

Aspire's Mission:

Aspire's mission is to support children and adults with developmental and similar disabilities, helping them to live their lives to the fullest by providing individualized assistance based on personal choices.

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Save the Date

DDAWNY Family
Committee Meeting
7 Community Drive
Cheektowaga, NY
Third Tuesday of the Month
7:00 pm

For more event information,
please contact Amanda Rosenberg
at 716-505-5514 or via email at
Amanda.Rosenberg@aspirewny.org

Aspire of Western New York

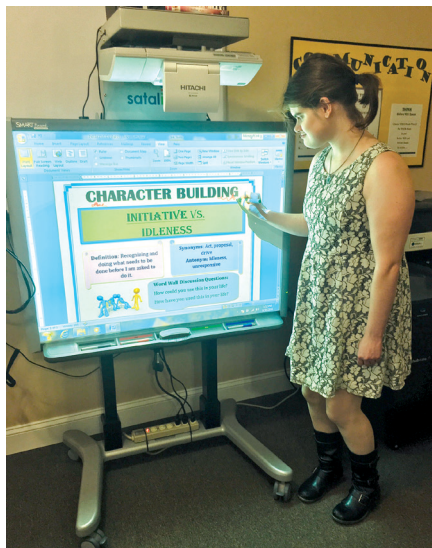
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Cummings Foundation Supports WOW Program with a Technology Grant



Brittani using a SmartBoard during a WOW classroom session.

The James H. Cummings Foundation, Inc. recently awarded a \$35,100 technology grant to Aspire's World of Work (WOW) Program for the purchase of a 55" Smartboard and 40 iPads for participating students. Recognized as a best practice in New York State, the WOW Program is a community-based program for students with disabilities that combines on-site job skills training at participating local businesses with classroom-based vocational learning.

The Cummings Foundation grant provides WOW with the means to utilize technology to further engage students in learning and enhance the success of the program. In addition to the enhanced learning opportunities through the use of the Smartboard in

classroom activities, the iPads will be equipped with a variety of software applications. The pre-loaded software will help students learn time management skills, financial skills, documentation development, and have a greater awareness of and ability to utilize computers in preparation

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ACRONYM CORNER

SDS - Self-Directed Services allow the person (or their designated advocate) to have more control over the services the person chooses and receives. SDS allows you to choose the kinds of things you want to do in your life and the kinds of supports you will have.

COS - Circle of Support is the name for a group of people who come together to help a person to visualize, express and accomplish their personal goals and valued outcomes. This group includes the individual's Medicaid Service Coordinator and is required to meet quarterly.

FI - Fiscal Intermediary is an agency chosen to assist individuals with the budgeting aspect of their Self-Directed options. This includes assistance with fiscal reporting, billing and overall management of their budget.

WOW/PROJECT SEARCH: A Multi-year Vocational Adventure

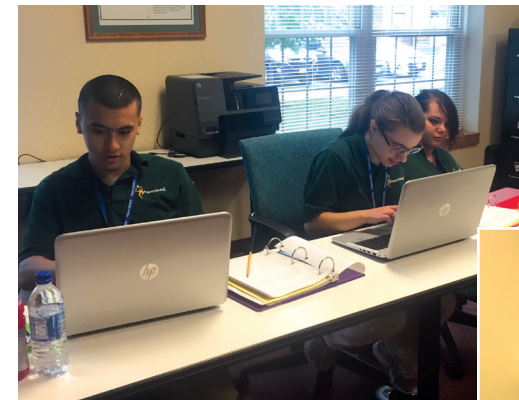
WOW SUCCESSES PRESENTED AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

On Thursday, October 20th, the World of Work (WOW) Program was introduced to attendees at Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC. Aspire's Sr. WOW Associate Kimberley Volk and West Seneca Central School District, Director of Special Education, Kristin Collins, Ed.D. presented "World of Work Program: Building Pathways to Employment" to hundreds of Human Services, Education, and Transition professionals from around the country.

The hour-long discussion focused on the critical role that WOW plays in helping school-age students with disabilities acquire employable skills through classroom training and internships at local participating businesses. The theme of the presentation illustrated how West Seneca Central School District and Aspire of WNY are working together to provide a diversified educational program resulting in students who demonstrate growth in social and work place behaviors and upon transitioning from school will have developed skills that translate into future employment opportunities.



Kimberley Volk presents at the DCDT Conference in Myrtle Beach.



Project Search interns creating an email address to aid them in their job search.



Alexia Woods with mentor Christian mopping the weight floor at Catalyst Fitness.



Jenna Mook preparing silverware for the catering department at Wegmans.



WOW interns, Nick Hallgren, Elena Carroccia and Jonathan Luongo, cleaning the recycling center at Orchard Fresh.



Michael Crawford organizing the Market at the Country Inn & Suites.



Rachel Holtz assisting in the Jewelry Department at SAVERS.



Tom Botticello with Auanna showing off desserts at Bob Evans.



Natia Garlock preparing racks for new merchandise at SAVERS.



Project Search Intern Elizabeth Goss restocks the cooler at Beechwood.

Your Smartphone is Powerful Assistive Tech



The smartphone in your pocket, or your son or daughter's pocket, is likely to be the most powerful assistive technology device you've owned; depending on your needs, it may be the only one you need. We'll look at Apple's mobile iOS platform in this article, and next time we'll explore the Android platform.

Apple has long been at the forefront of creating universally accessible devices, and anything running iOS - your iPhone, iPad,

iPod, or Apple Watch - has a multitude of accessibility features built into the operating system. This means you can use accessibility features without paying for and downloading extra apps.

Apple's Speak Screen and Speak Selection features provide a powerful screen reading solution for any text content, including web pages and eBooks. Hearing impaired users with a Bluetooth enabled hearing aid can pair their device to their iPhone. This allows them to use the phone to take enhanced calls or, in noisy environments, to concentrate their hearing to the immediate area. Switch Control allows users with limited coordination or articulation to control their device with a single switch, and Siri can now help replace the function of expensive environmental modifications with semi-automated smart home elements.

Are you curious what else iOS can do? Check out Apple's new Accessibility website, which outlines all the ways they've dedicated their devices to accessibility: www.apple.com/accessibility/

Comments, Suggestions or Ideas?

If you have any comments, suggestions or a subject you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter, please contact Paula Kerber at 716-505-5262, or email paula.kerber@aspirewny.org.

Want an electronic copy of Transition Times?

Send your email to: paula.kerber@aspirewny.org and we'll send you an electronic version of Transition Times. Thanks for your interest!

Quick Guide to OPWDD's Front Door

- Front Door is the first step in connecting to OPWDD services.
- Individuals and/or advocates must attend a Front Door session to learn about services and supports and how to get access to them.
- A Front Door Facilitator will be assigned to each individual to assist in the process of coordinating OPWDD services.
- As part of Front Door, OPWDD decides who is eligible for services.
- The Front Door process will result in the creation of a service plan for each eligible individual.
- All OPWDD services are paid for through Medicaid.
- Individuals can apply at any age.
- The amounts and types of services will vary based on each individual's particular needs.

Cummings Foundation Grant

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for future transition into long-term, meaningful employment upon graduation.

In the current 2016 - 2017 school year, there are 28 students from 11 school districts participating in the nationally recognized WOW Program. With this technology funding from the Cummings Foundation, WOW administrators are hoping to build upon the current 60% of program participants who are moving into paid employment or additional pre-vocational skills programs upon graduation. This documented success has laid the groundwork for WOW Program growth in the coming 2017 - 2018 school year and beyond.

If you are an interested parent, student, or school administrator in need of additional information about participating in the World of Work Program, contact Paula Kerber, Aspire's Coordinator of Individualized Transition Services at (716) 505-5262 or paula.kerber@aspirewny.org.