2009 Conference Highlights

Once again, another successful rehabilitation and transition conference was held at The American Club in Kohler on April 1-3, 2009. The general theme was entitled “Destination Collaboration.”

Participants could select from 45 sessions within 7 general themes including employment, transition, best practices, special interests, legislative, mid management, and ethics. Over 56 exhibitors participated in the conference.

Opening session speakers included Ms. Roberta Gassman, secretary of Wisconsin DWD, and Mr. Andrew Imparato, president and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities. Participants also saw a great comedy improve troupe “Monkey Business” for the closing session.

Mr. Thomas Cook, executive director of RFW, along with Dr. Susie Eberhard, president of WRA, presented two awards for outstanding individuals. Ms. Marcia Jagodzinski won the 2009 RFW/WRA Rehabilitation Leadership Award. Ms. Jagodzinski is the president and CEO of Riverfront. The Government Leadership Award was presented to Mr. Dave Dumke, the field services representative with the Wisconsin Counties Association, as well as chairperson of the State Use Board.

Last but not least, the conference provided everyone a chance to meet old friends, network, participate in board activities, and have a good time. Thursday night’s theme party gave prizes to the best dressed “Wisconsin” characters, and “Finderz Keeperz,” the best conference band, provided the music. Look inside for more pix!

Outstanding Students!

WRA student scholarships for the Rehabilitation Conference were awarded to Heather Taylor (left) and Jennifer Dalson (right) from UW-Madison.

Jennifer Dalson has a lot of experience with disability that led her to pursue a degree in rehabilitation in the hopes of one day being able to positively change the lives of others. She was excited to attend the conference so she could learn about a variety of techniques and information that could be incorporated into her daily practice. She feels the benefits of being a member of NRA/WRA is being connected to a network of professionals all working toward the ultimate goal of helping people with disabilities while having access to best practices.

Join NRA on Facebook today!
A great Thursday night at the RFW/WRA conference! Recognize anyone?

Outstanding Students Cont.

Heather Taylor is entering the field of rehabilitation because she finds the opportunity to work with people with a variety of disabilities very fulfilling. She hopes to use the information she receives at the conference to better serve the consumers she works with. She sees the primary benefits of being an NRA/WRA member as the opportunity to learn about innovative ideas and networking.

Each of these students is distinguished scholastically, and has a history of service to persons with disabilities. Congratulations students! Our future is in your hands.

A special thanks to Dr. Susie Eberhard, Jenny Neugart, the scholarship committee, and the other outstanding applicants for these scholarship awards.

Attention!

A WRA Sponsored Event Nov. 12

WRA is pleased to announce that we are a participating conference sponsor for “Elements of Success: Finding Common Ground for Integrated Employment Outcomes,” hosted by WI APSE and RFW November 12, 2009 at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake.

The day includes nationally recognized speakers, Dave Hammis and Laura Owens. Attendees can also expect to learn more about managed care and employment as well as practical tools for employment success.

WRA's sponsorship will go toward a scholarship fund for people with disabilities to have a table at the conference for their micro-enterprise. WRA members will also get a reduced registration rate so please SAVE THE DATE! More details coming soon...

COMING SOON! WRA Member Spotlight!

To honor professionals in the rehabilitation field WRA is making a new addition to our newsletter by adding a Member Spotlight page. The spotlight will help us get to know other WRA members and to learn who’s who in rehabilitation right here in Wisconsin. This is an excellent opportunity to let others know about the work you are doing and to build networks with each other. We will be contacting WRA members to gather some information soon!
The Legislative Digest

The Legislative Digest is provided as a service to WRA Members by the Legislative Affairs Committee. Email any comments to: Legislative Affairs Co-Chairs: Allison Lourash (alourash@gmail.com) and Tim Carey (tcarey@DisabilityVoice.us) www.wra-org.org

Medicaid Marriage Penalty
This bill would require DHS to request a waiver from the federal government to disregard the assets and income of an eligible individual’s spouse. Reintroduced in the Wisconsin State Assembly by author, Representative Roger Roth, LRB-1081/1 will also need support from Federal legislators. WRA has supported a previous bill against the Medicaid Marriage Penalty.

When someone receives Medicaid, their assets must be below $2,000. Someone that is married must keep their joint assets below $3,000. When someone with a disability has high medical bills and is unable to access private health insurance, Medicaid is their only way to get the medical care they need. Having a future spouse lose their assets can actually remove other support mechanisms, which leads to dependency on other government programs in addition to Medicaid. Therefore, this is a “marriage penalty” built into Medicaid that in some instances can actually cost the government more than it would cost to remove this penalty. Removing this Medicaid marriage penalty would not cause additional people to be on Medicaid because people on Medicaid are just not willing to risk losing their Medicaid benefits to get married. More information is available at www.DisabilityVoice.us under Advocacy.

National Council on Disability Makes Recommendations to Create More Federal Job Opportunities for People with Disabilities
The National Council on Disability (NCD) has issued a paper examining the status of employment of people with disabilities in the Federal Government and makes recommendations for improving federal hiring and advancement of employees with disabilities. The paper summarizes the legal authorities and policy guidance, the responsibilities of various federal agencies charged with ensuring equal opportunity in federal employment, barriers to hiring and advancement, provisions for reasonable accommodations, and agency initiatives. The paper, Federal Employment of People with Disabilities, can be found at (http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2009/pdf/Federal_Employment_of_People_with_Disabilities.pdf)

Inclusive Home Design Act
New legislation, The Inclusive Home Design Act was introduced on March 10 by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky. According to Access Living of Chicago: “The Inclusive Home Design Act aims to increase the number of homes accessible to people with disabilities by applying visitability standards. The principle of visitability seeks to create homes that are affordable and sustainable, and utilize a design approach that integrates accessibility features into newly-built homes.”

Kathy Hoff Recognized
Kathy has been the WRA secretary for many years, traveling through snowstorms from LaCrosse, and patiently taking notes for all those board meetings. She decided to hang it up this year so we gave her a plaque, but it doesn’t even begin to express our appreciation for her service.

Thank you Kathy!
Calendar of Events

2009 National APSE Conference - Employment for All
June 30-July 2, 2009
Hyatt Regency in Downtown Milwaukee, WI.
Go to: www.apse.org

2009 National Rehabilitation Association Annual Training Conference
September 10-13, 2009
The Marriott Louisville Downtown, Louisville, Kentucky.
Go to: www.nationalrehab.org

2009 IARP (International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals) Forensic Conference.
October 29-31, 2009
Memphis, Tenn., DoubleTree Hotel. More Information available at

November 12, 2009

2010 RFW/WRA Rehabilitation and Transition Conference
March 24-26, 2010
The American Club, Kohler, WI. Reserve your room today at 1-800-344-2838. Visit www.RFW.org

Did we forget anything?? If so, contact the WRA newsletter editor, Jim Hill @ 608 835 0998, or at vecs@charter.net.