



## GAPSE Newsletter

### Georgia Chapter of APSE: The Network on Employment

May 2008

#### Special points of interest:

- New Board members
- 2008 Conference
- GAPSE Employment Grant



#### GAPSE Board

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#### Highlights from the GAPSE President

Last May, I began my remarks in this column by saying "Mark your calendars for the best training event ever!" I can say that again and mean it. If you haven't already marked your calendars for the best training event ever, please do so now! The 2008 GAPSE: The Network on Employment will be held October 22 – 24 at the Jekyll Oceanfront Resort ([www.jekyllinn.com](http://www.jekyllinn.com)). The conference theme is **JOBS!** We have an outstanding conference planning task group of individuals who represent several organizations and who are committed to offering a meaningful event.

Since we are all about **JOBS!**, by popular demand we have asked **Mindy Oppenheim** to join us again. When extending an invitation to Mindy, I let her know our invite was based on encouragement from the 2007 conferees. Her comment was *"I'd love to and what a compliment that they want me back. I promise this time I'll bring some real clothes with me on the plane!! Thanks again and you definitely made my day!"* Mindy will facilitate 2 workshops during the concurrent sessions on Thursday (October 23) and will be our closing keynote speaker on Friday (October 24). I am confident that those of you who heard and participated with Mindy will return – she has new material and many new ideas to share. If you missed Mindy last year, don't miss her this time. Check her out at [www.staffdevelopment.net](http://www.staffdevelopment.net).

I am extremely pleased to announce that **Denise Bissonette** will be our Thursday (October 23) morning keynote speaker. Denise is one of North America's most sought-after trainers and speakers on career development, job development, workforce development, and "true livelihood." We have been trying to get Denise to Georgia for the past two years and have finally succeeded. More information about Denise may be found at [www.diversityworld.com](http://www.diversityworld.com). Some comments from others who have attended Denise's training:

*"Denise's training is extremely practical, but more important...I feel my passion and purpose again!"*

*"Jump up and down, do whatever you have to do – but don't miss a Denise Bissonette training event!"*

*"I loved Denise's comprehensive approach – including poetry, analogies, personal examples, parables and quotes. Combined, these brought her learning points alive I could have sat and listened to Denise for a week – More than two days would have been great, but take what you can get!"*

We are very fortunate to have **Mindy** and **Denise** at the same conference. It will be an event that you don't want to miss. Although we have not finalized the first day of the conference, we have confirmed that **Gwendolyn Skinner**, Director of the Georgia Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, & Addictive Diseases, will open our conference on Wednesday (October 22) afternoon. There will be a poolside networking reception Wednesday evening – we won't run out of food this year! A full breakfast will be provided Thursday and Friday mornings and also back by popular demand, we will have a salad and potato bar for Thursday lunch – a new offering on the resort's menu just for GAPSE. As soon as the concurrent sessions are finalized, we will share the line-up with you. Within the next couple weeks, we will send conference registration information to GAPSE members and our partner organizations.

In addition to attending GAPSE's annual conference, I encourage your involvement in a great organization (I also find it a fun organization because of the people who join). Please visit our website ([www.gapsenetwork.com](http://www.gapsenetwork.com)) and click the "Membership – To Join" link – scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Volunteer Form" – complete and submit. You will be glad you did – so will I. Thanks for supporting GAPSE and for all that you do personally to make our world a better place to live. Let's meet at the beach to learn new stuff and play a little.



**SE: Building  
bridges to a  
better tomorrow**

## Meet the New Folks!

### Meet Cindy Burns

GAPSE: The Network on Employment is pleased to announce that Cindy Burns, Community Employment Supervisor for Coastal Center for Developmental Services, Inc. in Savannah, has unanimously been elected to serve on the GAPSE Board of Directors. Cindy was recently named to her current position after serving thirteen years as the agency's Job Developer. Her new role allows her greater opportunities to successfully link area businesses with an eager, capable workforce of adults with disabilities.

After receiving her education locally, Cindy worked in the Chatham County school system for five years in a special education classroom. From there, she sharpened her job developing skills at Vocational Rehabilitation and Goodwill before joining the CCDS workforce in 1994.

Cindy continues with advance training opportunities through Virginia Commonwealth University that focus on supported employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. In 2005, Cindy and her department participated in a national collaborative project co-managed by the University of Michigan, VCU, and the Department of Labor. Currently, Cindy represents CCDS in the partnership with the Savannah-Chatham Public Schools and St. Joseph / Candler to develop Project SEARCH in the Savannah area. This innovative approach brings a school classroom setting into a workplace for training which will ultimately lead to employment.

A member of the Chamber of Commerce in both Savannah and Effingham, Cindy lives in Pooler with her family and is eager to build on her job matching success in Chatham, Liberty, and Effingham counties. Welcome Cindy!!

### Want to join the team?

#### **GAPSE** Seeks Partners

GAPSE would like to continue its positive collaboration efforts. In 2005, GAPSE held its first Collaboration Luncheon which generated a GAPSE Resource List and an excellent GAPSE Conference. We have maintained those partners and would like to continue to work with all associations providing competitive employment to people with disabilities. We are planning the 2008 conference titled "JOBS" and would like your association's support. We are proud to say that we recently added Employment First Georgia and NAMI to our partner list. Phil Chase, our president, is also developing a list to be posted on our website of agencies who provide services to people with disabilities as a resource for families who do not know where to go for help. Check out this site to ensure that your agency is listed.

One of our goals is to get the word out to employers that we work with people with disabilities who are an under tapped resource for employment.

Another goal is to have one loud voice to let the legislature know that we work with real people who want real jobs. Please join us in our campaign to get as many people to work with disabilities who want that opportunity. If you would like to get involved it's not too late. Contact Phil Chase @ (706) 542- 1360 or e-mail to [pchase@coe.uga.edu](mailto:pchase@coe.uga.edu).

## Project Search In Action

After being awarded the Project SEARCH Grant for Chatham County, Cindy Burns and Savannah High School Transition Specialist, Margo Green observed Project SEARCH first hand. Traveling with fourteen other representatives from newly-awarded Georgia Project SEARCH communities, Burns and Green traveled to Cincinnati to meet with the project's creators and tour the associated businesses during their 2 day tour.

A key player was Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center where Project Search began. A whirlwind tour of the hospital took the group through medical records, surgical units, the morgue, and equipment sterilization rooms. Individuals from the project were actively entering data, sterilizing equipment, stocking supplies, prepping surgical kits, and many more white-collar roles.

Another key site was Fifth Third Bank where participants hold down prominent jobs. These jobs include filing, scanning, and data entry. One individual's performance was so impressive that he literally does the work of three non-disabled co-workers, saving the bank countless costs. "I learned so much from this visit," Burns confessed. "There were jobs there that I would have never thought of, but now I cannot wait to pursue here in and around Savannah."

Project SEARCH transitions students from high school to work by providing classroom learning on a job site, followed by job development, and then placement with a long-term support job coach. Project SEARCH also opens the doors for additional opportunities for older individuals to find community job placement.

Thanks,  
Cindy Burns

## GAPSE Offers Grant to Person or Persons to Obtain Employment

The GAPSE board will offer up to \$5000 this year to help one or more people with significant disabilities obtain employment. The applicant (job coach or employment specialist, person with a disability, or other advocate for the individual) must be a member of GAPSE. There must be a good plan for how the money will be spent and enhance or result in employment. Please go to the GAPSE website ([www.gapsenetwork.com](http://www.gapsenetwork.com)) to find the application (click on "Grant Application") or call or e-mail Adele Patrick or any other board member. Information about all of us can be found on the GAPSE website.

At this point GAPSE has yet to receive an application for this grant. The entire \$5000 is still up for grabs!

## Special Tenth Anniversary Issue on Supported Employment

**The Spring 2008 issue of the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal** is a Special Tenth Anniversary Issue on Supported Employment (1998-2008) edited by Robert Drake and Gary Bond. The papers in this special issue summarize the remarkable success of evidence-based supported employment from many perspectives including personal testimony and quantitative synthesis. Articles cover the most rigorous studies of supported employment currently available and describe large multi-site projects that confirm the potential of supported employment to be helpful to thousands of persons with severe mental illness in different settings, communities, states and countries.

APSE members can take advantage of a time-limited Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal online only individual subscription offer. Please visit the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal's website for more details on both the Special Tenth Anniversary Issue and subscription details. Visit the APSE website at [www.apse.org](http://www.apse.org) for more information.

**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 GAPSE website at [www.gapsenetwork.com](http://www.gapsenetwork.com)

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### **APSE's 19th Annual National Conference:**

Mark your calendars for July 9-11, 2008.

The conference will be held at the Marriott Louisville Downtown in Louisville KY.

Check out the APSE website for more details @ [www.apse.org](http://www.apse.org).

## **Artist Corner**

### Bipolar Poem

While waiting on the rain on gray  
Thursday, the monster  
crept up on me,  
chased away the sky,  
killed the sun on sight,  
turned puffy white clouds  
blackier than the blackest  
night.

A bitter wind growled,  
menacing and mean,  
raindrops sharp and cold  
stabbed the captive earth.

The wait once over I felt relief,  
watched the storm shower the land.

Believing the grace of spring  
would show up soon,  
I felt a flicker of hope,  
Sent as a gift  
from the faraway moon.

E.E. Kellogg  
Job Coach

### Not Mental Illness; Spiritual Warfare

When I look back at all that I've gone through  
And realize that I've survived  
I know that it was because of you  
That my faith was tested and tried.

The battle is fought in the mind I know  
And that is why I'm trying to show  
That my mental state has nothing to do  
With where I'm going to go.

My faith in me has got to be as great as my faith  
in you  
Because you see, I've got dreams of things  
I'm going to do  
On wings of eagles I soar  
As I go through that open door.

What tried to destroy my faith in you  
Has only thickened the glue  
And made me more determined to be  
Free to be in my destiny.

Janet Reasons  
Certified Peer Specialist

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](mailto:stuten@satilla.csb.state.ga.us)