

APSE Conversations: SetWorks leaders Kirstie and Preston

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Julie Christensen

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

Welcome, this is Erica Belois-Pacer with National APSE. And I am here again today, we have had the honor and just really enjoying my time speaking with different sponsors for upcoming conference. That is very soon we're going to be in Denver, Colorado on June 13 14th, and 15th. So a week away, very exciting. But today, I wanted to highlight one of our sponsors, SetWorks. And I have Kirstie and Preston with us here today. And I was hoping that you could introduce yourself and just give us a little background on where you come from.

Kirstie MacArthur

Absolutely. Thank you, Erica, for the introduction and for the opportunity to be here today with you for this recording. Preston and I are from set works. And I'll tell you a little bit about set works here in a second. I have been with that works a little bit over a year and had been in an adjacent industry to Disability Services and was looking for a company that had equal parts head and heart, an organization that was really motivated to make a difference and to be involved in advocacy and also smart technology and was so pleased when I found that works. And it's an organization made of really great people that are also extremely passionate and motivated about disability services. So I'm thrilled to be here today and to be working alongside professionals like Preston, and at sat works. And Preston, did you want to give a quick introduction to yourself, and then we'll jump into a little bit more about that works.

Preston Finkle

Sure, I am Preston Finkle, I have been with set works now for five years. My current title is Client Operations Director. So I work with all of our existing clients, through Client Success support, onboarding, everything on that end. I have before that works, I had no - I was not part of the this industry. And I love it now that now that I'm here, I had no experience with it. I came in from a from a software onboarding angle. But I the the best part of my job is definitely working with all of our clients and solving problems, working through just workflows and making sure that the data that they need to get out, can be taken out of the system along with them also connections and connecting providers in different areas that do the same thing. Because there's definitely a lot to learn from from everyone in this industry.

Erica Belois-Pacer

I would agree Preston. And actually that kind of leads into my question of and I know we've chatted before, but I think that we probably have some new listeners on with us today, if you don't mind kind of giving an overview of you know, what you do at set works, what they provide. I love the fact that you mentioned, you know, partnering with other entities because I agree, I think we can learn a lot from each other. And there's more than enough work to go around. Just so you know, how can we use that information and move forward? But if you could kind of describe it, that would be great.

Kirstie MacArthur

Yeah, happy to do that. Thanks. Again, at SetWorks we're really passionate about building software that solves some of the nation's most challenging problems, and on the leading edge of management technology for Disability Services. And beyond that, we partner with some of the most influential organizations to transform how they define success using data and technology. Our platform has been used to enhance compliance, reduce overhead and redundancy on massive scales. We help organizations discover new trends and gain an edge in their financial for, excuse me, performance and beyond. But ultimately, we really help agencies become data driven, optimize their performance, and achieve better outcomes for not only their employees, but those that they serve. And it's one of the things that led us to a partnership and support of APSE is very similar missions and visions for how we can use our time and resources to be able to impact back to those that that need it. And we're based out of Kansas City. And I think one thing that really makes that work so unique is that we've got a national ID/D expertise representation on our team. And being centrally located, it's given us direct access and opportunities to partner with agencies over the last couple of decades. And because of these partnerships, and these friendships that we've built, and the connections and working with our clients and those they serve, it's really inspired that works to be what it is today, which is so much more than a technology platform. We're actively involved in advocacy and education in empowering in a variety of different ways. And that happens when you build relationships, and get intimately familiar with the needs of those that you're serving and those that they are serving. So we're just really grateful for the opportunity to partner and support APSE, and be at the conference this year.

Erica Belois-Pacer

Thanks, Kirstie, I was actually going to ask, you know why you decided to sponsor the conference this year, which you kind of touched on there, but I don't know, Preston and Kirstie I'm curious to see if there's anything else you wanted to mention about, you know, what played into your decision in terms of sponsoring. I know, in the past, you have sponsored as well. So I know that, you know, we have a relationship from yours before as well. But if there's any other things you'd like to share about why that would be great.

Preston Finkle

Yeah, I can speak to this part. So we love sponsoring APSE, we sponsor some regional APSE as well. The-the knowledge that is shared at these organizations is so great. The way that people

are able to get up and speak and talk about problems in the industry, how they're trying to solve them. The people that are at absi, tend to be just, many of them are just brilliant minds. And everyone has the same common goal. And it's great to be there with everyone. And we we're not employment consultants, we don't provide the services ourselves. But we like to help as much as possible. And the only way we can help is if we have these conversations with people and try to actually work through some of these things. So yeah, we absolutely love sponsoring app. See, I was on a panel last year, when it was virtual. It's going to be great to be back in person this year. For all the events and everything goes on. I know the attendance is gonna be super great. So yeah, it'll be a lot of fun to be there with everyone and have the conversations about the industry and kind of catch up over the last couple of years where we haven't been able to be in person. So yeah, super looking forward to it.

Erica Belois-Pacer

Thanks, Preston. I do I remember the panel was very well received last year. And yeah, it was good. So thanks for doing it. Yeah, of course.

Unknown Speaker

Yeah, I was going to say that I didn't mention earlier, I oversee our marketing, our sales and our business development departments. And when looking at all the opportunities for what we have sort of set in our budget, there's so many different things that we could do to show support and participate. But going back and revisiting the history that SetWorks has with APSE, it was very clear that this would be a relationship that we would continue to invest in. And for me personally, really, learning and getting more acquainted with and familiar with what Employment First meant. Started with the relationship that we have with APSE and SetWorks is very proud to support and be publicly participating. With APSE's endeavors, precedent, mentioned local chapters, as well, but with National APSE, to really facilitate that full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and community that's so present and what everything that APSE does, from your website to the different events that are happening to the policies that are being written to even the tracks at the upcoming conference. Just so very powerful, and, and practical and relevant. So that's one of the driving forces behind our participation this year, and just why we appreciate the relationship so much with APSE.

Erica Belois-Pacer

Thanks, Kirstie, I agree on many of those things, for sure. I especially, you know, we want to make sure that what we're providing people is practical and usable within the field. So strongly agree on that. So I know that you'll both be at the conference, which is great. So you'll be able to chat with folks that are there in person. And I think that you're going to be hosting and working with one of our mini networking sessions. After that - some of the general sessions, so that's great. But I was curious, how could people reach you? Otherwise, if they're passively, you know, just listening in and aren't attending in person or through our virtual pass? What would be a great way to get ahold of you?

Unknown Speaker

Great question. Thank you. As you mentioned, yes, we're going to be at the conference in person, we have an exhibitor booth there, and we welcome anyone to stop by but for more of, I would say, an intimate connection or, or networking, where we have an open invite for lunches on any of the three days that the conference for whoever wants to join us. So that's one way that we can connect in person, a social hour before karaoke on Tuesday. And then, as you mentioned, that networking session on Wednesday that we're doing, that we're hosting. But beyond that, beyond the conference, we were actively out and about at other conferences and supporting different events. So you'll see us nationally present, I think the easiest way is to visit our, our website, setworks.com. We are always involved with different webinars and educational opportunities and different initiatives. So all of that's hosted on there. And then also, we like to be kind of a catalyst or a vehicle for people to be able to get connected to others within the industry as well. So different events that we're hosting are on the website. And then also, if you just want to talk to us, we've got Hello at [set works.com](http://setworks.com). But I would say the primary source of connection would be the website, you can actually schedule time with us right on the calendar for what's convenient. And yeah, so check us out. So [it works.com](http://itworks.com)

Erica Belois-Pacer

I like that. I think a lot of people are moving towards those calendar, invite type things on their websites, so that you can actually schedule time. Immediately. definitely helpful. So before we hop off, I just I like to usually ask people if they can share a fun fact about themselves. Press it. I'm trying to think if last year if you had mentioned anything, but if you use it again the same thing. It's okay. But do you ride sharing something fun about yourselves?

Unknown Speaker

No, not at all. I don't think I shared a fun fact in the in the panel last year. I guess I can say that. When I was in high school in college, I had a super long hair. Down on my shoulders. I joke that I kind of looked like Nick Cage and Con Air. It was pretty bad and nasty looking. But yeah, that was all shaved off whenever I was basically told that I couldn't go to Australia with my mom on a trip if I had long hair. So that was all cut off prior to that trip and I was able to go.

Erica Belois-Pacer

That's great. I think a lot of people might be in that position just with the hair for sure. The log here I feel like at least with my high school and college kids is back in. So think about that style again.

Preston Finkle

Yeah, COVID definitely helped with that for sure.

Erica Belois-Pacer

Absolutely. Kirstie. Is there anything you'd like to share about yourself?

Unknown Speaker

Oh, I would say that I'm an interesting person, for sure. I have lots of varied interests. But a funny fact about me is that when I was I grew up. My dad was in the military. So I moved

around a lot. When I was 14, the state that we lived in allowed you to get a driver's license if you lived in a rural area. So immediately when I turned 14, I really wanted to get my driver's license and my dad made it. The way that I was able to do that would be to write a 12 page essay on why I needed a driver thinking that it would be way too big of a project. But I wrote a very lengthy 12 page essay that he has shared many times to embarrass me since but I got my license

Erica Belois-Pacer

Did you get it when you were 14?

Kirstie MacArthur

I did. Yes.

Erica Belois-Pacer

Oh, my gosh, that is so scary to me considering I have a 17 year old, a 15 year old and a soon to be 14 year old.

Unknown Speaker

Felt like I was 20 when I was 14. But thinking back a vehicle in the hands of a 14 year old is a little scary.

Erica Belois-Pacer

I guess it depends where you live for sure. But no, that's great. Oh, thanks for sharing. But before we had off today, I just wondered if you had any closing comments or anything you wanted to share prior to being at a conference in person?

Unknown Speaker

Yeah, I think just will be at the booth the whole time. We'll have a few other people there as well. I know we're going to try to do in as many sessions as possible, to kind of get a feel for everything. But please stop by talk to us go to the website. We're all about making connections, solving problems, and making sure that everyone can do what they need to do to get people hired out in the community. We're super looking forward to it.

Unknown Speaker

Yeah, echoing what Preston was saying, we'd love to get connected and what we can't provide through our, our software, through our, our platform, and through our team, customer service, we really want to do what we can to connect others to different resources. So conversations are what make that happen. So please don't be shy to connect with us even in advance of the conference. But otherwise, we look forward to seeing everybody there. And also seeing everyone's karaoke skills. I've never done karaoke at an event so very curious to see how this goes.

Erica Belois-Pacer

Wow, well, you'll be in for some good laughter.

Preston Finkle

I think yeah, it's an APSE staple for sure.

Erica Belois-Pacer

It is I did not realize that till we always had it at the New York State APSE conference, but I you know, soon found out that it is a national thing as well. So there are some amazing singers out there and there are some entertaining singers as well. So always a good time. Yeah, well, thank you Kirstie. And Preston and I will see you soon and I would say you know reach out ahead of time set work stack have or you can see them in person. So have a great rest of your day.

Preston Finkle

Thanks, Erica.

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