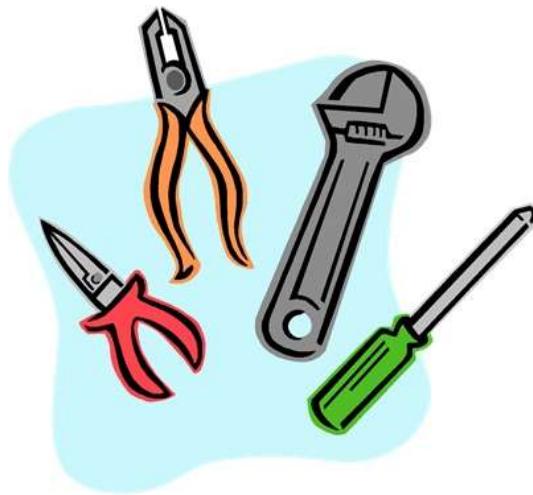


Ninth Annual Tools for Life: Secondary Transition and Technology Fair

March 7-8, 2013

Riverside Hotel – Boise, ID



POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

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Introduction

Planning for the Tools for Life Fair is provided by members of The Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition (IICST). The IICST is made up of representatives from agencies that have a federal mandate to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities after high school.

The **9th Annual Tools for Life: Secondary Transition and Technology Fair** took place in Boise, Idaho with an employment theme. The 2-day fair is held annually for transitioning students with disabilities to learn about resources and tools to help prepare them for life and work after high-school. During the Fair, students were taught self-advocacy skills, given resources like The Moving on Binder, and inspired by exceptional keynote speeches. The Fair was organized around four learning tracks, including; assistive technology, self-advocacy, employment, and post-secondary education. The Fair was an opportunity for students to learn, make new friends, and have fun!



“I loved the conference and recommend it to anyone who has disabilities.” – Student Comment

Tools for Life was not only for the 145 students that attended... the fair was also a fantastic learning experience for the 41 parents, 64 educators, 36 professionals, and 15 college mentors who attended and supported the students. Many of the Fair’s breakout sessions contained information for professionals, and several sessions were provided by, and for, parents.

“I really enjoyed it. Tools is an awesome program. Had a ton of fun.” – Student Comment

Funding

It takes the generous support of many organizations to put on the Tools for Life Fair. Many exceptional individuals donate their time and provide in-kind support. This year’s Fair expenses totaled approximately \$45,000.00. Sponsors and contributors included:

Idaho State Department of Education
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Idaho Assistive Technology Project
Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities
Idaho Parents Unlimited
Idaho Impact
Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and Blind
Computers for Kids
Key Bank of Idaho
Mountain West Bank
Stepping Stones, Inc.
Members of the Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition



“This workshop really helped me to realize about my disabilities and not let anyone put me down because of my disabilities.” – Student Comment

Highlights

Keynotes



To kick off the fair, attendees were treated to a special address from Richard Henderson, Director of Special Education for the State Department of Education. Inspirational Keynote addresses were given by John Evans, and Duane French who work for disability service organizations in Washington State. Both speakers held the students rapt attend while they shared their inspiring life stories. A panel of Employers spoke during lunch to offer employment strategies for the transitioning students.

“What I liked about Duane's talk was how he got hurt, but never gave up on himself. He is a strong man and went through this, but also became even stronger getting this far in life with disabilities he had ever since he was a boy. He's so inspiring, telling me to never let someone destroy your dreams, and for the rest of my life I will look back and thank him for everything.” – Student Comment

It's My Business Expo

A great new addition to the fair was unveiled this year called the **It's My Business Expo**. The Expo featured beautiful metal work, jewelry and other products and services offered by self-employed Idahoans with disabilities. The Expo was organized by the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities, and showcased businesses in an effort to inspire Fair attendees and teach them about the variety of employment opportunities available to them.



“I think it was cool because we got treated like adults.” – Student Comment



Social

Tools for Life is about more than just learning! The chance to make friends and socialize is a large part of what makes the fair successful. Many students took part in the pizza social and dance. Good music was provided by The Country Boys band. With glow sticks in hand, the attendees had a great time dancing, laughing, and making memories!

“This is my community. I liked the dance.” – Student Comment

Attendees

Students from many high schools in various school districts across the state were represented, including: Emmett, Minidoka, McCall, Glens Ferry, Middleton, Jerome, Twin Falls, Blaine Co., Butte, Mountain Home, Boise, Fruitland, Horseshoe Bend, Meridian, Vallivue, Nampa, Filer, Troy, New Plymouth, Lewiston, Nez Perce, Grace Joint District, Highland High School, Middleton, Idaho Virtual Academy, Jefferson, Elmore, Filer, Aberdeen, Moscow, Gooding, and Driggs.



“It was the most important trip of my life”. – Student Comment

Breakout Sessions

Many exhibitors and agencies held informational booths at the Fair. The Breakout sessions listed below provided attendees with a chance to learn about a wide-variety of topics:

Employment Track

“Getting a Summer Job/First Job (The Value of Paid Work Experience)” Julie Sherry

“Maximize Your Job Search and Get an Interview!” Rachel Piepmeyer

“Dream. Discover. Do! Dare to Become Who You Were Meant To Be” Dan Long & Maureen O’Toole

“Solving the Employment Puzzle” Lana Gonzales

“Getting and Keeping the First Job” Lisa Lee

“Engage in Life and Career Planning Using CIS” Christian Busnardo

“Future Ready: Tools to Help Prepare for Your Future Career” Anne Orzepowski

“Beginning with the End in Mind: Transition from Post-Secondary Education to the Workplace” Kim Copeland

“Maximize Your Job Search and Get an Interview!” Rachel Piepmeyer

“My Job Application = My Reflection” Ann Flannery & Steven Birkby

“I loved hearing Dan Long because he helped me with what I want to do in the future.” – Student Comment



iPad Winner!

Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination Track

“You're at Tools for Life! Now What?” Beth Eloie-Reep & Irene Jones

“Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities: An Introduction to the Program, Eligibility, Application and Appeal” Monique Johns

“Seven Steps to Reasonable Accommodations” John Evans

“Off to College” Brenda Kotewa

“Go Vote!” Mel Leviton

“Student and Family Resources from the State Dept of Education” Alison Lowenthal

“Self-Directed Community Support Options” Jada Yancey & Hadley Goff

“How I Started My Own Business” Panel of Business Owners

“Learn to Paint” Toby Schultz

“Guardianship and Your Rights” Mary Jo Butler & Courtney Holthus

“Legal Planning for Life After 18” Charlene Quade

“Transition from School to Work” Therese Varela

“Advice from the Trenches: Information Every Self-Advocate Should Know from Self-Advocates Who’ve Been There!” Shiloh Blackburn, Richard Cardwell & Mike Smith

“Understanding Laws and Policies that Protect Deaf People’s Rights” Steven Snow

“Dream Big” Duane French

“How to Keep my Social Security Benefits if I Work...Using the Social Security Work Incentives!” Scott Hoover

“You’re Moving On!” Irene Jones

“Preparing for a Healthy Transition” Jennifer Zielinski

“Friendship: How to Make Friends and How to Be a Friend” Becky Woodhead

“Working Relationships: Romance and Sexuality in the Working World” Laura Curtis

"I have wondered how people can work with disabilities." – Student Comment

Assistive Technology Track

"iPads Are Not Just for Angry Birds!" Todd DeVries & Rebekah Hill

"AT for Writing at School or in the Workplace" Mike Mann

"Visual Impairments and Assistive Technology" Lisa Baker, Larry Henrie & Scott Pearl

"iPads in the Workplace" Dan Dyer

"Assistive Technology is Rocking My Job! I Can Work and You Can Too!" Dana Gover, Emilie Pennie & Steven Snow

"Using AT Tools to Get the Job" Kathy Griffin

"From No Communication to Full Communication for Deaf and Hard of Hearing" Sonny Wasilowski

"Ten Top Technology Tips" Todd DeVries & Rebekah Hill

"Idaho Hamilton Relay Services for Those with Hearing Loss and/or Speech Difficulties" Emilie Pennie



"I am glad there are people who can help us read and spell." – Student Comment

Post Secondary Education Track

"What's In Your Toolbox?" Heidi Tracht

"College and Advocating for Yourself" Heather Grayson & Terri Scofield

"Writing a Compliant Secondary Transition Plan" Alison Lowenthal

"SPARC: Students and Professionals Accessing Resources in the Community – A Postsecondary Transition Program" SPARC Students & Professionals

"Off to College!" Brenda Kotewa

Self-Advocacy – "Creating a Healthy Transition" Lorisa Wellock

"DHH Transitioning from High School to College to the Workforce" Allison Gonzalez

"This tools for life conference was one thing where I learned to be when I get older." – Student Comment




Measuring Success

A survey was generated and distributed to students and adults with a high rate of completion. The survey asked general-to-specific questions rating the overall success of the Fair. Adult and student Responses to the survey are listed below.






Adult

1. How satisfied are you with the Tools for Life conference?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Highly Satisfied		81.1%	99
Satisfied		17.2%	21
Somewhat Satisfied		1.6%	2
Not Satisfied		0.0%	0
		answered question	122
		skipped question	1

Student

5. How Helpful were the sessions?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Very Helpful		73.1%	76
Helpful		24.0%	25
Somewhat Helpful		2.9%	3
Not Helpful		0.0%	0
		answered question	104
		skipped question	17

Knowledge Before and After Fair – Student

Before Tools	After Tools	Not at All	A Little	Quite A Bit	A Lot	Count
	I know how to use the Moving on Binder.	28.6% (32)	32.1% (36)	17.9% (20)	21.4% (24)	112
	I know how to use the Moving on Binder.	15.2% (16)	26.7% (28)	18.1% (19)	41.0% (43)	105
	I know how vocational rehabilitation can help me.	17.6% (19)	35.2% (38)	22.2% (24)	25.9% (28)	108
	I know how vocational rehabilitation can help me.	6.7% (7)	27.6% (29)	25.7% (27)	40.0% (42)	105
	I know how to be a self-advocate.	13.6% (15)	22.7% (25)	30.0% (33)	33.6% (37)	110
	I know how to be a self-advocate.	2.9% (3)	17.3% (18)	28.8% (30)	51.9% (54)	104
	I know how to make decisions about my life.	8.3% (9)	24.8% (27)	25.7% (28)	41.3% (45)	109
	I know how to make decisions about my life.	2.9% (3)	18.3% (19)	21.2% (22)	57.7% (60)	104
	I know what I am going to do after high school graduation.	15.9% (17)	17.8% (19)	18.7% (20)	47.7% (51)	107
	I know what I am going to do after high school graduation.	6.7% (7)	16.3% (17)	23.1% (24)	53.8% (56)	104
	I know what technology can help me in a job.	20.2% (22)	32.1% (35)	23.9% (26)	23.9% (26)	109
	I know what technology can help me in a job.	5.8% (6)	22.3% (23)	29.1% (30)	42.7% (44)	103
	I know the steps needed to get a job.	13.9% (15)	25.0% (27)	30.6% (33)	30.6% (33)	108
	I know the steps needed to get a job.	3.8% (4)	13.3% (14)	34.3% (36)	49.5% (52)	105

Knowledge Before and After Fair – Adult

	Before	After	Not at All	A Little	Quite A Bit	A Lot	Rating Count
I know how to use the Moving on Binder.			36.1% (35)	20.6% (20)	17.5% (17)	25.8% (25)	97
			12.4% (12)	14.4% (14)	34.0% (33)	39.2% (38)	97
I know how vocational rehabilitation can help my student(s).			9.7% (10)	21.4% (22)	34.0% (35)	35.0% (36)	103
			1.0% (1)	9.8% (10)	37.3% (38)	52.0% (53)	102
I know how to support self-advocacy skills in my students.			12.7% (13)	27.5% (28)	38.2% (39)	21.6% (22)	102
			1.0% (1)	5.8% (6)	38.8% (40)	55.3% (57)	103
I know how to support my student(s) with the skills necessary to make decisions about their life.			8.7% (9)	25.2% (26)	48.5% (50)	19.4% (20)	103
			1.0% (1)	3.9% (4)	43.7% (45)	54.4% (56)	103
I know what options are available to my student(s) after high school graduation.			11.7% (12)	30.1% (31)	44.7% (46)	13.6% (14)	103
			1.0% (1)	6.7% (7)	49.0% (51)	44.2% (46)	104
I know what technology can help my student(s) in their job.			12.0% (12)	45.0% (45)	32.0% (32)	12.0% (12)	100
			1.0% (1)	6.9% (7)	48.0% (49)	44.1% (45)	102
I know what supports are available as my student(s) take steps toward getting a job.			10.9% (11)	41.6% (42)	35.6% (36)	12.9% (13)	101
			1.0% (1)	5.9% (6)	48.0% (49)	46.1% (47)	102
I know what supports are available to my student(s) for college and work.			13.3% (13)	34.7% (34)	40.8% (40)	12.2% (12)	98
			3.0% (3)	8.1% (8)	51.5% (51)	37.4% (37)	99

Tools for Life 2014

Tools for Life 2014 will be held the first week of March 2014 in Idaho Falls, subject to funding commitments.

“Keep moving forward and never give up.” – Student Comment