



# Minnesota APSE

*The Network on Employment* • January 2007

## Conjunction Junction, What's Your Function?

Dawn Bacon  
MN APSE President

High Functioning OR Low Functioning? An interesting dichotomy of words many of us use or have used to define persons with disabilities. When using these terms as a matter of permanency, we systematically divide people into two camps. And based on what? In my experience, it has been a rather loosely and randomly ascribed label given to people in casual conversation. So I ask you this: Have you ever heard anyone refer to himself or herself as Low-Functioning? If not, would you want to?

Context is key here. No one

is good at everything and we all need supports in certain areas. When we label someone as “low functioning” our expectations for and from the individual take a nosedive. How does this descent of expectation influence perceptions on the part of the described individual, a current or potential employer, and members of our communities?

The advantage of Supported Employment is that it is not an either/or. On the contrary, SE services embrace an approach that centers on individual strengths and builds in supports tailored to the individual.

So I ask you this: Collectively, at what level are we functioning? Of course, this is a loaded ques-

tion but one worthy of dialogue and discernment. To turn the mirror on ourselves and begin to ask such questions can be difficult. We may find that we have to let go of some of our perceptions that are holding us back; such as the belief that someone is too low functioning to participate in the workforce or that the barriers are just too big to penetrate. It's easy to go there and most of us have. However, if we want to achieve the outcomes that transform lives, we have to take off the lens of scarcity, step outside our comfort zones and walk boldly into 2007. Let us resolve to expect more, think bigger and unlock doors to places that were traditionally unattainable.

## MN APSE Receives 2006 Age and Disabilities Odyssey Award

MN APSE was the recipient of the *2006 Age and Disabilities Odyssey Award*, awarded by The Minnesota Department of Human Services and The Minnesota Board on Aging to honor outstanding organizations and individuals who work in the aging and/or disabilities community. This award recognizes an organization or individual who has championed innovations in direct services, coordination of services, community-based partnerships and increased the resilience, interdependence and quality of

life for seniors, people with disabilities and their communities. Award winners were showcased at an evening social/networking gathering, “Awards Recognition Night”, on May 5th, during the *2006 Age & Disabilities Odyssey 22nd National Home & Community Based Services Conference*. MN APSE is very honored to have received this award as we continue to work towards our mission to improve and expand integrated employment opportunities, services and outcomes for persons experiencing disabilities.



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## Mapping Out the Future of MN APSE

The MN APSE Governing Board met in September 2005 to create goals for the future. Our priorities revolved around making Minnesota APSE a strong, viable organization. In the last year, we have worked diligently to meet these goals.

In order to do that, MN APSE has restructured our board so that self-advocates, employers, family members and people active in the mental health field have stronger voices and are better represented. (Incidentally, opportunities remain - contact us if you are interested or know someone who might be!)

The organization has worked hard to expand our list of contacts throughout the state in order to build a broader network on employment,

engaging both Minnesota APSE members as well as potential members. Additionally, Minnesota APSE has forged a variety of partnerships with various stakeholders, having candid conversations about how we might discover new approaches toward achieving employment for all.

This year we solicited detailed feedback from the attendees at our spring conference in Hinckley, MN. In addition, we sought feedback from our members via forums that were held this fall throughout the state. All of this valuable information is being used to structure our 2007 annual conference so that we can best serve the state of Minnesota.

## National APSE Update

The national Board met recently in Richmond, VA to review the strategic plan for the coming year as well as develop new initiatives around marketing, membership, public policy and training. Members received an update from APSE regarding the retreat in December.

The APSE "Choose Work" DVD was recently distributed to Chapter Presidents for feedback and will be ready for national distribution by early 2007. Likewise, the Everybody Works Marketing brochure has been reviewed, edited and is currently at the printer. Watch your e-mail for a link to the APSE website for both of these products, along with alternatives and instructions designed by the APSE Marketing Committee for their use.

One new objective developed was to increase membership from the business community. Chris Davies, HR director for J&J Distributing in St. Paul and a

national Board member, offered to take the lead on this initiative. Thus Minnesota has been selected as one of two initial pilot states. MN APSE will be developing regional forums for employers which will be similar to the ones facilitated for MN APSE members this past fall. The general concept is to answer questions from potential employers regarding employing people with disabilities and hopefully develop a network of employers through out Minnesota that are willing to come together to develop or "build" jobs for people who are unemployed in the same way that people come together to build homes for people who are homeless. Stay tuned for information regarding these forums.

Finally the 2007 national Conference will be in Kansas City, MO on July 16-18. The RFP for proposals has gone out and the deadline for submission is January 15, 2007.

# Minnesota APSE Regional Forums

Connie Moore  
MN APSE Treasurer

This fall, I had the opportunity through the endeavors of MN APSE to visit Duluth in September, Mankato in October, and St. Paul in November. Each city brought new friends and networking contacts, as well as reunions with old friends and acquaintances from around the state. What did we all have in common besides living and working in the fine state of Minnesota?

A dedication to the growth and of supported employment for those we serve as job coaches and job developers.

The Duluth forum topic of discussion was primarily job coaching and on-going support services. Dawn Bacon, President of MN APSE and an experienced job coach offered an introduction to MN APSE and a short presentation on her experiences in successful job coaching. A panel of job coaches and an employer then responded to questions spurring further dialogue and audience interaction. We all learned that simplicity is often the answer. Short anecdote: An audience member asked the panel how to handle assisting someone of the opposite gender in a rest room at work. Many deep philosophical answers followed, none quite the "simple" answer. An audience member suggested that an "Out of order" sign placed at the entrance to the rest room

would handle the privacy issue quietly and without further explanation. Simple, perfect answer!

Mankato is breathtaking in mid-October. This time the topic for discussion was job development

most of life's issues we discovered we all had more in common than not.

The St. Paul forum was well attended, with over forty participants. Due to increasing demands for training across service areas, this time we tried to tackle both job coaching and job development in a two hour time frame. Even with a shortened presentation, time was limited. A self-advocate, Hunter Sargent, joined the panel, enriching the discussion greatly. There was a wealth of knowledge and experience in the room and the discussion was fast paced. Many attendees requested more time for the next forum. Like the two previous forums, there were frequent requests to do it again.

Many thanks go out to the panel members for sharing their experiences and expertise: Heidi Maghan, Andrea Zuber, Dawn Bacon, Jon

Alexander, Hunter Sargent, Chris Davies, Margaret Reminger, Kristie Buchman and Georgette Wondolkowski.

Watch for what blooms in Spring...

*"It is impossible for ideas to compete in the marketplace if no forum for their presentation is provided or available." Thomas Mann*



Top: Dawn Bacon

Left: Connie Moore

Below: Panel discussion

and I was the presenter. I was very interested to find out if this small group of hardworking job developers was experiencing the same roadblocks and successes as those of us in the Twin Cities or if a more rural setting created different issues. The answer was yes and no. There was a wonderful give and take around the table and like

# Making Employment First

Discovering how to make employment the first option for people with disabilities has become one of the major focus areas for Minnesota APSE. Over the past several months, MN APSE members have been involved with the planning and coordination of several events that share a common objective related to advancing employment first.

## Supporting Employment Innovation Series

Last spring, the MN Department of Human Services presented a series of video conferences to promote service innovations in the area of residential services for people with disabilities. The series was well received by the participants and has prompted people who are involved with services to and with people with disabilities to begin thinking in different ways. As a result of the success of the residential series, DHS decided to create a second series on supporting employment innovations. MN APSE is represented on the Steering Committee by former national and state chapter president, Bob Niemiec.

The goals of the video conference series are:

- Highlighting best practices of policy development to promote employment of people with disabilities;
- Encouraging dialogue between Minnesota stakeholders and nationally recognized experts who have implemented strategies that recognize partnerships that contribute to

new ways to support people in meeting their employment goals

- Recognizing the value of innovation, by this steering committee, in supporting employment for people with disabilities in Minnesota.

As of the writing of this article, the planning is well underway. The first in the series of five video conferences is scheduled to be held on February 28. The principle speaker for the first session is Dr. David Mank of Indiana University who will be talking about Values and Innovation at the State and Federal Levels. You will soon be able to find information on the video conferences by visiting the DHS website (<http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>).

This has been a great opportunity for MN APSE to address one of its strategic goals of influencing or shaping public policy. We are excited about what a series on employment innovation might spawn in our state as well as others.

## The Minnesota Employment First Summit

Minnesota APSE has long sought a voice in shaping public policy in our state. For as long as we have been in existence, MN APSE members and leaders have believed that we had a great deal to contribute to the debate. At long last, the talking is over and action has begun. As mentioned earlier in this article, MN APSE has a voice on the steering committee for the Supporting Employment Innovations Video

Conference Series. However, that is not all that we have been up to in the area of influencing public policy and promoting individualized, community based employment for people with disabilities in Minnesota.

MN APSE assembled a group consisting of The Minnesota Department of Education Transition Services, Pathways to Employment (DHS and DEED), The Consumer Survivor Network, U Care Minnesota, and PACER Center to plan and host an employment summit. The summit will be held on June 12, 2007 in Chaska. The keynote speaker for the event will be Neil Romano of the America's Strength Foundation. The summit will bring together leaders and champions from across the state that share a vision of individualized, community-based employment for people with disabilities in Minnesota. More information on the summit and other MN APSE policy events will be forthcoming in future editions of the newsletter and announcements.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Minnesota APSE's  
Annual State Conference**

*will take place on*

**Monday, June 11th,  
2007**

*at the*

**Minnesota  
Landscape Arboretum**

*in*

**Chaska, MN**



Joint State Chapter/National Membership

**NOW is the time to join a vital organization committed to expanding employment for people with disabilities!**

## APSE: THE NETWORK ON EMPLOYMENT

APSE is a rapidly growing national membership organization formed to improve and expand integrated employment services and outcomes through supported employment (SE) for persons experiencing disabilities. APSE members are SE professionals, consumers, family members, employers, rehabilitation counselors, advocates, and state and federal agency officials. Membership is open to anyone who wants to be part of a grassroots network committed to ensuring that SE continues to grow and improve.

### APSE Focus

APSE is the only national membership association focusing exclusively on integrated employment for people with disabilities, particularly those with the highest need for workplace support. To better serve our mission, we are actively expanding our focus to include a variety of ways to support employment of people with all sorts of disabilities and different support needs in integrated workplaces – supported employment, self-employment, customized employment, business ownership, and more. We are continually expanding our member services and benefits to better meet the needs of our members.

### APSE Mission

APSE staff and members work together to:

- Provide advocacy and education to people invested in paid integrated employment, including providers, people with disabilities, family members, businesses and others.
- Address issues and barriers that impede the growth and implementation of inclusive employment services and supports.
- Improve SE practice so that individuals and communities experience quality service with meaningful outcomes.
- Promote national, state, and local policies that enhance the social and economic inclusion and empowerment of all people with disabilities.
- Educate the public and business community on the value of including people with severe disabilities as fully participating community members.

### Membership Benefits

There are many more people who can benefit from SE, yet cannot access it. APSE provides a strong voice for SE when policy and funding decisions are made. With the support of a strong membership, APSE will be able to advocate for quality SE for an increasing number of people experiencing severe disabilities in your community.

#### What You Will Get With APSE Membership..

- Stay on the cutting edge of current SE news and events in **the Advance**, a quarterly newsletter
- Belong to your state chapter and influence state-wide policies and practices
- Receive APSE publications free or at discounted rates
- Access APSE-sponsored SE training at discounted rates
- Attend the largest annual conference on SE in the world at discounted rates
- Be represented in Washington, DC for national legislative action/policy change to ensure quality SE services
- Enhance your professional standing through use of APSE's endorsed ethical guidelines and quality practices
- Access an international network of partners in SE through APSE networks with the European Union of SE
- Get help finding information and technical assistance
- Receive legislative updates on issues affecting SE by accessing the APSE Web page on the Internet
- Receive Action Alerts on state and national events that will affect your job, SE, and your future
- Receive job search assistance
- Vote on APSE issues and shape the future of SE

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**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR REDUCED RATES DURING MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN  
JOIN THE APSE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT TODAY!**

**SPREAD THE SE MESSAGE AND SUPPORT THE APSE MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN.  
SHARE THIS 10% NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES !  
Recruit New Members and Earn Points Toward Free Conference Registration!**

**APSE NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION—Rates Effective Until 6/30/2007**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Fees**

Includes 1 copy of *theAdvance*/1 vote  
 (NOTE: APSE Dues are not tax deductible)

<b>Individual Income:</b>	<b>New</b>
Professional - \$26,000 or more	<input type="radio"/> \$100 \$90
Professional - \$17,000 - \$25,999	<input type="radio"/> \$80 \$72
Professional - less than \$17,000	<input type="radio"/> \$55 \$49
Nonprofessional family member or student	<input type="radio"/> \$40 \$36
Supported employee	<input type="radio"/> \$20 \$18

**Please provide the following information. I am a (n):**

- Consumer             Family Member
- Student (not yet working in the field)
- Employer
- Professional (please give your job title)

**My organization is a (n):**

- Advocacy Organization       SE Provider
- State Agency                 School
- Federal Agency               University
- Local Agency                 Rehab Facility
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Instructions:** Send check, money order, or credit card information with your application to: APSE, 1627 Monument Ave., Richmond, VA 23220. **Canadian members add \$10 to rates; other non-US members add \$20.**

**Amount Enclosed** (US currency only) \_\_\_\_\_  
 or fax credit card information to (804) 278-9377  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cardholder Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_  VISA       MasterCard

\_\_\_\_ I want to pay my membership fee in even installments, deducted from my credit card on a monthly or quarterly basis. I will contact APSE if I want to stop the installment payments.  
**If you were recruited by a current APSE member, please tell us who so they may receive credit for your membership:**  
**Name of Recruiter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organizational Memberships**

**(Note: APSE dues are not tax deductible)**

**Basic Organizational Membership** includes member benefits and copies of *theAdvance* for up to 8 people and 1 vote in elections or other voting issues. Benefits of membership and discounted conference and training registration limited to 8 names provided with the membership. **\$640 (New member: \$576)**

**Contributing Membership** includes copies of *theAdvance* for up to 8 people and 1 vote in elections or other voting issues. Other membership benefits apply to anyone in your organization using your organization's membership number, plus unlimited discounted registrations to state and national conferences and training events for anyone in your organization using your organization's membership number. This constitutes significant savings over a year in registration fees. **\$840 (New member: \$766)**

**Gold Contributing Membership** includes copies of *theAdvance* for up to 8 people and 1 vote in elections or other voting issues. Other membership benefits apply to anyone in your organization using your organization's membership number, plus unlimited discounted registrations to state and national conferences and training events for anyone in your organization by using your organization's membership number (significant savings in registration fees) and Gold Contributor listing in newsletters. Plus a certificate of recognition honoring your contribution for front office display. **\$1050 (New member: \$945)**

Organizations must designate individuals who will be covered under an organizational membership below:

<u>Name</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____

**Membership Enhancements**

***Infolines Subscription***

**APSE discount:** Print: \$89/yr; E-mail: \$79/yr

\_\_\_\_ Please apply my APSE discount and start my monthly subscription to *InfoLines*.

\_\_\_\_ Please apply my APSE discount and **RENEW** my subscription to *InfoLines*.

***Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation***

**APSE Members: Electronic access free; print copy: \$48/yr**

\_\_\_\_ Apply my APSE discount and start my subscription to a print copy of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.

- Yes! I want to contribute to the APSE Foundation**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes! I want to sponsor a consumer membership.**  
**\$ 20.00.**