

4-7-17

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Re: Employment First: Meet at the Mountain IV

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

[Like Us](#) on Facebook!



(Left to right) Roberta Dunn, her son Todd Dunn, Sam McKenney and his mother Karen McKenney gave a presentation at the family reception.

Meet at the Mountain IV, which brought together local Employment First teams along with families, self-advocates, providers and staff, drew a crowd of more than 350 attendees this year.

The event, which had the theme “Trek to the Top,” kicked off on April 4 with a family networking event in the evening.

Parents Roberta Dunn and Karen McKenney were joined by their sons Todd Dunn and Sam

McKenney to discuss their path to employment and living a whole life. The families discussed independent living, working and mapping your community.

“Community doesn’t happen by accident – community is built,” Roberta said.

The families explored concepts such as “What Does my Week Look Like?” and talked about balancing pay versus play.

“When the boys moved into their condo, there was a discussion of, ‘If you want things like cable and Wi-Fi, you have to pay for them’,” Roberta said. “And to pay for those things you enjoy, you have to work.”



Keynote speaker Jason Quick discussed his journey to becoming a professional juggler despite having lost his arm from an accident as a young child.

The conference opened Thursday, April 5 with a keynote speech from [Jason Quick](#). Jason is a disability advocate and juggler who spoke about empowering people with disabilities by believing in their talents and strengths. He wowed the crowd with his juggling act, while also incorporating his personal story about how he lost his arm in an accident when he was young.

After Jason's performance, leadership from the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Oregon Department of Education updated the audience on progress happening at the programs.

Presentations throughout the two-day conference included a panel on public sector employment with representatives from the city of Hillsboro, a presentation on Project Search in Oregon, an update on Oregon's Seamless

Transition Pilot, a session on job development, and a presentation from self-advocates on peer mentoring.

A dinner presentation on April 5 featured videos of three employment success stories. Paul Haggerty, general manager of the Comfort Suites in Redmond, discussed his experience employing an individual with a disability.

"We need people like John in the workplace, people who are committed and want to be there," Paul said, before addressing the crowd. "Keep doing what you all are doing – it is making a difference."

At the dinner, Karin Morris, ADA manager from the city of Bend and employee Dana Bromley spoke about the city's efforts to hire more people with disabilities. Josh Bearman and Thomas Saucedo of provider agency TVW discussed their partnership with the city of Hillsboro's parks department to employ more individuals with I/DD.

Self-advocate Jordan Ohlde was given a surprise award at the dinner by Bob Stevens with central Oregon VR. Jordan was honored for his advocacy on transportation and accessibility issues.

Meet at the Mountain IV was funded by the Department of Human Services' Employment First and ODDS employment teams, with planning and coordination provided by the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE), along with assistance of ODDS, VR, ODE, Full Access High Desert, Roccas Family Network, Oregon Resource Association, and the Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition.

A slideshow of photos from the Meet at the Mountain is [online](#).

If you have comments or other questions, please email them to employment.first@state.or.us.

~ Acacia