

APSE 2017 Board of Directors

Candidates for At-Large Board Seats

Please select **four** of the following ten candidates:

1. Wesley E. Anderson



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated employment/supported employment: I began my work towards integrated employment in 2008. I worked to place at-risk youth upon completion of a 6 month in-residence program. After moving on, to work at a traditional special education school in 2010, I was able to see the first-hand the fear that my students felt when it was time to graduate. The prospect of entering the adult world, with all its uncertainties, was magnified as many thought they had been left to fend for themselves. I was able to see the pride that the parents felt when their children received their diplomas. However, I also saw the the fear that their young adult wouldn't receive the assistance and support that they would need. Eventually I would move on to become an Employment Specialist for the Arc of Camden County, where I am proud to say I became that support for many families. However, I was not satisfied because I knew that for every family I helped, there were many that I would never meet. So I pushed for change on a systemic level. I was appointed ambassador of the largest chamber of commerce in New Jersey, where I worked to educate employers on the business benefits of integrated employment. Eventually, I moved on to become The Director of Training and Consultation Services at The Arc of New Jersey, where I work statewide to train supported employment providers best practices and emerging trends. This field is my passion.

Biographical Sketch: Wesley Anderson is the Director of Training and Consultation Services at The Arc of New Jersey, where he provides technical assistance and training to supported employment agencies and families throughout the state. A certified practitioner of The Teaching Family Model as well as a Traumatic Brain Injury Specialist, Wesley has been providing supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 7 years. He started his career in Special Education and continued on to supported employment at The Arc of Camden County, as an Employment Specialist and Job Developer. An effective networker, he was appointed by the Chamber of Commerce Southern New Jersey to represent them as a member of their Ambassador Committee. In his current role, Wesley is also a member of NJ APSE Board of Directors, and sits on its Steering, Conference and Professional Development Committees.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? The search for connectivity is at the heart of what I do. As a trainer, what you think is far less important than what the learner takes away. The mission then, is to find the connection, the common thread, between the material you have to cover and the learner's life experience. I believe that that focus, on the connective tissue that unifies us, will be my biggest contribution. Every agency, employer, town, city, and state has their own way of conducting business. It will be my mission to focus on what makes them similar, what connects them through shared purpose and mission.

2. Julie Christensen



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated employment/supported employment: Over a decade ago, while working as a consultant on collaborative initiatives between the government and not-for-profit sectors to improve post-school outcomes for academically and behaviorally at risk students, I was recruited to the university because of my proven reputation for successfully bringing diverse stakeholders to the table to solve community problems. I was hired to design and implement a Project SEARCH demonstration project, which included conducting a robust evaluation, engaging stakeholders in continuous quality improvement, and leveraging lessons learned to inform systems/policy. This regional pilot project ultimately grew to a statewide effort, encompassing 17 sites across the state with a combined success rate of 87% in terms of successfully transitioning youth with significant disabilities from school into competitive, integrated employment (working a minimum of 20 hours per week at minimum wage or better). My primary interest in Project SEARCH, however, was the required systems collaboration across special education, vocational rehabilitation, community rehabilitation providers, the state Medicaid agency, the business sector, and other stakeholders; and how this collaborative approach led to improved outcomes. Two published impact and outcomes studies resulted from this work, including the only longitudinal outcomes study associated with the Project SEARCH model, and an evaluation of the impact and appropriateness of the model in transitioning people with disabilities from sheltered work to community-based employment. An additional interest was in exploring how the successful creation of collaborative stakeholder groups at the local/regional level could, ultimately, inform statewide systems change efforts in support of Employment First Outcomes. To that end, I was the lead writer on NY's application to become a Partnerships in Employment (PIE) state, and was the Principal Investigator/Project Director of that effort from 2011-2016.

The NY PIE work plan leveraged the regional infrastructure created through Project SEARCH statewide efforts to tackle broader systems-level improvements.

Biographical Sketch: Julie J. Christensen, LMSW, PhD, is the Associate Director Iowa's University Center for Excellence in Disabilities (UCED), the Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD), at the University of Iowa (UI). She holds a primary research faculty appointment in the UI Carver College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, and adjunct appointments in the Department of Pediatrics and the School of Social Work. Dr. Christensen's background encompasses work in schools, not-for-profits, government and higher education. For the past 15 years, her career has centered around improving quality of life outcomes for at-risk youth, including youth with intellectual and development disabilities, through promoting employment and access to leisure and recreation opportunities in inclusive settings. She has considerable experience developing, administering, and evaluating federal, state and local grant-funded projects with an emphasis on cross-systems collaboration and systems change.

Prior to working at CDD, Julie was the Director of Employment Programs at Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities at the University of Rochester (a New York UCED), where she served as the Principal Investigator and Project Director for New York's Partnerships in Employment Systems Change project (funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities), Co-Director of the New York Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP, funded by the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy), and also served as the New York State Coordinator for Project SEARCH.

Currently, Dr. Christensen participates on Iowa's Employment First and EFSLMP team, serves as the State Coordinator of Project SEARCH in Iowa, and is a member of the Iowa Chapter of APSE.

Dr. Christensen received her undergraduate degrees in advertising and music from Syracuse University, and a Masters in Social Work degree from Roberts Wesleyan College. She received her Ph.D. in Health Practice Research at the University of Rochester.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? My personal areas of expertise relate to policy and research & evaluation, and I believe I can put these skill sets to work in ways that would benefit APSE at the national and state levels. Over the past few years, I have participated in the policy committee, taking a more active role as I've become more familiar with the organization and its goals. This is an interest that I'd like to continue to pursue and expand, working with APSE to disseminate useful and timely information to inform the APSE network of shifts in policy that impact disability employment services and supports. While in NY, I worked with National APSE to look at the impact of CESP on provider satisfaction and

employment outcomes across the state. This is another area that I would be very interested in exploring, as increased evidence of the benefits of certification would increase the buy-in from providers to invest in the professional development of direct support professionals. Additionally, I'm interested in exploring ways to expand on the work that Wendy Parent-Johnson has spearheaded in South Dakota in terms of getting state vocational rehabilitation to recognize the value of CESP and offer higher billable rates for certified job coaches & developers. This type of fiscal arrangement elevates the field both in terms of promoting quality services and outcomes, as well as the value and respect for those individuals who choose direct service as a profession. Finally, I have many years of experience participating on boards, managing budgets, and engaging in strategic planning efforts. These are skills that I would also bring to the Board.

3. Courtney Horton



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated employment/supported employment: For over twenty years, I have been a human services professional primarily focused on Supported Employment. I began my career as an Employment Specialist, in California and continued this profession after moving to North Carolina, working for both state agencies and private entities. I am driven by the value that employment brings to the lives of the individuals we serve to open doors and create opportunities through advocacy. I am committed to a person centered approach and strongly believe in the

Employment First initiative, supporting individual success for every person. Currently, I direct a vocational program serving 23 counties across the state of North Carolina. Throughout the years, I have been fortunate enough to attend several APSE and NCAPE conferences, which have all proven to be beneficial in many ways. The networking has been priceless and the knowledge acquired is some of the best that can be obtained in the field. As a director, I am able to share the knowledge learned from these conferences and trainings with my team, insuring that the Employment First initiative is carried out effectively through service delivery. This career has rewarded me with the opportunity to assist hundreds of individuals with varying disabilities in obtaining employment; both directly and indirectly. It is a humbling and gratifying job and mission. For over three years, I have had the pleasure of serving on the NCASPE Board of Directors, which has included serving as the co-chair for the Public Policy committee and most recently the chair for the Conference Planning committee. This has enabled me to learn from some of the best human services representatives in the state, to educate others on what APSE is and carry out that mission, and to better provide my staff with the most up to date training and information available.

Biographical Sketch: Over twenty years ago, I started in the field as an Employment Specialist, and knew from day one that this would be my career. I was 18 and it was my first day of college, where I found a job on campus in the Disabled Students Program (as it was then called), which led me to the world of Supported Employment. I am fortunate enough to be one of those people that found what they are meant to do at a young age; I have never questioned my choice to stay in this field, as I am a better person for the work I have done, the many people I have worked with, and the outcomes that have resulted. I earned my Bachelor's degree in Human Services Management and my Masters in Public Administration. Throughout time, I have watched and taken part in moving facility based programs into community based integrated employment; which has been a necessary evolution in the field and a pleasure to watch come to fruition. Throughout the years, I have also worked in the areas of case management, Special Education, CAP services, direct care, and Adapted PE. I actively volunteer with Special Olympics, Camp Care in Nevada for 15 years, the Gathering Place, and the Transition Advisory Board for the New Hanover County Schools. Personally, I have one daughter that I raised as a single mom who is now in college, I am so proud! I live in North Carolina, in my first home that I have owned, and with my dogs. I enjoy traveling, networking, swimming in the ocean, horseback riding, reading, and Sunday dinners with friends.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? Involvement with and support of APSE has been a consistent part of my career over the last 20 years. I have been fortunate to have attended numerous conferences and enthusiastically believe in the mission of this organization. I am exceedingly grateful that after attending these wonderful events over my career, I now have the opportunity to serve as the conference chair for NCAPSE and as a member of the NCAPSE Board of Directors; this is a humbling realization and opportunity. I believe that if elected to the national board, I would be provided a unique opportunity to contribute in even more meaningful ways. Using my leadership experience and knowledge attained from involvement with APSE to educate more communities about the Employment first initiative, promote the APSE mission, and continue to create opportunities where there were none before. Additionally I would like to contribute through reducing or eliminating the misconception that APSE only represents individuals within the DD and ID communities. Ensuring that APSE is represented and understood is an important part of its overall success, thus providing education about APSE representation for those in the MH community and all persons with disabilities is essential. As an active member of the APSE Public Policy Committee, I have had the opportunity to learn and participate with various public policy initiatives and action alerts. I would like to further contribute at the national level by sharing the knowledge I've gained and continuing to support legislation at the local, state, and national level that encourages Supported Employment and Employment First. As a goal oriented individual, seeing things through to completion is exceptionally important to me. I enjoy thinking

outside of the box to develop or contribute unique, proactive solutions. I am committed and dedicated to moving the APSE mission forward in any way possible.

4. Karen Lee



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated

employment/supported employment: I have been involved in community employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since graduating from college in 1984. I have long believed that being employed is the fastest way for someone to belong and achieve social justice.

I have worked in all aspects of employment supports. I have assisted in creating federal, state and local policies. I have worked as a job coach, job developer, and agency leadership positions. I have presented using inspirational stories and taught competency based training on job coaching, discovery, job development and systematic instruction.

I have served as a keynote in conferences as well as breakout sessions. My credentials include a master's degree in public policy and special education my CESP, and as an ODEP Subject Matter Expert

Biographical Sketch: With a Master's Degree in Transition, Special Education and Public Policy, Karen Lee has dedicated her 30-year career to advocate for the active engagement of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life.

-As the executive director of SEEC for 27 years, Karen has ~~tirelessly~~~~staunchly~~ worked to break down barriers to community inclusion and promote Employment First practices for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Karen and her team successfully led SEEC through a conversion from a center-based model to delivering day time, community living, and employment supports solely in the community.

In May 2015, at the request of the Deputy Secretary of Maryland's Department of Health and Human Services, Karen started a 17-month Fellowship on Employment Policy with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) where she worked on the creation of policies and strategies to implement Employment First throughout the state.

In 2016, Karen received the APSE Public Policy Advocate of the Year Award and was recognized by Maryland's The Daily Record as a Most Admired CEO. Also in 2016, SEEC received the Moving Mountains Award from the National Alliance of Direct

Support Professionals for the agency's work on recruitment, training and retaining highly performing direct support staff.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? My knowledge of public policy and the public policy arena in Washington DC and proximity to Washington DC allows for me to support the staff of APSE in meetings and presentations on legislative issues. I also have extensive knowledge on WIOA, The Rehab Act, the DD Act and other pertinent public policy. I also am a geek and like to read regulations.

5. Eric Matthes



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated

employment/supported employment: Eric Matthes works for the Arc of King County in Washington as the Community Change Champions Program Coordinator. Along with being a Civil rights activist. The C3 program at the Arc is a resource for people with I/DD and the community at large the program is led by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who promote disability awareness and organizes Legislative advocacy. Real work = real pay

"Don't work on me, Work with me"

Biographical Sketch: Living an inclusive life at work in the community, at home and at play is important to me. It gives the full respect of my self and it helps me to earn respect from others. I want everyone to know that people with disabilities: that I'm not inspirational or special I am a person, also a man. I love the life I have in being myself in having fun in being in the community living on my own in an apartment. I love eating healthy and making smoothies and salads and so on. I have many interests like photography, listening to music and also like playing Play station 4, going out to movies both alone and with friends. I love walking in the community and on the beach. There are many other great things I love doing as well.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? Being on the National board contributing as much as I can as an advocate along with having disability brings an important perspective on a board like this. In the past year I have served on the National Board and ask key questions as

decisions impact my life directly. I also have a strong voice in carrying the APSE mission statement forward to people in our community.



6. Gregory T. Miller

History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated employment/supported employment: In the earlier years of my career my involvement in integrated employment was relatively minimal. Supported Employment in our organization was for the few “high functioning” individuals that could work, mostly part time. My perspective changed drastically when I had the opportunity to advance my career and assume additional responsibility over our Employment

program. I was immediately taken back by how our programs had been stagnant for many years and nothing new was occurring. It was about that time I had the opportunity to travel to Brazil and share about some of the “successes” we were achieving in our facility based production program. Over the course of the next year my perspective on facility based work was influenced in a drastic way. My good friend, Rich Luecking, played a large role in helping me to see the world much differently. It was after spending an additional week with Rich that I knew whole scale changes were necessary for the people we support at Penn-Mar. In a matter of months, we completely changed our direction and adopted an Employment First initiative. Our Board of Directors was wholly supportive as we shared out vision for a preferred future. We set upon the task of educating the people we support, their families and our staff. We stopped facility based work, began paying at least minimum wage for any community work activity and have assisted in the creation of over 100 customized jobs. We also take very seriously our responsibility to share our expertise with our peers and we consult regularly to share not just a new vision, but practical ways to make it work.

Biographical Sketch: Gregory Miller is the President and CEO of Penn-Mar Human Services as well as CEO of the Penn-Mar Foundation. In his role as CEO Greg is responsible for organizational leadership and oversight, strategic planning and implementation, systems advocacy, development activity, and board development. Penn-Mar Human Services is a multi state organization serving over 2,000 people with disabilities and human service needs through a staff of over 500 employees. Greg has been employed with Penn-Mar for 28 years.

Greg’s educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from Shippensburg University and a Master of Science in Special Education/Human Services Management from Western Maryland College (Now McDaniel). Greg has completed the

Strategic Perspectives in Not for Profit Management course at the Harvard Business School and the Performance Measurement for Effective Management of Nonprofit Organizations at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.

Greg serves on several community boards including PAR (Pa. Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability) and MD Works. Greg has spoken at numerous national and international conferences on multiple topics including leadership, organizational development, customized employment, transition planning, mentoring and building sustainable relationships.

Greg is an ordained minister and serves as the Pastor of Marriage and Worship at a local community church in Westminster, Maryland. He has been married to his wife Terri for 33 years and they have four children ranging from 29 to 14 as well as three grandchildren. Greg is an outdoorsman, enjoys, hunting and fishing, music and he is an avid reader.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? I am a critical thinker with an intuitive mind. I can absorb information relatively quickly with a predisposition towards action. I currently serve two provider associations and understand firsthand the importance of continuously improving to be relevant and effective. If I am fortunate enough to be chosen to represent APSE, I will first try to understand all that I can about the strengths and challenges of the organization. I will respect all the good work that has been accomplished to get APSE to its current condition and I will speak honestly and respectfully as I see potential improvement or growth opportunities. I believe that sometimes we are provided the opportunity to walk through an open door, but I also believe we are sometimes called to knock doors down. I am skilled at networking and political advocacy so if those strengths can be leveraged to assist APSE that will be a natural part of my leadership. I will advocate on behalf of any growth strategy that is set forth by the board and leadership. As a representative of both Maryland and Pennsylvania I believe there are ample opportunities to be shared within the provider community regarding the benefits of being associated with APSE. As a provider, I am fortunate to see the success stories that are being lived each day and I believe APSE has a leadership role to play in helping many who have yet to experience this transformation in their lives.

7. Wendy Quarles



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated

employment/supported employment:

Wendy has worked for Heritage Christian Services for eight years as the Director of the Center for Human Services Education. She is responsible for creating and providing education and training opportunities for organizations throughout New York State and beyond. She oversees curriculum development and revision, ensuring that training materials are relevant. Wendy has 30 years experience in staff development, training and education, including program development, staff management and the development of comprehensive continuing education programming curricula and resources in the area of disability services. Through her direct cultivation of professional relationships with personnel at the government level in New York State, Wendy has become a lead director of statewide employment contracts for ACCES-VR and OPWDD, with the goal of raising the standard of service delivery, and ultimately improving employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities.

Wendy's passion for supported employment is lived out through her vibrant and engaging training style. Her method of teaching people on topics such as integration and community engagement, help professionals better understand their role in supporting persons with disabilities to achieve employment success through a holistic approach. She asks provocative questions that lead a group to great conversations related to supported employment, as well as other topics she teaches. Wendy's teaching style is able to help professionals learn both on a philosophical and skill-based level. I continually hear from people attending Wendy's training that they come away from her training more interested in the topic, engaged, and wanting to learn more.

Wendy is a nationally recognized leader in the area of Supported Employment, and has served on various boards and planning committees for organizations such as the NYS Association for Persons Supporting Employment First, the Association for Community Rehabilitation Educators, New York State Rehabilitation Association and the Rochester Area Employment Network.

Biographical Sketch: Wendy lives in Rochester, NY and is the proud and very involved parent to three young adults--Tim, Josh, and Caroline, who just started college in Nashville in 2016. Wendy "walks the walk" in every aspect of her life. As the Chief Training Officer of NY State APSE for many years, she has been the driving force and organizer behind the NY State APSE Conference, and her kids have grown up volunteering for APSE.

Wendy continues to wear her "supported employment hat", creating connections in the communities she is involved in. Wendy has worked at the YMCA for 30 years, is active

in her church community, and has participated in various community based organizations such as the Genesee Community Charter School. Wendy understands, and lives the concepts important in the supported employment field: That every person has value, that society as a whole benefits from embracing diversity, and that everyone can and should give back to their community. Wendy lives what she teaches.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? I believe that my expertise in the area of staff development, training and technical assistance will contribute to National APSE as a support to creating learning events and training options that elevate the field. I have been in the field for over 30 years with the past 20 years spent working on statewide, regional and national training initiatives funded by RSA, NYS State VR, NYS DD and NYS Department of Education. I have done work nationally on creating competencies and curriculum materials designed to increase the skills, knowledge and abilities of employment professionals. With all of this being said, my contribution to the Board would be to support the growth and relevancy of the CESP credential (and exam) as well as represent the voice of the providers, funders and service users in their expectations of a competent workforce.

8. Duane Shumate



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated employment/supported employment: As a graduate student in 1991 at the University of Missouri, I had the opportunity to complete a practicum with a community organization which provided day and employment services. I had the great pleasure to meet and provide direct support for individuals in a facility-based program. As each person began to share their ambitions and dreams with me of community engagement, I had a new found understanding of the importance of community membership and the value work provided with shaping one's identity. My career path immediately transitioned to one focused on increasing community employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In my 26 years of state agency employment, I have had the opportunity to see lives shaped by inspiring hope and creating pride through employment for thousands of individuals and their families. I have supported individuals with exploring career pathways and coordinating supports to become employed. I have, also, facilitated the design of supported employment program design and developed public policy to affirm Employment First.

Biographical Sketch: I graduated from the University of Missouri with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Educational and Counseling Psychology with an emphasis of Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling. I worked with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation as a counselor for 8 years and a District Supervisor for 13 years. While with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, I had the opportunity to implement a federal systems change grant on peer-to-peer employment supports. In addition, I was the chair of two statewide advisory committees - Client Services Policy Team and the Community Rehabilitation Provider Team.

Since 2014, I am the Director of Youth Transition/Employment Services for the Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities. In this role, I have had the opportunity to design and shape public policy to affirm Olmstead, ADA and HCBS rights and opportunities with competitive integrated employment. I work closely with the State Employment Leadership Network, Missouri Interagency Transition Team and the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program.

I am a previous board member of Missouri APSE and currently the President-Elect. In addition, I have received Mission Champion awards from the State of Missouri and Administrator of the Year Award from Missouri Rehabilitation Association. I have served on numerous advisory committees for community programs and institution of higher education; served as a board member of an independent living center and presented at numerous conferences.

My lovely wife and I have two sons who amaze and astonish us daily with their accomplishments. I enjoy community volunteering and serving as a president of our local high school booster club. In the summer and fall, I can be found near a barbecue grill or smoker experimenting with the latest outdoor culinary creations.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? My time, my energy and my resolve. I believe that one of my personal strengths is my commitment to teamwork. I value listening, empowering others, supporting strategic plan design and then acting to accomplish. As an "organic" goal oriented professional, I believe in developing synergy and allowing natural growth through the building of consensus. I am looking forward to investing my time and energy to accomplish the goals established by APSE with not just advancing Employment First; but, also continuing to build the best national organization which represents individuals, families and professionals committed to making a positive difference.

9. Wally Tablit



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated

employment/supported employment: My connection to people with disabilities started as far back as to when I was in the 3rd grade. My dad was a chef, and we had this amazing garden that he adored. Then one day I came home from school to see it all cleared and the beginning of an extension to our home. Once it was completed, we had some people who moved into that part of our home. I didn't know the word disability at the time - these individuals just maybe talked differently than I did or maybe walked a bit differently than I did. We would watch TV together after school, and we'd have dinner together and play games together. What I eventually learned was that my family had opened an Adult Family Home.

I started my career in 1997 as job developer for a mental health agency in Seattle in their dual diagnoses employment program. Since then, I have been involved as a Project Manager in a self-determination project and person centered planning, and organizing Washington State's Annual Employment Conference for over 6 years. From there I became the Director of Community Employment Services for an agency that wanted to transform and close their sheltered workshops and move as many people into paid and inclusive jobs. I also helped WA State start our WA APSE chapter, and was a founding board member of our state chapter. I currently serve as our WA APSE Board President. I have attended over 11 National Conferences, and have presented at over 6 of them. I am also a national consultant and trainer on various topics to promote supported employment.

My current role is as Vice President of Employment Services for an agency called AtWork! serving 3 large counties in WA

Biographical Sketch: I believe my life is driven by wanting to experience things to the fullest. I don't postpone joy. I seek knowledge and challenges as often as I can. I lead by example and experience, as well as with humor and knowledge. I often wear my heart on my sleeve, and I do so with a song in my heart.

My passion and commitment for creating an equitable world for people of all abilities is also driven by that belief. People should be allowed to experience their life to the maximum capacity that it can be. Driven by their choice, their skills, their desires, and their basic needs.

We are all global citizens, and once we remember that how we learn in life is to be engaged by it, we will allow people the opportunities to do so.

Specialties:

Organizational Development, Leadership Branding, Staff Motivation and Retention, Person Centered Planning,, Customized Employment, Conference and Special Events Coordination, Goals and Strategic Planning, Creative Job Development, Systems Navigation, Mental Health supports, Business and Community Relationships, Agency Collaborations, Transformation resources and innovations

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? I think I would bring a sense of humor and a creative edge to the ways that APSE could continue to brand itself as the ONLY national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities. and as a LEADER on Employment First.

I also believe that any of us who have been involved in this work for an extended period of time have the privilege and responsibility to cultivate, nurture, mentor, and support any and all of our emerging leaders. There is amazing leadership and passion that our work can benefit from by including these younger leaders into the conversation and inviting them more often to the table.

APSE and Employment First is at a renaissance period right now - with more employers than ever hiring people with disabilities, large scale employers having disability hiring initiatives, agencies beginning their first steps in their transformation, and mental health agencies looking more strongly at employment as a sustainable recovery model, and with the new administration in place and all of the sweeping changes they have implemented. APSE needs to continue to be on the front lines of those conversations, and we need to and can gather much more strongly together.

And with any changes to any entity, a good question to ask is: are you wanting to bring someone on board to ENHANCE our current culture, or are we wanting someone on to help CHANGE it?

10.Melita Winnick



History/nature of involvement/interest in integrated employment/supported employment: As an accomplished business expert for over 23 years, my career began in human resources, supporting employment services for fortune 500 corporations. It was through my extensive background in people services that I gained a valuable understanding of diverse hiring needs. The most rewarding experiences in my career path were related to creating opportunities for all individuals to obtain meaningful competitive employment within the organizations I managed. By translating corporate business strategies into operational strategies for

leading companies, I created awareness for senior talent executives to support employment for individuals with disabilities. In my current role, as the Director of Employment Services, I partner with local agencies in an effort to create and expand opportunities for members to be vocationally successful. It is through shared community support and local business participation that has made our program so successful. Sharing these experiences in the APSE network has broadened my involvement and my desire to serve as a Board Member.

Biographical Sketch: I currently serve as the Director of Employment Services at The Centers for Habilitation in Tempe, Arizona. The employment department provides center based employment programs, group supported employment, Individual employment support, and community based career programs for over 100 members. My background includes more than 23 years experience in corporate positions; including, Regional Vice President for Vistacare hospice in Scottsdale, Regional Manager of American Express, and Human Resources Consultant for Banner hospitals. I have been a member of the SHRM organization and served on the Society of Human Resources Management team since 2001. As an active participant in community programs, I joined TCH in April of 2015 to continue my mission to serve employment first initiatives. I hold a Master's in Business Administration and a Bachelor's in Psychology degree. As a member of the Arizona Department of Education Employment First strategic initiative, APSE, and an active participant in the Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities my dedication is to the members I serve.

How will you be able to contribute to the growth and improvement of APSE as an organization? Through my passion for employment first initiatives, it will be my mission to significantly contribute to the overall success of increasing competitive employment for individuals with disabilities. I have a proven track record of positive results in achieving over 80% employment outcomes in the greater Phoenix area. My partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Disabilities, Arizona Association for Providers for People with Disabilities, AZ Assist, Southwest Autism and Research Center, United Cerebral Palsy, Project Search, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Arizona's Employment First Strategic Planning Committee, Employer Engagement Employment First Strategic Planning Sub-Committee, Tempe Mayor's Disability Awards, and local provider relationships is a reflection of my commitment. Being the catalyst to influence corporations, legislative policy, executive orders, and community support through employment first is a rewarding role. Being an at large board member with APSE will support my continued passion for employment first through serving people with disabilities.