

APSE Conversations: SETWorks

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<https://apse.org/apse-conversations-setworks/>

Julie Christensen 0:09

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 0:35

Good morning or afternoon depending on when you're listening to this session of an app see podcast. I just wanted to welcome our friends from set works today. They are joining us to talk about what they're doing across our country within different states. And you know why they wanted to partner with us on this conference and be a sponsor. We're really excited to have them as a sponsor for the upcoming national APSE virtual conference that kicks off next week, on June 14, and it will be happening all week until June 18. So if you're not registered, there's still time we would love to have you on. And we're gonna just talk a little bit with the folks from set works today. So in addition to myself, I'm Erica balice, Pacer and probably heard me before, I'm the professional development director at national APSE, but I also have Erynn joining me today from our national APSE staff. Erynn want to introduce yourself.

Erynn Pawlak 1:33

So our thing. I'm Erynn Pawlak, I'm the Director of Operations over at APSE and I'm here to learn a little bit more about set works. We've had a couple of

Erica Belois-Pacer 1:51

Awesome, thank you. So today we have Kirstie and Jocelyn joining us and I'm gonna kick it over to them to just introduce themselves kind of let us know their background, how they ended up in this field, and maybe a brief overview on what set works does so Kirstie and Jocelyn, I'm going to hand it to you.

Jocelyn at SETWorks 2:11

Great, thanks. Thanks for having us. My name is Jocelyn bright. I'm the client success manager here at set works. I've been at set works for about 15 months now. But my history with set works goes way back. Prior to set works, I worked for an IDD organization for nearly six and a half years in the state of Missouri. And we use set works for our documentation system during that whole time I was there. I loved it. I loved the technology. And so I moved into the tech world. And a couple years later, here we are.

Kirstie at SETWorks 2:49

Yeah, and funny story. Jocelyn is actually one of the reasons why I'm even with that works. I had done a little bit of discovery into the the software services world and I was transitioning out of a career and senior living development and wanted to do something that was in healthcare technology, but really had a good mission. And that was a smart technology that was providing solutions and really making waves. So I started researching companies and came across that work, reached out to Jocelyn and just asked what her experience was. And she told me all about that works and the services that I provides the clientele that it serves. And I was just really excited to learn more about it. So I'm brand new to the company. I'm just on my now officially past eight weeks, but very excited to be part of this organization and to be partnered with such high caliber organizations such as absi, and have the opportunity to support the conference this summer.

Erica Belois-Pacer 3:55

That's great. I'm just out of curiosity. So you just started eight weeks ago. So I'm guessing that you have a different perspective, which is awesome. I'm I'm are you growing? Is that are you adding folks to the team is that you know why there's new folks happening on?

Kirstie at SETWorks 4:12

Yes, definitely. And in fact, that's part of my role at the company is to help with that growth and scalability. That works is definitely in a growth phase. They have been consistently growing for the last couple of years. But now we're now at the point where we're adding additional team members to be able to enhance our existing offerings, and then also be able to support new agencies as they come on board as well.

Erica Belois-Pacer 4:38

Excellent. Um, so do you mind I know some of our listeners probably maybe use set works products or you know are familiar with you. I know that you have a representative from severs, that will be on one of our panel discussions during the conference, which is wonderful. Talking about data collection and how do you Use it to have more positive outcomes. I'm curious if one of you would mind giving us or both of you a little overview on you know, what is available through set works. And you know, maybe what states you're in or where you're looking to expand.

Jocelyn at SETWorks 5:15

Um, so set works is at its core, a software company, software as a service company, SAS company, and we target organizations that are providing Disability Services, specifically, serving those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. But now that we know the healthcare industry is doing more inclusive type services, we are going more beyond just IDD services into all Disability Services. We are currently in 25 states, we have a heavy focus in some of our core states that states that we've been in for years now such as North Carolina, Missouri, Washington, Pennsylvania. And then we also have some growing states, such as Oregon and California that we're in. And then piercey, would you mind talking about the states that that we want to be in?

Kirstie at SETWorks 6:17

Yeah, well, we are, as I mentioned earlier, are definitely in a growth phase and are looking at adding in additional states. And that comes with a lot of research, because that works doesn't isn't just a software solution, we really seek to partner with organizations that are informed and educated. So it's a lot of research done. On the front end, before we enter into a new state. We'd like to get familiar with the legislation, the compliance and really intimately familiar with what the agencies need. And before we start adding in new new foot, excuse me footprints into new states. So we are again, as Jocelyn mentioned in over 25 states, we're looking at Colorado right now, building out our California footprint, Texas is on the horizon, Georgia, Florida, I mean, anywhere where there's Disability Service Management organizations, we want to be able to serve and represent that. I think, in addition to what Jocelyn was saying is that we're more than just a software organization, though we really partner with those organizations to help them maintain compliance, become data driven and solve problems through best practice solutions, through our cloud based technology, leveraging all of the information that we're collecting from across the entire United States, compiling that and then being able to offer a very comprehensive service to organizations for their existing needs, and also help them prepare for what things might be coming up on the horizon.

Erica Belois-Pacer 7:57

Excellent. And I know Colorado is doing a lot with employment first. I know that we were gonna be there last year for our national conference. So we worked fairly closely with the Office of Employment First there that they established. And, you know, that's that's great that you're working there as well. I'm Are you in any other countries? Or is it basically are primarily in the united states currently?

Kirstie at SETWorks 8:22

I wouldn't rule out a global presence with that works. But right now we're, we're focused on our national presence here in the States.

Erynn Pawlak 8:35

I have a question over here Erynn Pawlak just popping in. I'm very curious, I know that you guys have been partnered with APSE in the past, I think our relationship, probably six or seven years now at this point, I want to know, kind of what you're doing to support the Employment First, next in the upcoming years and through, you know, what we know about COVID. And, and working from home and just how things are changing?

Jocelyn at SETWorks 9:00

Yeah, I can take that one. So actually set work started out with an we started out pretty much as a project with one of our organizations that that was one of the providers we work with. And they provide supportive employment services. And so we, we built this product around their needs as a supported employment organization. So years ago, I mean, that's pretty much how set work started. And that's primarily who we're currently serving, or those organizations that are providing community based employment services. So we, the software itself, is extremely person centered. So we have an individual profile, that you can collect all the information that

you need in regards to the individual, including the placement that they have or the the employment that they're currently working for, or the employer. They're currently working for the employment position that they maintain, and then Actually, I would like to say, one of the one of the things we're really trying to strive for and in the future, it's one of our top initiatives right now is actually a work incentives planning, we are working towards educating ourselves towards work incentives planning I have just completed, or I'm working to complete the course with Cornell University, to become a work incentives practitioner. And really, we'd like to encourage and empower organizations to think beyond just getting an individual a job, a placement in the community, we want them to think about the holistic view of the individual, and how that job is going to impact the benefits that they're on. And we want to make sure that our organizations understand that the individual maybe somewhat in somewhat scared to go back to work because they feel the need to have some of that financial stability. So we're, we're really striving to build into the product, some of the work incentive planning aspects, the data collection, so that our organizations can feel that they have the big picture view of the individual and take some of that work incentive, they'll take some of that benefits planning information into consideration outside of just going about their typical, typical service delivery.

Erica Belois-Pacer 11:32

Oh, that's great. Um, I actually live in New York JOcelyn. So I, I know a lot of people who have gone through that program slash course, and I may know some of the instructors, so they do a really nice job. And I know VCU also does a similar thing, I think each program is excellent, probably a little different nuance wise, but

Jocelyn at SETWorks 11:55

I am working, we're working on a project with the with an organization in the state of Washington, and they have a huge push as well, right now to get everybody on board with the get everybody educated, and, you know, work incentive planning. And I was grateful to have the opportunity to hop on board with that team. And they're sending me through the training as well, so that we can work really good as partners together and, and help fulfill that that mission and that vision that they have,

Erica Belois-Pacer 12:24

fully I would agree. I used to do trading for school staff and transition folks. And benefits, of course, always comes up. So I always say, you know, that education and the information needs to be provided to families, and the person who chooses support, you know, right from the very beginning. So they know what options there are. Because for too many times we hear the statement, you know, I can't work because I'm going to lose my benefits. So I think that's amazing that you guys are partnering and moving towards having, you know, more understanding and opportunities for folks. That's great. Yeah.

Erynn Pawlak 13:01

It sounds very, very holistic, and like big, big, big picture, thinking.

Jocelyn at SETWorks 13:16

But to dive right in and try to figure out the system ourselves. And I can say that being the person who has attended the training, what a complex system. So if we can help our organizations, even a tiny bit more with the data collection, so that they can have that full image of how that job impacts the individual's life. Yeah, we're really excited to move in this direction.

Erica Belois-Pacer 13:41

It is a very time consuming process. jesselyn and very complicated. So I, I respect that you're doing that. It's you. It's a lot. Absolutely. Again, thank you for being one of our sponsors during the conference. And I was just curious, you know, why you wanted to sponsor and you know, why you're hoping to do stuff moving forward with us to, you know, by you're moving in that direction?

Kirstie at SETWorks 14:08

Yeah, I can take the lead on this one. Jacqueline. I mentioned earlier that I'm new to the organization here at thoughtworks. But one of the first names that I heard coming out of the gates was apathy. And as I've done a little bit of research and gotten to understand APSE, and what it does it, it's all making sense, but set works was founded as a company that served supported employment agencies. And since then, we've expanded into all sorts of services and beyond not just employment, but quickly our founding got connected to absi and has been involved and supported absi ever since both at a national level, but also with more of the state chapters, some of our current state chapters, but not all of them aren't like North Carolina, Missouri, Connecticut, and the Pacific Northwest. So, we really want to leverage our skills to network and empower, IDD and disability service organizations in whatever way that we can. We have a laser focus on IDD and Disability Services. And we want to continue to have our focus on that. And those that serve employment organizations, our software is uniquely positioned to be able to help those service providers. But more than that, it's really to network and empower those agencies. And at a conference like APSE see that the doors wide open to be able to do that we believe very much in the power of education, and being able to empower one another. I don't think any one of us has all of the answers. But when you bring people together, that's where the real magic happens. So we're super proud to be able to support and sponsor absi, and then be present there, not only as a resource for people, but also to be educated ourselves. And to stay informed.

Erica Belois-Pacer 15:58

I was just gonna say, I'm hoping that some folks from set works will be participating in the conference as well, I know that one of your co workers is going to be on a panel discussion with I believe, ici, and also think therapy is on there and a variety of other entities. So I'm excited for that very much. Yeah,

Jocelyn at SETWorks 16:22

we are as well. We have Preston, Preston Finkel who is on that, on that panel discussion with some other tech companies that are serving the same industry. And I think one thing, one reason we really want to support APSE II and national absi for your conference this year,

specifically, we've reevaluated our mission and our values recently as of like, the last 12 months, and we want to become more than just a software company. We have people on staff that have in that that no individuals, I came straight from the industry myself. So we know individuals that that need to see positive people in their lives. And we really just want to be more than a software company that collects your data and then pops it out on the other end, we want to provide the service, it's going to allow you to network that's going to allow you to talk to other organizations about your struggles about what's coming in the industry. We've recently held some roundtable events for some of our state's just to talk about what are you expecting to hit hit your hit the industry in your state? And is your organization prepared for that. And if it's not prepared, can we help provide the technology to help the organization become prepared to not only maintain compliance, but to really serve the individuals that that you're providing services to? So we want to be more than just the technology. We really want to empower those organizations to become better.

Erynn Pawlak 17:59

Sounds very similar to what we do with our our chapter leader meetings, just trying to get a better pulse on what's going on out there all around the United States. How much you said you re evaluated your goals and missions over the last 12 months. I mean, how much did the whole COVID experience have to do with that when you were kind of redefining the way you think and and what you guys want?

Jocelyn at SETWorks 18:23

Well, I think first, the change of environment really, really hit us differently as well. Like we are an organization that has a cloud based software so we can really do our work from anywhere. So we we went home, we've been home now for I don't know, 15 months, I worked in the office for nine days. And then I've been at home now for 15 months. So that was the first thing was how are we going to serve are continue to serve. The organizations continue to serve our clients, while not being in this insane proximity of each other. So if that's the first thing that we need to reevaluate is our environment, what else can we evaluate? And that's kind of went into the way we're structured and where our goals are? Where are we? Where are we heading? What's our endgame? When do we want to get there? What do we really value? And then what are we trying to achieve? What's our mission?

Erynn Pawlak 19:17

Definitely, I think, I mean, I think a lot of those things are exactly what most organizations and you know, companies have done. And it's interesting from being in like at the APSE II perspective. It's a whole new world of possibilities for individuals with disabilities, just different kinds of work environments. I think a lot of folks were told that, no, like, we can't accommodate this, you have to, you know, come to the office and that working from home wasn't an option. But I think it's very clear now that things are changing and that and that's, I think, for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Jocelyn at SETWorks 19:53

Yeah, we're really trying to work with organizations currently on utilizing some of those remote services that states have been authorizing lately, and then how they can, how they can use those or continue to provide service delivery or even better quality service delivery now that you are able to receive additional funding by by answering the phone a little bit more frequently, or providing technology based services, through a FaceTime or a zoom call with some of those individuals while they're on the job site, and how that would improve the individual's life, just having a little bit more support whenever they need it. And outside of their typical service delivery, schedule, time,

Erynn Pawlak 20:39

APSE, he is actually hosting two interns this year, one from the California and another one from our local DC area. But it's interesting, they're both individuals with disabilities, and we're doing the FaceTime and the zoom meetings and remote work and they're, you know, they're younger, they're high schoolers college age, and it's it's cool that they get to have their first work experience, be in like a remote environment. So it's kind of like going to be the new normal, I think for many,

Erica Belois-Pacer 21:08

I would agree, I'm hoping that we can take, you know, the good parts, and good things that we learned and move forward and, you know, make some positive changes after the past 15 months that we've experienced, definitely the sweat pants and the yoga pants. I would agree. Yeah. So, um, I think I did want to let everybody know that, again, set works will be with us throughout the conference next week. And I'm sure that we'll be doing some things we'll be working with them in addition, but um, before we sign off for today, josselin in keirse. And, Erin, do you have any parting words for our listeners today?

Jocelyn at SETWorks 21:53

I'd say attend the conference and enjoy. I mean, we are in an ever changing environment right now. And we have been we will be. And I'm sure that there's going to be great discussion, great inspiration to take away to, to head back home and implement that. And don't be afraid to try something new.

Erynn Pawlak 22:14

Definitely sounds like set works is getting ahead of the curve, and very doing very, very exciting stuff. So I'm excited to do the conference as well and see all the new things happening.

Erica Belois-Pacer 22:28

Yeah, well, thank you for joining us. And I look forward to seeing you in chat. Next week, since it won't be at person and hopefully, you know, in 2022, we will all be back in person to some degree so that we can you know, have more time to network and talk and do all the fun things that you can actually do in person. So thank you again for joining us. And thank you again for the sponsorship. We really appreciate it and hope to see folks next week

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