

## THE INDEPENDENCE

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

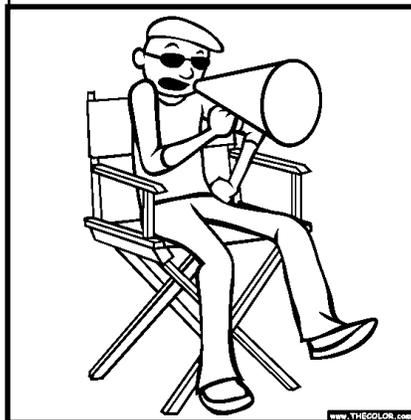
<i>AL-APSE Conference 2016</i>	1
<i>Project GATE</i>	1-2
<i>UA ID Registry</i>	2
<i>ODEP</i>	3-4
<i>2015 Awards</i>	3
<i>Conference Registration</i>	3
<i>Tazikis</i>	4

### Save The Date!!!

**The 2016  
Conference Date  
has been Set!!!!**

JULY 20—22, 2016  
MOBILE, ALABAMA  
RIVERVIEW PLAZA  
HOTEL  
UPDATES POSTED @  
WWW.AL-APSE.ORG  
OTHER SPONSORS  
PENDING

Alabama APSE will host their 2016 conference in Mobile at the Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel on July 20–22. Co-sponsors are currently pending. The event will begin at 1:00 p.m. on the 20th and conclude at 12 noon on the 22nd. Registration and other conference information is available at [www.al-apse.org](http://www.al-apse.org). This year's theme is still pending and should



be announced in the near future.

One featured highlight this year will be your opportunity to showcase an outstanding outcome for an individual or family as a result of the support of a professional, school system, agency, etc.

The Alabama APSE Chapter invites you to put on your *Director's Cap*, grab your video camera and spotlight an individual and/or family whose life has been impacted positively as a result of your efforts. This could include someone going to work, someone completing an education program, someone moving from a group home into their own house or apartment, etc. The video should not exceed 5 minutes in length. Videos

should be submitted on a flash drive and mailed to Byron White at 8228 Royal Oak Court, Montgomery, Alabama, 36117 or Byron White, ADMH, 100 North Union Street, Suite 486, Montgomery, Alabama, 36130. (No You-Tubes please).

Please obtain an appropriate signed release and include with your video as the video will become the property of AL-APSE and featured during the 2016 conference. Selected videos will be shown at the conference. The conference attendees will have an opportunity to vote on the "best" video/story. The winner will be announced at the AL-APSE awards banquet and receive a cash award.

The deadline to submit your video is June 1, 2016. Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your good work and the success of an individual and/or their family member that you've served.

**Project GATE in Alabama: Creative Sequencing of Funding** was recently featured in the Institute for Community Inclusion UMASS Boston publication as a promising best practice. GATE (Gaining Access to Employment) is a collaborative effort between the state's Department of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities (MH/DD) and the Department of Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation VR). Through this project, the two agencies work together to help local service providers use funds to support integrated employment opportunities. MH/DD and VR have a long history of partnering, including joint efforts on a supported employment workgroup, due to the strong relationships between colleagues at each department.

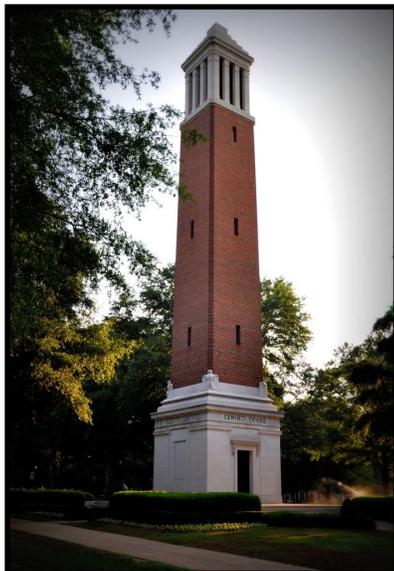
Through braided funding, both Waiver and Milestones, individuals participate in paid work experience opportunities within a selected business. The participants receive a combination of services that include assessment, pre-vocational services, job coaching with an expected outcome of employment.

GATE was initially piloted by the Arc of Jackson County in Scottsboro. (continued page 2)

The Arc developed a strong partnership with Sanoh America, an industry-leading supplier in North America specializing in tubular products for automotive applications. The program is funded for up to 480 working hours per individual. However, employment development begins as soon as the individual is “ready” for a job. The first GATE program proved to be very successful as all five participants were offered employment, either in the host business or other businesses in the community.

GATE has expanded in Alabama within other community agencies. Programs were established at UCP of Greater Birmingham within CVS Distribution Center, Volunteers of America Southeast within Crown Products, and Arc of Mobile within Point Clear Holdings (Riverview Plaza Hotel and The Battle House Hotel).

This initiative has shown that good agency collaboration and partnerships can be very useful in helping individuals move from sheltered workshops and other day services into competitive employment in the community. To read the ICI article visit: [http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article\\_id=395](http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=395)



### The University of Alabama's Intellectual Disabilities

#### Participant Registry seeks participants

Research is the foundation upon which our knowledge is built. The University of Alabama's Intellectual Disabilities Participant Registry seeks to connect families in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida with researchers conducting studies on intellectual disability (ID). Joining the Registry allows families to become active participants and supporters of ID research. In order to join the Registry, three eligibility criteria need to be met: 1.) have a family member or are an individual with an ID 2.) Be willing to be contacted up to three times per year to participate in a research study 3.) Be willing to be contacted twice per year to update contact information.

Your family contact information and basic descriptive information will be added to the Registry by the Registry Coordinator. When a researcher needs participants, the Coordinator contacts possible participants and invites them to take part in the study; when a participant is contacted in regards to a study it is always their choice whether to become involved in the study or not. The studies that use the Registry are behavioral studies, and must be not-for-profit and minimal risk. Participation in the Registry is completely voluntary and can be ended at any time. If interested, please

call the Registry at (205) 348-4253 or email at [idl原因.ua.edu](mailto:idl原因.ua.edu). We can also be found on Facebook and Twitter (@UAIDPR).

### ODEP's Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program

ODEP recognized that many states desire to align their efforts to support individuals with disabilities toward an *Employment First* approach, but may not possess the capacity, experience or technical resources necessary to lead and facilitate such change. To address this need, ODEP initiated the *Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program* (EFSLMP) in FY2012. This is a unique Federal investment to bring about systems change that is cross-disability in scope, cross-systems in focus, and heavily entrenched in systems reform at the state level.

Alabama has benefited greatly from participation in this initiative. Participation has strengthened collaboration among multiple agencies. These include Department of Mental Health ID/DD and MI/SA, Department of Rehabilitation Services (VR), Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Department of Commerce, Post Secondary Education, Special Education, Career Tech, and Senior Services. Due to the successful partnership and shared vision for an “employment first” philosophy in Alabama, a second year of funding was received. Several objectives were established that support Alabama's provider agencies in transforming their services from traditional facility based to community based, with an emphasis on employment.

Two agencies piloted “provider transformation” in 2015. Both the Arc of Madison County and the Arc of Jackson County completed a comprehensive agency assessment that was utilized to develop a plan for transformation. In FY 2016, four pilot agencies were added to the initiative. These include the Arc of Mobile, the Arc of Clarke County, the Arc of Jefferson County and the Arc of Tuscaloosa County.

In addition to supporting these six agencies with the transformation process, additional technical assistance will be provided that will support this effort. “Subject Matter Experts” will work closely with each pilot to provide support and information related to Employment Networks and Ticket to Work. This could potentially become a source of revenue for provider agencies as more individuals on benefits move into employment. (Continued page 3)

(ODEP continued) Nationally, Alabama ranks at or near the bottom when looking at employment numbers. This low performance is based on Alabama's long history of supporting more facility based services with little or no emphasis on employment. Further, data collection has been inconsistent and sometimes absent. Therefore, ODEP will provide support in assessing the state's current method of measuring employment numbers, including wages and hours worked.

Finally, the Employment First website will continue to receive enhancements and updates that support the move towards more community based services and specifically employment. With ODEP support and ACDD funding, the state released the first ever Alabama Employment First video. Please visit the website to view the video and other employment first updates. <http://www.employmentfirst-bama.org/>



Alabama APSE hosted "A Night on the Red Carpet, AL-APSE Style" to honor and recognize the winners of the 2015 awards. Winners were as follows:

**Personal Achievement**

Winners: Quinten Baugh & Amber Black

**Small Employer**

Old Navy Spanish Fort

**Large Employer**

Oral Arts Dental Laboratories Huntsville

**Professional**

Anthony Lewis

**Innovation/Best Practices**

Arc of Jackson County

**Brenda McComb Leadership Award**

Sara Haynes

**Jim Green Agency of the Year**

Arc of Walker County

**Congratulations Winners!!!**

The Nomination Form for the 2016 AL-APSE awards will be posted at [www.al-apse.org](http://www.al-apse.org). The banquet will be held on Thursday evening, July 21st.

**AL-APSE 2016**

Registration is now open for the conference that will be held in July in Mobile. Registration rates remain unchanged from the 2015 conference. Also, hotel rates at the Riverview Plaza remain the same as 2015. Early registration for members is \$210.00 and for non-members \$240.00. Early registration ends on June 30. Members need to include their membership number on the registration form. If you are unsure about your membership status, contact National APSE at [membership@apse.org](mailto:membership@apse.org)

Please note that payment is due 15 days after registering except for purchase orders. Alabama APSE gladly accepts checks and credit card payments (Visa and Master Card through PayPal).

To Register Electronically:

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=e q8in9eab&oeidk=a07ec39g29x4924c0ab>



The Riverview Plaza Hotel will again be the site of the 2016 AL-APSE conference. Click link below to reserve your room early:

[http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkIdData=Alabama%20APSE%5Emobrv%60apsapsa%60119%60USD%60false%604%607/15/16%607/25/16%6006/18/16&app=resvlink&stop\\_mobi=yes](http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkIdData=Alabama%20APSE%5Emobrv%60apsapsa%60119%60USD%60false%604%607/15/16%607/25/16%6006/18/16&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes)

## Alabama Employer, Keith Richards, Founder of Taziki's, Recognized by the National Association of People Supporting Employment First

### **Restaurant News Release** Restaurant News and Press Release Distribution



#### **Taziki's Noted for Their Hiring of Special Needs Employees**

Birmingham, AL ([Restaurant News Release](#)) Keith Richards, Founder and Chief Development Officer of [Taziki's Mediterranean Café](#), was recently presented with a prestigious honor at the National Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), National Awards Luncheon held in Philadelphia in June.

The APSE's Large Employer Award is given out to employers of 250 or more employees, who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to hiring, and fully integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce.

APSE said that Taziki's was more than deserving of the organization's Large Employer Award.

"Mr. Richards has not only made a tremendous commitment, but also served as an advocate for the Employment First philosophy, encouraging other employers across the country to do as he has done, and give individuals with disabilities opportunities to pursue real jobs at competitive wages," said Peter Burnes, Membership & Chapter Relations Manager, APSE National.

APSE believes that employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.

"We hire special needs students in many of our restaurants and work with organizations such as The Arc of Shelby County, Down Syndrome of Alabama as well as support Special Olympics Chapters around the country," said Keith Richards, Founder and Chief Development Officer of Taziki's Mediterranean Café. "Parents of the special needs students that are employed by Taziki's can find personal time while their children work in the restaurants. It is joy to have them as our employees."

Richards and Taziki's were also recognized for their creation of the Herbs Offering Personal Enrichment (HOPE) program which grows fresh herbs used in Taziki's locations across the country, including basil, parsley, rosemary, cilantro and oregano.

"HOPE is a program for special needs children in Alabama," said Richards. "We buy from the HOPE garden as our vendor, the children are paid to come out and tend to the land."

Earlier this year, the [United States Healthful Food Council](#) (USHFC) announced that Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe' has become the first national franchise to achieve REAL Certification, the emerging national standard for foodservice nutrition and sustainability. With 46 locations across 13 states, Taziki's is also now the largest chain restaurant to complete the certification process.

#### **About Taziki's Mediterranean Café**

Taziki's Mediterranean Café is headquartered in Birmingham, AL and currently has 46 locations in 13 states. The recipes are all made fresh and inspired by Mediterranean cuisine. The menu features freshly grilled meats, original sauces and healthy side dishes. Taziki's is open for lunch and dinner, offers take-out as well as catering for events large and small. Visit [Tazikiscafe.com](http://Tazikiscafe.com) for more information. Follow events and promotions on Twitter- [@Tazikis](#) and on Facebook- [Taziki's Med Café](#).

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