12th Annual Tools for Life:
Secondary Transition and Technology Fair
March 1-2, 2016
Boise, Idaho

Planned by members of the Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition (IICST) as a collaborative effort to improve outcomes of students with disabilities post-high school

Post-Conference Report Prepared by the Idaho Assistive Technology Project
12th Annual Tools for Life Sponsors

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Idaho State Department of Education
Idaho Department of Labor
Idaho Assistive Technology Project
Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development
Idaho Education Services for the Deaf and Blind
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Idaho Impact
Mountain West Bank

Post-Conference Report Prepared by the Idaho Assistive Technology Project
The **Tools for Life: Secondary Transition and Technology Fair** was held in Boise, Idaho.

The conference is an annual chance for transitioning students with disabilities to learn about resources, tools and strategies to help prepare them for life after high-school. The 2-day conference encompasses more than forty presentations and group activities to expand student knowledge of assistive technology, self-advocacy, college and career readiness.

After attending a Tools for Life conference survey data shows that students have a better idea about their options after high-school and they are more familiar with resources to help them live, learn and work successfully.

**Highlights**

Charlie Silva, Director of Special Education and Jane Donnellan, Administrator of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation kicked off the conference with welcome addresses.

Inspiring and informative keynote speeches given by Jamie Ellison, Tom Ball, and Jennifer Adams connected with the attendees on a personal level. Each keynote speaker faced challenges they had to overcome in their lives which they relayed in order to convey the importance of perseverance and self-advocacy in obtaining your goals. Two of the keynote presenters have a close connection to the conference: Jamie Ellison is an Idaho Educator and Tom Ball actually attended one of the first Tools4Life conferences as a student!

344 people attended Tools for Life:
- 147 high school students
- 20 college students
- 21 family Members
- 49 educators
- 107 professionals

We asked the students the most important thing they learned at the fair. Listed below are some of their responses.

**I Learned:**

- I learned that you can do it no matter what’s the disability
- I've learned about the programs that would help me get a job.
- The biggest thing I learned was that later in life you will be on your own, so you must speak up and stand up on your own.
- I have to dress appropriately for job interviews.
- To be independent and know that I am an individual.
- How to be a self-advocate.
- To pursue your dreams and never give up.
- I learned to be independent and ask for help, and the costs of real life.
- That I am not alone in this challenge and to live life independent.
- I learned that I can do anything. I learned that having a disability isn't something to be ashamed of.
- Your disability doesn’t define you.
- I learned about understanding depression, how to prevent, signs, what leads to it, how to get help.
- Just because someone is disabled, it doesn’t mean they can’t be successful.
Reality Town: 50 students participated in the financial literacy event Reality Town sponsored by the Idaho Falls Community Transition Team. During the activity students used a checkbook and/or a debit card to make purchases and balance expenses in order to come away with a better understanding of what it means to live independently.

Field Trips were provided to Boise State University and College of Western Idaho to give students a glimpse of college life and exposure to post-secondary educational options.

Social: Students had fun at the dance party with entertainment provided by the Country Boy: Chase Doty.

Support: Conference expenses totaled approximately $55,000.00. In addition to this figure countless hours were spent in the planning, preparation, and execution of the conference by many individuals who donated in-kind support. Conference Sponsors include:

- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Idaho State Department of Education
- Idaho Department of Labor
- Idaho Assistive Technology Project
- Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development
- Idaho Education Services for the Deaf and Blind
- Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
- Idaho Impact
- Mountain West Bank
Measuring Success

A survey was generated and distributed to all attendees. The survey asked general-to-specific questions rating “Yes” the skill or knowledge had been gained by attending Tools for Life or “No” they had not been acquired.

Student YES Responses to the survey are listed below.

**Percentage of Student YES Responses Questions 1-4**

- I learned how to make decisions about my life: 97%
- I learned about being a self-advocate: 94%
- I know how vocational rehabilitation can help me: 93%
- I know about the Moving On Binder: 83%

**Percentage of Student YES Responses Question 5-8**

- I know how supports/resources can help me go to college: 78%
- I know supports/resources to help me after high school: 90%
- I know I can get a job: 93%
- I know what I am going to do after high school graduation: 83%
Measuring Success

A survey was generated and distributed to all attendees. The survey asked general-to-specific questions rating the overall success of the Fair.

Adult Responses to the survey are listed.
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Adult Responses to the survey are listed.

**Adult Survey Before Tools**

Sum of Likert Responses Per Question Questions 5-8

- Know Options Available Post HS
- Know Supports to Help Students get Job
- Know AT for Jobs
- Know AT used in College

**Adult Survey After Tools**

Summed Likert Responses Per Question Questions 5-8

- Know Options Available Post HS
- Know Supports to Help Students get Job
- Know AT for Jobs
- Know AT used in College
Tools for Life is tentatively scheduled to be held in March of 2017 in Idaho Falls.

Thank you Boise!

Report Prepared by The Idaho Assistive Technology Project

1187 Alturas Drive
Moscow, ID 83843
1-800-432-8324
www.idahoat.org