

3-16-18

**To: Employment First stakeholders**

**From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator**

**Re: Employment First: Oregon Transition Conference**

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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**Note:** A photo slideshow from the conference, including photos of all the award winners, is at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmdV9cMZ>



Jacquie Gerdes (left) and Felicia Echeverria, keynote speakers

Photo: Andre Harboe

The Oregon Statewide Transition Conference was held March 1-2 in downtown Portland.

More than 600 attendees had an opportunity to learn, network, and share innovative approaches regarding transition practices in Oregon.

The conference was a collaborative effort between the Oregon

Association of Vocational Support Needs Personnel (OAVSNP), the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Oregon Youth Transition Program (YTP), Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

The keynote speakers on the first day of the conference were Jacquie Gerdes and Felicia Echeverria with Eugene-based Alternative Work Concepts. The second keynote speaker was G Cody QJ Goldberg. Goldberg is executive director of Harper's Playground, an inclusive playground in Portland.

There were three topical strands at the conference: Education, Employment and Independent Living.

Employment-related sessions throughout the conference included: ODDS regional specialists Erica Drake and Nate Deeks on: How to Ensure I/DD Services are in Place; Ali Brown and Kimberly Larsen on Building a Richer Transition to Employment; Carla Waring on Reasonable Accommodations Process and the Americans with Disability Act; Emily Harris and Ryan Farrow on Video Resumes; and the ODDS employment team conducted a Question and Answer session on employment services.



Sandy Hyduchak (left) with Carolyn Fry at the awards ceremony for the 2018 Oregon Statewide Transition Conference. Sandy received the first I Work We Succeed Excellence in Employment First Efforts award.

Photo: Andre Harboe

An awards ceremony held on the first night celebrated educators, students and staff excelling in transition education and services.

Sandy Hyduchak, supervisor with Lincoln County Developmental Disability program, was the recipient of the first I Work We Succeed Excellence in Employment First Efforts award. This award recognizes a provider, agency, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, educator, service coordinator or personal

agent who has gone above and beyond to provide community employment services to transition-age youth or people in sheltered workshops.

Service coordinator Justin Wallace said in his nomination of Sandy for the award that “she does not settle for the status quo, but instead questions the processes and collaborates with agencies in hopes of finding the services the person wants.”

Other awardees included:

- **Outstanding Student of the Year:** Alana Kidd
- **Excellent Teacher:** Steve Baer, transition teacher/coordinator with Beaverton School District’s Community Transition Program

- **Stephanie Parrish-Taylor Outstanding Transition Rehabilitation Services:** Tracy Clark, VR counselor, Springfield
- **Extraordinary Support Staff:** Duana Charapata, instruction assistant, Mitchell School District; and Amy Nickel, adaptive PE coordinator, Redmond School District.
- **Exceptional Transition Program:** Centennial Transition Center
- **Outstanding Administrator:** Eric Richards, director, Salem-Keizer Transition Program

~ Acacia