017 Business of the Year



(from left to right) Able Trust Board Chair Karen B. Moore, Angela Lagos, Marian Adams, Gail Bennett, Tim Arnst, Sharon Foley, Scot LaFerté, and Able Trust President & CEO Dr. Susanne Homant

the Asian Pacific American Network, Studio Out for LGBT members, iUnidos for Hispanic-Americans, Veterans Network, Woman’s network, and MyAbility, the group that assists with team members who have a disability. The company focus of the MyAbility group is “to be recognized as a workplace that embraces the disability community by valuing differences.” The goals of the group include supporting independence and promoting workplace contributions made by people with varying abilities.

In addition to its internal focus on diversity and inclusion, Universal Orlando Resort partners with other organizations, including lending executives for membership on the Boards of The Able Trust, Quest, Special Olympics, and other charitable organizations. One of the company’s special events for the past several years is its “A Day in Our Universe”, which involves organizations from within the disability community, and helps to keep Universal leadership up to date on work spaces, job tasks, and to identify opportunities within the organization for its workforce and guests.

Well known among the disability network for its diverse and inclusive philosophy, Universal has the fortune to have a great supporter of those goals among its key executives. Under the visionary leadership of Scot LaFerté, Senior Vice President of Human Resources, teams across the various disciplines of the human resources department work to understand the best way to collaborate, innovate and deliver results. Scot continues to serve as an exemplary leader, embodying Universal’s culture of inclusion. He lives the Universal Way, which highlights the best way we can each stand out to deliver unforgettable moments to all – guests, team members, suppliers and the community. He knows that people are at the heart of all that Universal does, and he continues to find ways that all people can contribute to the company’s mission and vision. Under his leadership, inclusion is Universal.

The Able Trust is honored to recognize Universal Orlando Resorts and Scot LaFerté as the 2017 Business of the Year. ■

Universal Orlando Resorts works consistently to make sure the company represents its guests and the entire population that it serves. The Resort has received recognition from parent company Comcast NBCUniversal for its focus on Varying Abilities, for its ADA and Safety team, and Diversity and Inclusion programming. Tom Williams, Chairman and CEO of Universal Parks and Resorts, stated, “We are completely committed to diversity and inclusiveness. It makes sense to have our leadership teams represent the diversity of the guests we serve. Diversity is critical to our success.”

In the spirit of that philosophy and under the extremely capable leadership of Senior VP of Human Resources Scot LaFerté, Universal Parks and Resorts in Orlando has fostered the development and growth of Team Member Resource Groups, which include groups such as the African American Network,



Open Call to Florida Artists!

1st Prize \$150

2nd Prize \$100

3rd Prize \$100

Contest Opens: October 2, 2017

Entry Deadline: November 8, 2017 at 5 PM.

Format: Original artwork on paper or graphic design that can be printed to paper no larger than 8 ½ X 11 OR on a high resolution JPEG file.

Artwork should be sent along with an "About The Artist" statement of 50 words or less. The Statement should provide a personal statement about the artist, the submitted piece of art, the holiday season, and the artist's disability.

Both submitted Artwork and Statement should be labeled with the contact name, complete address, phone number and email address of artist.

Original Artwork will be returned only if requested. The Able Trust is not responsible for lost or damaged pieces. One Artwork Submission per Artist. Artists must currently maintain a Florida address. Artwork submitted in formats other than outlined above will not be considered.

Selected Artwork: Images of the top 3 Selected pieces will be retained for any use by The Able Trust for up to 2 years from the date of selection. Winners will be notified after December 8, 2017 of their selection. Entries are encouraged to be festive and reflective of Florida's diverse culture.

Send To: The Able Trust; Holiday Card Contest; 3320 Thomasville Rd, Suite 200; Tallahassee, FL 32308.

**GRANT
UPDATE**

The deadline for 2017 Strategic Employment Placement Grant applications has been extended to Friday, December 8, 2017. Visit www.abletrust.org and click Grant Information to learn more.



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, or mail your gift with the form below to:

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

Tax Deductible Donation Amount (\$): _____

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

Is this donation (*please check one*):

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Credit Card Type: _____ Credit Card Number: _____

Credit Card Expiration Date: _____ Credit Card CSV: _____

E-mail: _____

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

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

THE ABLE TRUST IS RECOGNIZED AS EXEMPT FROM FEDERAL INCOME TAXATION UNDER SECTION 501(C)(3) OF THE IRS CODE AND ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS. FEDERAL ID: 59-3052307. THE ABLE TRUST IS REGISTERED WITH THE FLORIDA DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES AS REQUIRED BY THE SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS ACT (#CH957). A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE IN FLORIDA: (800) 435-7352. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

The Able Trust High School High Tech: A Proven Path to Education & Employment

by Allison Chase

The Able Trust High School High Tech (HSHT) is a year-round program for youth with disabilities ages 14-22. HSHT prepares students for life after high school – post-secondary education, employment, community involvement – through real-world experiences. Activities include career workshops, industry & campus tours, summer internships, community service projects, leadership development, and much more. Core features of the HSHT program – job shadowing, industry site visits, mentoring, and internships – are designed to provide hands-on experience that excites and attracts students to promising careers. HSHT partners with business and industry through local Business Advisory Councils (BAC) to ensure that program standards align with business needs. HSHT fosters business champions that understand the importance of diversity in the workplace, and the benefits of including students with disabilities in STEM education. ■

The Able Trust High School High Tech is an amazing program that allowed my son to learn about the world of work. He gained employability skills and had the opportunity to interact with other students with disabilities. The most valuable aspect of the program were the summer internships. Each experience allowed Josh to understand the day to day aspects of working and what it takes to be a successful employee. We are so grateful he had the opportunity to be a part of the HSHT program. I would highly recommend this program to any student with a disability.

–Karen W., Parent of Alachua HSHT student



EMPOWERMENT

85% of HSHT graduates entered postsecondary education, continuing education, or employment upon graduation compared to 43% of all graduates with disabilities in Florida.

EDUCATION

During the 2016-2017 school year, The Able Trust HSHT Program served 1,550 students with disabilities in 40 Florida counties. Services were provided in 151 high schools and alternative education settings, including Department of Juvenile Justice facilities and a foster care site. 373 HSHT students graduated in 2017. The HSHT program achieved a graduation rate of greater than 99% of all participating seniors.

EMPLOYMENT

During the 2016-2017 school year, 459 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.

HSHT Internship Partners Include: Publix Supermarkets, Darden Restaurants, US Sugar, Habitat for Humanity, Santa Fe State College, Fairpoint Communications, Play It Again Sports, Walgreens, Winn Dixie Supermarket Company, Home Depot, The UPS Store, Largo Medical Center, the Miami Theatre Center, local school districts, city/county governments, and numerous local businesses.



YLF 2017: Empowering Future Leaders

by Ray Ford, Jr.



YLF 2017 participants toured Florida State University (top) and Tallahassee Community College, giving them information about career programs and admission criteria. They also visited several STEM industry sites, including the STEM Center on the campus of Tallahassee Community College (bottom) where they learned about careers in engineering and robotics.

On July 19, nearly 40 students from across the state of Florida participated in five days of leadership training at the 2017 Able Trust Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). Thanks to major funding from The Able Trust, along with generous support from corporate and private sponsors, high school students were able to experience leadership training with a career path emphasis at no cost to their families.

“When I was sitting in the car with my mom, hugging her and saying goodbye, in my mind I was asking myself, ‘What are you doing? I must be crazy? Am I really doing this right now? But once I settled in, all my fears vanished.’” Catherine shared during the closing ceremonies.

Over the course of the forum, students took campus tours of Florida State University and Tallahassee Community College, in addition to learning about the steps necessary to apply and get accommodations should they be necessary.

“Before I came to this forum, I really didn’t know if I could go to college,” Manny said. “But now, I believe I can make it.”

YLF participants visited several local industries as part of a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) career exploration exercise. Students had the choice of learning about healthcare careers at the Ghazvini Center, science careers at the Florida State University National Magnetic Laboratory, or technology careers at the STEM Center and Advanced Manufacturing Training Center (AMTC) at Tallahassee Community College. Students also participated in a mock legislative session in the House Chambers of the Florida Capitol where they debated and voted on a bill regarding homework in public schools. Dinner and business etiquette training, disability history, sensitivity, and resource seminars rounded out the week’s events. ■

Alumni Corner: Anthony LaCava

by Rachael Moulton

Anthony La Cava is a member of the Able Trust Alumni Association, and serves as Chairman for the Planning Committee. He is one of the first students to participate in the early years of YLF, and has returned each summer for more than a decade as a staff member.

Anthony is an IT professional in Atlanta, Georgia, who recently completed negotiations with a new employer. After applying via social media site LinkedIn, Anthony completed a phone interview and two in-person interviews. He expects to begin his new job in October.

“I’ve been lucky that I haven’t had too many obstacles in finding a job,” Anthony said. “But once I get a job, I’ve had to advocate for what I need. Don’t be afraid to ask for help or accommodations.”

Anthony encourages others who are looking for a job to remember that when considering a job, not only is the company interviewing you, you are also interviewing them.

“Make sure you think the company is a good fit for you, and don’t focus on the money. Finding a company that you will be happy with is a lot better than making a few more dollars in the long run.” ■



FLORIDA GRANTOR

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

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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

October 2017

Disability Employment Awareness Month

October 18

*Able Trust Grant Award Presentation
The Haven
Sarasota, FL*

October 18-20

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

November 2017

Hire A Veteran Month

November 30

*Able Trust Grant Award Presentation
Vincent Academy
Sarasota, FL*

December 8, 2017

Able Trust Board of Directors Meeting