

APSE Conversations with the National Board: Wally Talbit

December 12, 2020

<https://apse.org/apse-conversations-with-the-national-board-wally-talbit/>

Julie Christensen 0:10

Hi, this is Julie Christensen with APSE. We're excited to launch the APSE Employment First employment for all podcast as a new way to connect with you. This podcast is a way to provide updates, real time advocacy alerts, and information related to all things Employment First, be sure to subscribe so you don't miss an episode. And thanks for listening.

Erica Belois-Pacer 0:38

Welcome, this is Erica Belois-Pacer with national APSE, the professional development director there, and we have been doing a series welcoming the new board which actually started in June, the executive committee so they started back in June, but we've been quite busy. So now we're speaking with the executive committee. And today we have Wally on and he is the treasurer for the National APSE board us to do he was previously on the board for quite some time, I believe I'm going to ask him that in a second. And he also does a great job in the state that he lives in. So while Lee Do you mind introducing yourself a bit?

Wally Talbit 1:21

Yeah, absolutely. Hi, everybody. My name is Wally tablet. And I am, as Erica said, the current Treasurer of Pepsi. And I my job title. My day job is the Vice President of mission services with an organization called at work. And we are based in Washington State. So on the other coast or the wetter coast,

Erica Belois-Pacer 1:42

I should say, it's been kind enough that that valley, New York is pretty wet. I feel like it rains a lot.

Wally Talbit 1:50

And as soon as I say that the sun comes out outside my window, and it's beautiful. So

Erica Belois-Pacer 1:54

same here, how funny. So volley on I know you're really involved with your state chapter. So I was actually curious how long you've been doing stuff with the state chapter.

Wally Talbit 2:05

Yeah. So you know, just not to go too much into my past because you know, you can read my autobiography later. But I first got involved with APSE c attending to my first conference

sometime around 2003 or four. And that was hooked from the very beginning, I thought, What is this about? So I was just really involved, both of my job is as a, you know, conference organizer for our state and a project manager. But as we started going to more conferences, the conversation came up. as things change in our state of Washington, we realized we needed to have a chapter, you know, because Washington State had other organizations or associations that kind of, I don't want to say fill the void, but perform similar duties tap seat, but as around 2010, I think was when the original conversation started. And so the Washington State chapter came into fruition in 2011. And I was one of the original board members of that kind of, yeah, so one of the originating or pioneers of that original board. And I've stayed on ever since in different rows left for a period but then had different roles as Vice President and then past pres, I was president for about two years. And then joined the national board in 2017. got elected to that, which was a wonderful honor. But you realize I needed to step off of my own state board. There was just a lot going on, but I still support our board in terms of, you know, supporting them and questions they have organizing our state's conference that we partner with, with Oregon APSE. So just been really involved. Because APSE has always just been such a wonderful core and the values and the things that happen without seeing the Employment First movement has just been something I've been so passionate about. So proud to be an APSE supporter involves since since 2004.

Erica Belois-Pacer 3:58

So while just out of curiosity, and we won't go too back into your history, but I was just curious, when you were growing up, did you think that you would end up in this field? Or did you have other aspirations?

Wally Talbit 4:13

You know, yes, and no, it's interesting, because when I tell this story all the time, and is that I was probably in the third grade and, and my father, who was a chef, and he loved to cook, we had this beautiful garden in the back with all these vegetables, and it came home one day, and he had torn it all up, and he was racing it, you know, just completely flattened out. And I thought what's happening, you know, and then we bought another house in the back of our yard. And last summer, we had, you know, people who had moved into the back area, and I thought, well, what's this about? And what I had known until much later that my father had started an adult family home. And so I grew up around people with disabilities, but I never knew that word. There was just people who rented a room from the house, who maybe walk differently than I did. Maybe spoke differently than I did. Maybe could Speak, or didn't use words from language. And so it was just part of my upbringing. And so I kind of had those values that my dad kind of just always had. But I never thought that was something I do as a career, I always thought I'd go into either politics or to law, or even performance, you know, because I love musical theater and performing. Um, but but my, you know, I think it was just something that happened. Naturally, you know, you can't change your values, and your values will always come to the forefront when you see either the opportunity that you can make as a global citizen, and the impact, you can make a change. And I think that always was something that was in me. And so without it presented itself, I've just followed that path. And here I am.

Erica Belois-Pacer 5:46

Yeah, no, I did not know that you grew up with a house in your backyard. It is really interesting. I feel like I know quite a few folks that are now in training in the field of competitive integrated employment training that had a similar upbringing. So that is interesting. Goodness. So few other questions. While we while I have you here. I was just curious, you know, on, you have been on the board for a few years, are there any things that you're proud of that you've done so far on the board, and I'm curious what goals you have in the future,

Wally Talbit 6:26

not just in terms of not even Flipboard. But for apps in general, I'm really proud of introducing, you know, and I'm sure other chapters in other places have done karaoke, but just that kind of social concept, you know, we introduced karaoke, in our state, when Washington hosted the National Conference in 2011. And just really proud of how people responded to that, and just kind of the, I want to say, that's part of my legacy. But there's a wonderful connection when you bring people together in that way. And not to say, obviously, you know, obviously brings people together with with other kind of values and commitments, and, but that kind of social gathering, you get to see people make those connections, more so in that casual space. And that celebration, that space of celebration that you know, normally don't, when you're sitting in a session having conversation about the work. So there's kind of a natural, authentic kind of space in that which I love and celebrate. But the time at the board, I think, you know, it's always, always believe that when you introduce someone new to a conversation, you can invite nature, change the conversation. And I think, you know, I think I've I've helped to change some of the conversations to look at some of the things we need to be doing differently and or better. When we look at the way we approach the board in terms of elections or diversity, intentional conversations about how do we support members? How, what is our responsibility? And I always say, you know, this role that I have in the executive board, it's a privilege and a responsibility. I don't just take it and say, Yeah, that's great. I'm on the board. Fantastic. But then what is my responsibility to the members, to the people that we support and to the movement? And so I take that into consideration every time, you know, make a decision, or have a conversation. And just, it's a wonderful position to be in. And I hope I continue to add to the conversation in the next couple years.

Erica Belois-Pacer 8:23

Absolutely. There's, there's lots to do. So I think you would agree on that. And that's for sure. So, Wally, I usually ask people that are on on if they have any fun facts they would be willing to share with our listeners. So I'm wondering if there's any rocks? Yeah.

Wally Talbit 8:46

Let me see what I can do. That's like appropriate for all ages. No. That's, I mean, just a couple things, right. I think a lot of people know this about myself, but I like to perform I love to sing. I used to sing on a cruise ship. I love Batman, Batman and Wonder Woman are my spirit animals.

Erica Belois-Pacer 9:04

I forgot about that. Yes. Great. Yes.

Wally Talbit 9:07

I am an accessory. Freak a Holic I have over 42 pairs of shoes. Over 27 watches over like 70 ties. So ties watches shoes are you know my husband always says we should just turn the the extra bedroom into your closet. Um,

Erica Belois-Pacer 9:29

I tend to agree with

Wally Talbit 9:31

starting to go that way. You know, and especially during this time of quarantine, it's like, oh, look, let me just while I'm sitting in this zoom. How would I just shop online?

Erica Belois-Pacer 9:42

Oh dear. Now have you been accessorizing with masks? I know. I was trying to

Wally Talbit 9:49

you have the opportunity. There's a company and I try to you know, there's an opportunity where you can map match your mass to the tie you wear Wow, that is impressive. Okay, you know, and that's the thing to me. Of course, people are saying why you do this. But Another fun fact is that I still dress up every day. And after nice to keep a routine and people said seriously, I said, and they asked, Is it just from the top up? Like you got sweats on even with your tie and your shirt? said, No, I still put on my dress socks and my shoes. I still think about what shoes Am I going to wear today, that helps keep my routine and helps make me feel like I've still embracing the day. And I don't know if this is another fun fact, I wouldn't call it fun. But I'm very proud of it. I'm a three time cancer survivor. I currently still get treatment for cancer, because unfortunately, my last surgery they could not remove out of the tumor. And so when people ask me, you know, I like to think I am a jovial person and approachable. And I try to find the joy, or create the joy and things. And it's because you know, what's the alternative? I can either let this be something that's not to say I haven't had those moments. But as with anything that happens, I always say this is temporary, this is fixable. And what's the alternative? I need to find joy in the moment right now, however hard it isn't, sometimes it's hard. But I say well find your gratitude every day, even if it's a simple thing is like today, I got to eat fried chicken. Or today I saw my neighbor. Yeah, you know, or whatever. I mean, whatever the case might be. So I wouldn't say it's a fun fact, because I know a lot of people do that and have that mantra in their life. But I will say during this time, it's really given me the opportunity to really be grateful and to really say everything, like I said, the privilege and the responsibility that we have. And so I'm proud of the opportunity I've had in my organization to support my team, and support the people we serve in our state. I'm happy and proud and thankful to be in the role that I am with absi. And that I get to do this work. And I'm also really thankful for the fact that I get to do this work with some amazing people, not just on the app seaboard, but who I've met in conferences from across the nation. You know, and I see this, I don't want to over quote, High School Musical, that we're all in this together. And if you could see me I'd be doing the choreography right now. All of this together.

Erica Belois-Pacer 12:16

No, you're absolutely right, Molly. And I just want to thank you for sharing, I think, yeah, trying to find positive things, and every day events is definitely necessary. And yes, we are all in this together. So thank you. You're very welcome. And I hope you have a great rest of your day. And thank you for listening.

Wally Talbit 12:39

Thanks, everybody. Thanks, Erica.

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