



GAPSE Newsletter

Georgia Chapter of APSE: The Network on Employment

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Special points of interest:

- 2006 Conference Reviews
- Legislative Issues
- Membership opportunities.
- National APSE conference.



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Highlights from the President

During a recent conference call, a nationally recognized marketing expert explained why he was offering his services to APSE: The Network on Employment. He said, "In my opinion, your organization is made up of people who are at the very top of the totem pole. I want to serve you." This guy is right! I believe that our members are at the very top of the totem pole. I am proud to be a GAPSE member; whether a job coach, employment specialist, job developer, rehabilitation counselor, supported employee, family member, administrator, advocate, or an educator, we perform well!

APSE/GAPSE is the only membership association that focuses exclusively on integrated employment for people with disabilities. I would like to share some of the activities GAPSE is engaged in. Our most visible efforts are our educational offerings to our members and partner organizations. GAPSE's statewide conference at Epworth By The Sea was an exceptional learning and networking experience. In March, in response to member input, we are offering a mini-conference, *Knocking & Opening Doors to Partnerships*

with Businesses, and it will be well worth your attendance. Sharing the very latest trends and issues in supported employment with you are high priorities. This newsletter and our listserv are examples of our attempts to communicate with members. We also have plans for website; however, in the meantime, please take advantage of APSE's excellent site www.apse.org.

We believe that all people who want to work should have that opportunity. This will be the focus of a national marketing campaign from which we will benefit. The APSE Marketing and Outreach Committee is within a few days of distributing a DVD package that highlights the effectiveness and value of supported employment. In addition, public service announcements have been developed and I anticipate the Atlanta market will be targeted. The timing of the release of this information will strengthen our response to the President's recent budget proposal that eliminates the Supported Employment State Grant Program. Our marketing initiative will contribute to the education of the public and business community on the value of the

full inclusion of people with significant disabilities.

Perhaps our most important initiative at this time is GAPSE's commitment to building collaborative partnerships. We have a long-term commitment to partner with people with disabilities, family members, employers, service providers, and advocates. Over recent years, our most experienced board members emphasized the need to collaborate with organizations who share our belief that all Georgians who want to work should have that opportunity. The success of our statewide conference at Epworth was an outcome of collaborative partnerships. That was just the beginning! We are determined to take full advantage of the strength in working with others to promote integrated employment opportunities and full inclusion of people with disabilities.

If you are a member of GAPSE: The Network on Employment, we thank you. We invite you to join a task group. If you are not a member, we invite you to join our network to ensure that supported employment continues to grow and improve.

GAPSE Conference 2007

In preparation for the **GAPSE: Georgia Network on Employment 2007 Statewide Conference**, the board of directors and conference planning committee would appreciate your input. 2006 conference participants stated that they had an outstanding learning experience - we also received helpful feedback regarding content planning for 2007. Where would you like the 2007 conference to be held? We are looking at dates in early October. The board has talked about returning to Epworth by the Sea, considering another coastal site, holding the conference in central Georgia - Macon, and checking out potential sites in the Georgia mountains. We want the conference to be available to as many Georgians as want to attend. Please give us your thoughts. You can respond back to the listserv or e-mail be directly at pchase@uga.edu. Thanks.

Note from the Editor: GAPSE strives to stay in the know and advocate for individuals that receive Supported Employment services. If you have articles or success stories that you would like to submit please contact Sabrina Tuten at (912)285-6469 or e-mail at stuten@satilla.csb.state.ga.us



SE: Building bridges to a better tomorrow

Adventure isn't hanging on a rope off the side of a mountain. Adventure is an attitude that we must apply to the day to day obstacles of life -- facing new challenges, seizing new opportunities, testing our resources against the unknown and in the process, discovering our own unique potential.

- John Amatt

Supported Employment Spot light:

Success Story submitted by Community Friendship Inc.

Sheryl is employed as a Guest Services Representative for Grady. She has held this job for approx. 1 year. What makes this a true success story is her perseverance in overcoming the obstacles that her illness of bi-polar disorder has presented. Her first challenge was admitting that she has a mental illness. The next challenge was becoming willing to take her medications as prescribed. Her struggles included being allergic and sensitive to different medications. She was required to be cooperative with a psychiatrist, employment specialist, family, social worker and MD; all requesting that a 37 year old, very independent, person that she required medication to maintain competitive employment in addition to checking with all of them on a regular basis.

Next, she had to prove herself to the employer who initially saw someone who had to be out frequently for brief hospitalizations and setbacks. She maintained an unpaid internship for a number of months before she was hired.

The employer saw her motivation and determination to overcome obstacles and to continue to maintain employment. She was also very good at her job. With the support of the employment specialist, they continued to allow her to return.

Sheryl is very grateful for her position. She says that she enjoys her job. She has a very positive attitude and would like to continue working in this position for as long as possible.

Supported Employment Spot light : Success Story

Success story submitted by : Satilla Community Services

“Hey there sweet pea” says a customer entering Wal-Mart to Angela. Angela smiles and responds, “Everybody calls me sweet pea”. Customers entering the local store are greeted by this delightful woman, Angela Dyson. Angela suffers from Spina Bifida and due to her paralysis, uses a wheelchair for mobility. Before beginning her journey with Satilla Community Services’ Supportive Employment program, her mother states “Angela had a strong desire to work, and she really wanted to work At Wal-Mart”. Angela’s desire to work was so strong that she once asked a man at a service station for an employment application while her mom pumped gas. Angela has been involved in the Supported Employment program since 2000. That same year was when she won the heart of the Wal-Mart manager and was hired as a customer service clerk. Angela’s position involved assisting customers by asking “May I help you?” Angela’s mother stated “Angie pursued that job and had the ambition to work there”. After participating in a sheltered workshop where she answered phones and filed papers for two years, Angela had achieved her dream of working at Wal-Mart.

It has now been seven years since Angela has been employed at Wal-Mart where she is a door greeter. Angela’s mother stated “It is a miracle from the Lord that Angie got this job. I’m so thankful for her opportunity and for the Supported Employment program.” If you sit with Angela at the store’s entrance, you will see the positive impact that Angela has on the community. Everyone entering seems to know Angela’s name and speaks to her. While sitting at the store’s entrance, Angela smiles and states, “I love being here, I just love it”.

Angela’s dedicated efforts to gain employment were assisted by the strong commitment and labors of the Supported Employment program. The program has been beneficial to Angela’s success and happiness by providing support, additional one-on-one training, and assistance with other work related issues.

2006 GAPSE Conference: St. Simons Island, GA

The 2006 Annual GAPSE conference was held at Epworth By The Sea , October 18th –20th. The conference “Supported Employment: The Drive to Work” emphasized work and promoting employment for all.

The conference keynoters included Rich Toscano and George Nostrand. Rich Toscano presented information on “Jobs for All” that focused on de-stigmatizing illness and support as well as offered information on current trends, best practices, and principles and practices of Customized Employment. George Nostrand presentation on “The Risks of Normalcy” gave insight on a consumer perspective. George states “If we aren’t treating people normally, how can we expect the community to?” Additional information included expectations, goals, natural supports, natural consequences, work works, community, risk of normalcy and the keys to normalcy.

Breakout sessions included a wide variety of topics such as: Customized Employment Services, Critical Facts about Employment in Georgia, Work: The Driving Force Behind Recovery, Knocking and Opening Doors to Partnerships with Businesses, My Art My Illness, Social Security and Going to Work, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) for Work, Consumer Conference Planning & Guidance for Job Coaches, Enable Georgia, Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), Supported Employment Fidelity Scale.

The conference ended with Meaningful Work for Meaningful Recovery in which panel members offered their multiple perspectives and unique work experiences on the role of employment in their recovery and Rich Toscano’s: The Drive to Work, Welcome to the Future.....

A special thanks goes out to Jean Mevoli-Cannon, conference chairperson, and her conference planning members and partner organizations. In addition to GAPSE members, the planning group included representative from the Georgia Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services, Georgia Consumer Mental Health Network, Georgia Department of Human Resources, Georgia Department of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases, The Rehabilitation Network, The University of Georgia, Community Friendship Inc., Satilla Community Services Board, Cobb-Douglas CSB, GRN CSB, Briggs and Associates, South Carolina Association of Persons in Supported Employment, Shepard Center, Worktec, Social Security Administration and Coastal Center for Development Disabilities

Legislative Updates

The President’s Budget for the next fiscal year has been delivered to Congress. Once again he has asked Congress to eliminate the Supported Employment State Grant program. Here is the explanation in the budget document for this request:

“The 2008 Budget reflects a multi-year Administration effort to reform job training programs, and eliminate funding for duplicative and overlapping programs. Consistent with this crosscutting reform, the budget eliminates funding for three programs (Projects with Industry, Supported Employment State Grants, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers). The services provided by these programs can continue to be provided by the larger Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants Program. ”

Unfortunately, the request does not come with an increase in the "larger Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants Program" to cover the losses.

Of course, this is not new to the advocates for the three programs. We have been fighting and winning this battle for several years now. And we will continue that battle this year. In fact, we will be asking for MORE money in the SE State Grant Program this year rather than NO money.

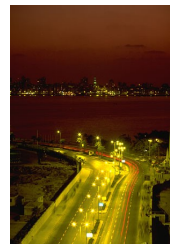
In the next few days we will create an in-depth Action Alert, with talking points and guidance that will be helpful for you in educating your federal legislators about the continued importance of the SE State Grant Program funding (not the least of which, unlike the Title I State Voc Rehab funding, it is distributed to the states with no requirements for a state match .)

Please stay tuned for more information and start gearing up for a continued educational campaign with your federal legislators!

Legislative updates obtained from APSE website.

If what you're working for really matters, you'll give it all you've got.

- Nido Qubein



Supported Employment: The Road to Success.

GAPSE: The Georgia Network on Employment is a member organization formed to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services and outcomes for persons experiencing disabilities. If you are not a member of this very important movement we invite you to join our group. Visit the APSE website at www.apse.org

GAPSE

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About Supported Employment

Supported employment (SE) enables people with disabilities who have not been successfully employed to work and contribute to society. SE focuses on a person's abilities and provides the supports the individual needs to be successful on a long-term basis.

It allows people experiencing disabilities, their families, businesses, and their communities to experience the successes of people with disabilities. The partnership that SE has established between individuals experiencing disabilities and their communities is having a lasting impact on the way the public perceives people with disabilities. SE affords the public the opportunity to see the person for who they are rather than seeing the disability.

APSE is committed to Supported Employment and the impact it has on improving the quality of life of anyone associated with SE programs. In order to improve services and make them available to an increasing number of people who want or need job support, APSE provides technical assistance and education to people involved with SE, encourages service delivery based on sound values and ethics, and is actively involved in legislative and policy change for SE. To accomplish these goals, APSE was formed to provide a strong partnership with others who share this dedication to SE.

The 18th Annual National APSE Conference will take place from July 16-18, 2007 in Kansas City, Missouri. This year's conference challenges you to join in shaping the future of supported employment!

- APSE wants presentations that highlight "best practice" ideas for innovations, change, and improvement that leads to integrated employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities
- Share your knowledge and expertise with APSE members from all across the country!
Join in strengthening APSE as a national membership organization.

Theme tracks:

- "Just Do It!" Supported Employment Implementation
- "Not Just Any Job!" Customized Employment
- "Creating Tomorrow's Leaders!" Program Management
- "Show Me the Money!" Wealth and Asset Accumulation
- "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?" School to Career Transition
- "We Just Want Regular Lives!" Family and Consumer Issues
- "What Can I Do?" Challenging the System Barriers to Supported Employment
- "Take It to the Hill!" Public Policy

Guidelines for Presentations

As you are considering your presentation for the APSE conference, please remember these few simple requirements:

- All presenters must be current APSE members. (Membership information is available at www.apse.org or by calling 804-278-9187.
- Presenters must register for the conference and pay all required registration fees.
- APSE is unable to pay travel expenses or an honorarium to any presenter.
- Presenters are responsible for bringing or covering the costs of their audiovisual equipment.
- Presentations must reflect APSE's commitment to community-based, competitive, integrated employment.
- Proposals must identify a lead presenter who is willing to share information with his/her co-presenters. All communication from APSE will be sent to the lead presenter.
APSE prefers to receive all proposals electronically. Proposals may be submitted on line, or you can mail or fax the completed form to the APSE office.