



May 2007

Special points of interest:

- 2007 Supported Employment Conf.
- Legislative Issues
- Reinventing DD programs
- National APSE conference.



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GAPSE

Highlights from the GAPSE President

Mark you calendars for the best training event ever! The 2007 GAPSE: The Network on Employment annual conference will be held October 24 -26 at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Macon. We've been listening to you and we are going to deliver. Last year, you said the GAPSE conference was fantastic! You offered several very positive suggestions for our conference planning committee to consider. A major recommendation was to offer the opportunity to network with colleagues throughout the state – our first evening together we have planned a Networking Reception with great hor'dourves. You asked for more concurrent sessions – we have reduced the number of general sessions giving you the opportunity to attend additional concurrent sessions.

We have an awesome lineup of general session presenters. You will not want to miss meeting and hearing four individuals who have committed to joining us. **Kathie Snow** will be our opening keynoter Wednesday afternoon. Kathie has presented hundreds of keynotes and workshops at conferences throughout the United States and Canada. She will challenge our conventional wisdom and encourage us to adopt new ways of thinking about disability issues. Kathie, the parent of a young adult with a disability, is enthusiastic, positive, and passionate about ensuring children and adults with disabili-

ties live real lives. She and her family reside in the mountains of Colorado. For more information about Kathie, please view her website at www.disabilityisnatural.com.

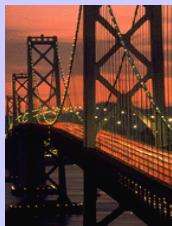
Thursday morning, **Dennis Drake**, Director of Dietary Services at Spalding Regional Hospital, will talk with us about the value of supported employment from a corporate perspective. As the father of a child with Down Syndrome and a child with Asperger's Syndrome, he is extremely passionate about developmental disabilities and work. Dennis has spoken at the national APSE conference and to many companies throughout Georgia. Our Thursday keynoter is **Mindy Oppenheim**. If you have heard Mindy before, tell your colleagues that she is coming to the GAPSE conference. If you haven't had the pleasure of hearing Mindy, you are in for a treat! She was the first training and marketing coordinator for the Florida Supported Employment Project, co-founder and coordinator for the Supported Employment Telecourse Network (SETNET) at Virginia Commonwealth University, senior research associate at Berkeley Planning Associates, and an instructor and adjunct professor at Chapman University, Dominican College, College of Alameda, University of San Francisco, and San Diego State University. As a trainer, Mindy is known for her pragmatic, down-to-earth approach. Her presentations combine humor and practical strategies to inspire, instruct

and impel professionals to unprecedented levels of creativity, productivity, and effectiveness. Learn more about Mindy at www.staffdevelopment.net/SEED.

You won't want to sleep-in on Friday! As our closing keynoter, we will welcome **Celane McWhorter** to our conference. Celane is the executive director of APSE: The Network on Employment. If you want to know what is happening in supported employment as well as a look toward the future, you don't want to miss her presentation. Celane is a powerful advocate of inclusion and a spokesperson for the elimination of segregated facilities. We are honored to have her as our guest. You can check out APSE at www.apse.org.

As soon as the presenters of the concurrent sessions are finalized, we will share that line-up with you. Within the next few weeks, we will be sending conference registration information to GAPSE members and our partner organizations. When you receive the registration material, I encourage you to complete and return the registration form without too much delay. Unfortunately, hotels have limited space and we will not be able to exceed available seating. Meet me in Macon!

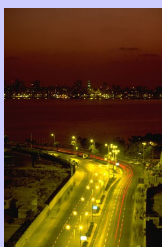
Phil Chase, President



SE: Building bridges to a better tomorrow

Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence.
-Unknown

If you don't like something change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it.
-- Mary Engelbreit



Supported Employment: The Road to Success.

Supported Employment Spot light:

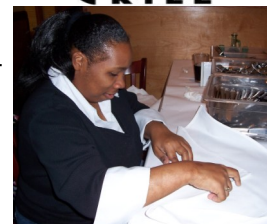
Success Story submitted by: Coastal Center for Developmental Disabilities

You might recognize these two ladies from our last newsletter (CCDS newsletter). These familiar faces were seen in front of Liberty Tax Services, advertising their business. As the tax season comes to a close, these talented ladies are now working as silver rollers.

Jennifer Dupree (*top*) is working at the Bone Fish Grill, and really enjoys working at this new upscale Savannah restaurant. Jennifer is responsible for rolling silver using a very complex technique. During her time at work she is expected to roll 6-8 bins full of silverware! Jennifer's position supports the waiters and waitresses by letting them focus on providing great service to their customers.

Patricia Bedford (*bottom*) has started working at Red Lobster. Patricia is responsible for rolling silverware and crab crackers for the seafood lovers who enter Red Lobsters doors. Patricia finds pure delight in her new position. Patricia's co-workers depend on her to complete a needed service to keep their fast paced restaurant running smoothly.

The next time you pick up your silverware, remember these ladies *rolling, rolling, rolling...*



Supported Employment Spotlight

Satilla Community Services Supported Employment Program would like to congratulate Alan Bittaker on receiving his 20 year service pin from Wal-Mart in Douglas Georgia. When Alan first began working at Wal-Mart his job was to sweep and pick up trash in the parking lot. Alan has since moved into the receiving department in which he is responsible for stocking new merchandise and operates the cardboard bailer machine. Through hard work and perseverance Alan has achieved a task that some work all their lives and never accomplish. Alan owns his own home and is an active citizen in the Coffee county community. Alan advocates for other individuals with disabilities through serving as the secretary for the People First organization in Douglas. In his spare time he is surfing the web, creating web pages and tinkering with computers. Alan's family is thankful that Supported Employment doesn't stop when you get the job and without these supports Alan would not have been as successful as he is today. Congratulations again to Alan for 20 years of hard work, we are all so proud of you!



The Disability Double Standard

Revolutionary Common Sense by Kathie Snow

www.disabilityisnatural.com

A few weeks ago, a neighbor ("Janet") called, inquiring if my daughter, Emily, could babysit her children. Before putting my daughter on the phone, Janet and I chatted about what was going on in our lives. (As a side note, Janet is a substitute teacher, her husband has his own business, they're both well-educated, and they recently remodeled their home with the latest in home appliances.) As we talked, Janet began complaining about her oldest son, Robert, a sixth grader. "Oh, he is so lazy and he's always trying to take the easy way out!"

"I don't understand—what do you mean he's 'lazy' and 'takes the easy way out'?" I asked.

"Well I'll tell you!" she huffed. "The other day in his band class, he wanted to switch from the saxophone to drums because he thought drums would be easier! See what I mean? He just always wants things to be easy! I told him, 'No way, Buster! You're sticking it out with the sax!'"

Her comments weren't out of the ordinary. I've heard many parents say similar things about their children, and at one time, I shared a similar attitude. But my work in the disability field, combined with being the parent of two teenagers, one of whom has a disability, has given me a different perspective. So I shared my thoughts with my frustrated neighbor.

Kathie: Janet, do you have a dishwasher?

Janet: Of course!

Kathie: What about a microwave oven, computer, cell phone, washing machine, and dryer?

Janet: Yes, you know I do!

Kathie: Why do you use those, Janet? Isn't it to make life easier?

Janet: Well, yes, I guess so.

Kathie: So why is it okay for grown-ups to decide to do things or use things that make our lives easier, but it's not okay for our children to do the same thing?

At that, she sputtered and hemmed and hawed, and then began to rethink her accusation that her son was "lazy" and always wanted to "take the easy way out." Oh, if changing attitudes in Disability World was this simple!

Across the country, children and adults with disabilities in all environments—in their homes, in schools, at work, and in other places—are in the same boat as Robert: they are held to a higher standard than those who impose the standard.

Children with disabilities, for example, are forced to spend countless hours trying to learn to write with a pencil. Yet their teachers (and most everyone else) routinely use computers instead of pencil and paper! In this era of computers, Palm Pilots, voice-to-text software, and other technology, handwriting is a skill of questionable value (unless one intends to be a calligrapher). And the hours spent on handwriting significantly reduces the time a child can spend on more meaningful and relevant academic pursuits.

Other students with disabilities are excluded from age-appropriate regular education classes because they can't do math calculations with pencil and paper. Yet when their teachers (and most everyone else) balance their checkbooks at home, they use calculators or computer accounting software.

Still other students are labeled as "slow" or even as "failures" because they can't read at grade level. But their teachers, as well as high-powered business people and others, make frequent use of audiobooks, videos, and computer programs to learn what they need or want to know.

Adults with disabilities, especially those in congregate living situations, are expected to meet habilitation "goals" that may include such tasks as "washing the dishes within 20 minutes of eating" or "making up the bed within 30 minutes of getting up." Yet the staff people who write these goals admit they don't follow these "rules" in their own lives.

These examples are the tip of the iceberg of the Disability Double Standard. I'm sure you can think of many more.

Looking at Janet and Robert again, we realize that this Double Standard doesn't apply only to individuals with disabilities. It occurs in many environments, to all types of people, when one person assumes a moral superiority over another. And it seems this trait is a generational "inheritance," in that we learn it from our parents and other adults when we're children, then we pass it on once we become adults. Ultimately, it represents a maxim we're all familiar with: "Do as I say, not as I do."

Like many children, Robert will learn to disregard the words of his mother. He will, instead, learn more from her actions, as reflected by another well-known maxim: "Actions speak louder than words." Robert was, in fact, following in his mother's footsteps: his desire to switch to an easier instrument was no different than his mother choosing to use a dishwasher instead of washing and drying dishes by hand. In Robert's case, the harm of his mother's "Do as I say, not as I do" position was probably minimal.

The harm to individuals with disabilities, however, is far greater. Because many children and adults are perpetually under the control or influence of cradle-to-grave services (early intervention, early childhood, special education, vocational-rehabilitation, group homes, therapies, and more) there is no escape from others determining the standards which must be met. (At some point, Robert will be in a position to determine his own standards. However, the same may not be true for many individuals with disabilities.) Moreover, those who do not comply with the "Do as I say, not as I do," Disability Double Standard (which may be manifested as "goals," "behavior plans," and the like) are at risk for a variety of consequences which may include: increased pressure to comply, additional "goals" to remedy the non-compliance, the continuation or increase of segregation/isolation, and even punishment or abuse.

The solution to this harmful practice seems quite simple to me. It's exemplified by another maxim we're all familiar with: "Treat others the way you want to be treated."

Shouldn't people in the human services system (including special education) be held to the highest standard of humane practices? Is it time to place an embroidered wallhanging of "Treat others the way you want to be treated," in the office of each and every "helping professional"?

Many may feel the solution lies in changing the rules and regulations of the system. And there's no doubt that many rules and regs should be changed. But there are, in pockets here and there across the country, human service staffers, therapists, educators, and others who—under today's rules and regulations—ensure children and adults with disabilities (1) are included and supported in typical environments with people who don't have disabilities, (2) live self-directed lives full of choice and opportunities, and (3) attain personal goals that are relevant and meaningful to them.

These individuals do not impose the Disability Double Standard on others. And no "Treat others as you want to be treated" motto adorns their walls—instead, it's written on their hearts. ©

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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

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Training Opportunities

Register now for The University of Georgia's online certificate program for employment specialists and job coaches. The next session begins September 24, 2007. Check out the course curriculum by clicking *Syllabus* at the Human Services Management Institute web site, www.coe.uga.edu/hsmi or call the Institute at 1/866-248-HSMI.

Self-Employment Webcast Series– Virginia Commonwealth University
July 18, 2007- Self-Employment: Vision, Partnerships and Creative Funding
Presenters: Chris Coleman & Nancy Brooks -Lane, Cobb/Douglas CSB

August 15, 2007– Developing a Business Plan for Self-Employment
Presenters: Joe and Ray Steffy, Poppin Joe's Kettle Korn

September 19, 2007– Facilitating Self-Employment for Disabled Veterans
Presenters: Urban Miyares, Disabled Business Persons Association

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Note from the Editor: GAPSE strives to stay in the know and advocate for individuals that receive SE services. If you have articles or success stories that you would like to submit please contact Sabrina Tuten at (912) 449-7236 or e-mail at stuten@satilla.csb.state.ga.us