

TIG Times



Congratulations to the 2015 Wisconsin Statewide Transition Academy Award Recipients!!!

Contributed by Pam Jenson, TIG Project Coordinator

Two Wisconsin Transition Professionals, one Family Member and one Youth were honored at the 2015 Wisconsin Statewide Transition Academy for their outstanding work in the area of transition.

The Transition Academy has honored transition excellence for the past 3 years under the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG). Awards are given in the areas of: Distinguished Educator, Distinguished Service Provider, Outstanding Family Member and Outstanding Youth. Award winners were nominated by educators, agency providers, families and youth to recognize those who go beyond the day-to-day demands of their careers, family life and mentorship to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. This year's award winners were:

Distinguished Agency Member Award: Tom Heffron-Wisconsin Technical College System



Tom is the Education Director for Disability Services for Wisconsin's Technical College System. We'd like to thank

him for all the work he has done to assist staff and students in receiving funding for transition services and to advocate for people with disabilities!

Distinguished Educator Award: David Koenig-Manitowoc Public School District



Dave has been a leader not only for transition services at Manitowoc Public School District but also has been a shining light for the entire Manitowoc County in the area of transition. He has assisted in students starting their own business, provided many employment opportunities for students, and planned Transition Fairs to keep the community, families and students informed of services and opportunities available for students in transition.

Outstanding Family Member Award: Beth Klepac-Phillips School District



Beth has been an unending support for her son. She is a strong advocate

for his needs by developing relationships with his teachers, paraprofessionals, and community support agencies to advocate for exposure to a variety of job opportunities for her son. Beth has also been active in the community as the Special Olympic Agency representative for Price County. She coordinates athletic trainings throughout the year in bowling, basketball, and power lifting. Many athletes move on to state and national competitions each year.

Although Beth has been an outstanding family support to her son, she has also been a community support to other families as they navigate the disability rights world. Beth is willing to share her experiences and dreams for her son to illustrate how all students can become productive members of our society with needed support.

Outstanding Youth Award: Erik Lindsey-Holmen School District



Erik is a clear leader and role model for ALL students in the Holmen School District. He assists

his younger peers with proper hygiene tips, shakes every new person's hand that he meets and uses great eye contact when making conversation. Erik's unrelenting desire to improve himself and the world in which he lives with an amazingly clever and entertaining sense of humor is contagious. He is willing to do whatever is necessary to get himself back up after being knocked down his entire life. This not only inspires us as educators, but also has taught many of us life lessons for ourselves. Erik is an amazing role model for all young adults and is very deserving to receive the Outstanding Youth Award.

Please help us in congratulating our award winners and all of the nominees. They are truly inspirational.

Inside this issue:

2015 Wisconsin Statewide Transition	2
Silent Auction is a Success!	2
Internship Offers Skills, Independence	3
WI CCoTs Here Comes a New Year	4
Age Appropriate Transition Assessments	4
Transition Related Stocking Stuffers	5

2015 Wisconsin Statewide Transition Academy

Contributed By: Pam Jenson-TIG Project Coordinator

When the Academy ended on October 30th, attendees left with a positive outlook on transition and the opportunities they have to change the lives of students with disabilities to become successful young adults as they plan for college and careers after high school. The Wisconsin Statewide Transition Academy has become the professional development go to conference for not only educators, but agency members and parents as well. The Transition Improvement Grant staff and Academy Committee have worked hard to bring all transition partners to the table to discuss transition for students preparing to enter the adult world. Our time has paid off as we hosted over 550 participants at the Academy this year, with an almost equal attendance of educators and agency professionals. Here is what people are saying about the academy: "Great job! All sessions were well done and informative. Good keynote speakers", "This was the BEST program of the last three years. Keep up the good work",

"Wonderful conference! Very well put together, organized, great sessions, inspirational! Thank you for the opportunity". We also heard your comments of: "Too many sessions to choose from", "I would like tables to sit at", and "please consider repeating sessions".

We again thank all of our speakers at the Academy that presented and discussed their work and experiences! This provided an important channel for exchange of information and ideas between agency professionals, educators, parents and students. Because of your time and talents, we were able to have presentations focusing on topics of Wisconsin Initiatives, Transition Planning, Employment, Literacy, Postsecondary Education, Raising Expectations, Parent Engagement, Academic and Career Planning, Culturally Responsive Practices, Technology, Mental Health, Ethics, College and Career Ready IEP's, District Transition Journeys and a youth track with rich transition planning and discussions.

The TIG Grant would also like to thank our attendees. Your participation at the Academy also brings value to our work. We understand it is difficult to take a day or two out of work and sacrifice a valuable chunk of time to spend in professional development. We will continue to work hard to make the Academy a worthwhile opportunity to improve transition. We challenge you to share information with us on how you are implementing any strategies you have utilized as a result of the Academy.

Please save the date and join us again next year for the 2016 TCN meeting on October 4th and the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Academy on October 5th, 2016 at the Wilderness Glacier Canyon Lodge in Wisconsin Dells.

From TIG to you, we wish you a happy holiday season and safe travels as you come together with family and friends!

Silent Auction is a Success!

Contributed by: Jenny Jacobs, TIG Post School Outcomes Outreach

The 3rd Annual Silent Auction was held during the 2015 Transition Academy. Fifty-four unique packages and gift baskets, many containing free admission passes and gift cards for Dells area attractions, were displayed in the large meeting room at Glacier Canyon Lodge. Attendees of the Academy had the opportunity to start the bidding process during breakfast and increase bids throughout the day. The money raised from the silent auction is used to provide scholarships to students with a disability pursuing further education. This year's auction

raised a total of \$2,858. A special thank you to all donors of items for the silent auction and also a big thank you to all of the winning bidders!

Watch the TIG website, www.witig.org, for an announcement in spring indicating the time frame when applications will be accepted for the 2016 scholarships.

Visit our website at:

www.WiTIG.org

For information, e-mail info@witig.org or call (262) 473-1446

Internship Offers Skills, Independence

Contributed By: Rhonda Siebecker, Baraboo News Republic

With help from an area resort, two Baraboo women are assisting young adults with special needs gain life skills and independence, while also preparing them for the workplace.

Pam Sorci and Sue Roessler work with eight interns as part of the Project SEARCH program at Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells.

The year-long transition program started in Cincinnati in 1996 and provides training and education through unpaid internships that can lead to employment for people with disabilities.

For a program to operate, it requires a local partner committed to working with the interns and willing to consider hiring them afterward.

"Kalahari Resorts has employed people with disabilities in an integrated work environment for many years," said Kalahari Resorts Corporate Director of Human Resources Traci Jones. "I actually started working on becoming a Project SEARCH site almost two years ago. We officially started at the beginning of the school year."

Loganville resident Kelly Smith said she enjoys cleaning hotel rooms and doesn't even mind cleaning the resort bathrooms.

"I like to make it nice for those guys," the 21-year-old said.

Smith started the program in September, along with 25-year-old Portage resident Jackie Jackson.

"I like everything," Jackson said. "I like making sure the guests have a clean place to stay."

Jackson said she enjoys working with her hands and was looking for work when she signed up for the internship. Smith said she also was looking for employment and has made good friends at the resort.

Sorci and Roessler have previous experience working with special education students in schools. Roessler said she likes the enthusiasm the program's participants bring with them.

"They really want to work, which I love," she said. "They want to become independent."

Another intern, Ala'a Southworth of Mauston, said he enjoys his job at the concierge desk.

"I love working here," he said. "I love the people."

Sorci learned about the opening for an instructor with the program while student teaching at Baraboo High School. She said she was interested in working with special needs students transitioning into the workplace. "I've always had an interest in what happens next with students," she said.

Sorci has a brother with special needs and said she knows how important it is for him to "get out and be productive." That is one reason she was drawn to the position.

"After meeting Traci and experiencing the inclusive culture at the Kalahari, I knew this was a great fit for me," she said. "This program offers life skill training and on-the-job experience that will help them become employable so they may be independent someday."

She said the resort hopes to hire all the interns at the end of the program. However, interns that come from surrounding areas may choose to work somewhere closer to home.

"I have the pleasure of interacting with the interns multiple times a week. It has been amazing to watch their development," Jones said. "They are learning every day, taking on new responsibilities and working independently."

She said they hope to grow the program to 12 interns next school year.

To learn more about Project SEARCH, visit www.projectsearch.us online.

"Instruction does much; but encouragement everything"
-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Wisconsin County Communities on Transition Here Comes a New Year!

Contributed By: Kathy Tuttle TIG Northern Regional Coordinator

The year 2016 will soon be upon us! It is often a time to reflect and revisit goals we have made the year before. This may be a great time for your CCoT to also reflect and review the goals made for the new year. Here are some guiding questions:

- * What successes can we celebrate?
- * Are we on track with our plans and activities?
- * Are we missing members?
- * Should we revise our goals or activities?
- * How can we measure our success?
- * Have we looked at our county Post School Outcome data?
- * What does our team need to sustain the collaboration?

'Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land amongst the stars.' Les Brown

Another great tool for this reflection is the CCoT Essential Checklist: http://witig.org/wstidata/resources/checklist-4_1430324745.pdf. Some facts to support the importance of the collaborative work of our Wisconsin CCoTs:

- * "Students who received assistance from 3 to 6 community-based agencies (as compared to students with assistance from 0 to 2 agencies) were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education " (Bullis et al., 1995).
- * "Collaboration works when transition teams are focused on outcomes and purpose" (Kelly Crane; Center on Transition to Employment)

Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments and Activities Guide

Contributed by: Brian Kenney – TIG Southern Region Coordinator

The Transition Improvement Grant team has fielded numerous questions in regards to resources for conducting both formal and informal transition related assessments. Our grant team has also been asked to put these resources into a user friendly resource guide that includes assessments and activities that can help school districts move towards more effective transition practices that engage students, families and school districts in meaningful postsecondary transition plans and IEP's. We wanted the guide to help navigate the transition assessment process for students with various types of disabilities, as well as promoting the movement from minimal compliance to best practice.

What is Transition Assessment?

"Transition assessment is an ongoing process of collecting information on the student's strengths, need, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future living, learning, and working environments. This process should begin in middle school and continue until the student graduates or exits high school. Information from this process should be used to drive the IEP and transition planning process and to develop the SoP document detailing the student's academic and functional performance and postsecondary goals." (Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., Begun, W. H., Lombard, R. C., & Leconte, P. J. (2007). Assess for suc-

cess: A practitioner's handbook on transition assessment (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. p. 2-3)

What is Effective Practice?

The results of age-appropriate transition assessments form the foundation of the student's transition plan. Transition assessments should begin well before the IEP team meeting where the transition plan is to be developed to ensure meaningful, high quality information is available for the IEP team to consider.

The Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments and Activities Guide is broken down into 5 sections as follows –

- Section 1: Comprehensive Transition Assessments
- Section 2: Education, Training & College Readiness
- Section 3: Employment & Career Readiness
- Section 4: Adult & Independent Living
- Section 5: Specific Area of Need (Various ranges of disabilities)

The Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments and Activities Guide is available to utilize and it can be found on our Transition Improvement grant website (www.witig.org) at http://witig.org/wstidata/resources/age-appropriate-transition-assessments-activities-guide-final_1450295083.pdf

Transition Related Stocking Stuffers

Contributed By: Jen Bourget, TIG Urban Transition Coordinator

For all your transition needs, take a look at what TIG has inside their stocking! Click on the links to be taken directly to valuable transition tools.



Happy Holidays from the
Transition Improvement Grant Team!