13th Annual Tools for Life:
Secondary Transition and Technology Fair
March 6-7, 2017
Pocatello, 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.
13th Annual Tools for Life Sponsors

Idaho State Department of Education
Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Idaho Falls Community Transition Team
Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Idaho Assistive Technology Project
Idaho Center on Disabilities and Human Development
Idaho Educational Services for the Deaf and the Blind
Idaho Department of Labor
Idaho Parents Unlimited
Idaho Impact

Post-Conference Report Prepared by the Idaho Assistive Technology Project
The Tools for Life: Secondary Transition and Technology Fair was held in Pocatello, 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 Alison Lowenthal from Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation kicked off the conference with welcome addresses.

Inspiring keynote speeches were given by Jamie Ellison, Nina G, and Tim Harris. Each keynote speech conveyed the importance of perseverance and self-advocacy in obtaining life goals. Nina G provided a well received fun and interactive session. Jamie Ellison thrilled and entertained the audience by arriving at the conference in full ski gear to demonstrate how he felt like a fish out of water when he was in school. Tim Harris gave out countless hugs and inspired the audience with his life story.

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

I Learned:

- “how life works, during reality town”
- “be proud of my self”
- “people care”
- “it is important to have a good attitude”
- “how I can use assistive technology for college”
- “how to do an interview”
- “my rights and freedom”
- “that it is ok to be different”
- “how to get a job and how to keep it”
- “don’t let your disability stop you”
- “I learned that I can accomplish anything even with a disability”
- “how to be better prepared for life after high-school”
- “I learned how to manage my time wisely”
- “not to give up on your dreams”
- “how I can be independent”
- “how to self advocate and become comfortable to run the show”
- “anything is possible”
- “about living life on your own”
- “that I can stand up for what I need”
- “that everybody can do what they need to and want to”
- “follow my dreams”
- “keep trying and don’t give up on stuff”
- “how you can do anything”
- “I learned about great assistive technology”

284 people attended Tools for Life:

- 142 high school students
- 9 college students
- 10 family Members
- 51 educators
- 72 professionals
**Reality Town**: 40 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.

**A Field Trip** was provided to Idaho State University to give students a glimpse of college life and exposure to post secondary educational options.

**Social** - Students had a great time at the dance party where they ate pizza and played games. The Developmental Disabilities Council provided costumes and a photo-booth to help capture the fun experience.

Idaho State University brought in a virtual simulation service using avatars to support interview skills, self-advocacy, and self-efficacy, for individuals with disabilities. Students practiced their interview skills within a safe, fun, mixed-reality environment.

**Support**: Conference expenses totaled approximately $45,000.00. 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.
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. An “already knew” option was also available.

Student Responses to the survey are listed below.
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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Thank you Pocatello!

Tools for Life is tentatively scheduled to be held in March of 2018 in Moscow, Idaho.

Report Prepared by The Idaho Assistive Technology Project

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Tools4Life 2017