

Q's News

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Talk to Your Legislators to Change Lives

As an advocate for people with disabilities, Quest is continually educating people about the unique issues these individuals face. Florida is experiencing reduced revenue rates, affecting many budgets in the state, including that of disability care. Despite the fact that the revenue may be decreasing, the needs of the people we serve are not. We must make sure that even though our state is experiencing budget cuts, individuals with disabilities will not be forgotten.

Getting involved in this effort isn't as intimidating as you might think; it's as simple as opening the lines of communication with our state legislators. Everyday tasks such as writing an e-mail, creating a personal note or making a phone call to your local representatives or senators is all it takes.

As legislators begin introducing new bills for upcoming sessions, it's especially important for us to come together and inform them about the needs and concerns of people with disabilities that they might not know about. Quest, in partnership with other local disability advocates, had the opportunity to do just that when it co-hosted the second annual Legislative Roundtable in November.

Quest president **Katie Porta** joined Representatives **Dean Cannon, Bryan Nelson, Stephen L. Precourt and Darren Soto** for this legislative forum to discuss important topics such as *disability awareness throughout Florida, how legislators make their decisions, wheelchair and pedestrian safety, transportation funding, and even property tax reform.*



We are glad to have had the opportunity to express our concerns before the 2008 legislative session, and hope that the information shared in this forum will positively impact our local delegation by helping them make informed decisions.

If you have an interest in becoming more involved with Quest's legislative efforts, contact **Katie Porta** at kporta@questinc.org or **Cathy Rogerson** at crogerson@questinc.org.

You may also want to visit www.flsenate.gov and www.myfloridahouse.gov for contact information of all Florida state legislators.

From the president

With the rising cost of delivering services, a constant challenge for us at Quest is to find the financial resources for people with developmental disabilities. Lack of sufficient funds has caused us to turn people away at times. To help us bridge the funding gap, we look for support from the community.

There is a lot that you can do to assist us in continuing our mission. Revenue sources such as personal donations, grants, corporate sponsorships, foundations, and fundraising events help Quest work to fill the gap. Your in-kind gifts and gifts of time are invaluable to us. You can also volunteer your time by helping us work with local legislators to improve the services and funding available for people with disabilities. The possibilities are endless.

Looking at the bigger picture, it goes beyond asking for your involvement in support of Quest... we need your help to build a better community. By working together towards this goal, we could provide quality services to more people and ensure they receive the resources they critically need.

Katie

Board Member Spotlight



Tom Porter

Owner
In The Event, Inc.

Executive Director
ITNOrlando

Since joining the Board of Directors two years ago, Tom has proven to be an integral member and solid support at Quest. Tom is the owner of the event-planning firm In The Event, Inc., and also serves as the executive director for ITNOrlando, a nonprofit organization fulfilling the transportation needs of seniors and people with visual impairments. He brings his great leadership skills, resources and entrepreneurial experience to the board. Also serving on both the Finance Committee and the Leadership Development Committee, Tom focuses on advancing staff and board training and development opportunities.

Always a big help, Tom has demonstrated his unyielding commitment to Quest most recently by taking principal roles during our annual board meeting and Quest for Independence Luncheon. We could never thank Tom enough for his continued support and dedication!



Tampa ADT Program Gets Some Room to Grow

In October, Quest's Tampa Regional office and Adult Day Training (ADT) program moved into a new home! Providing some much-needed room for growth and expansion, the new building has already resulted in the creation of an additional ADT group.

These **eight** different theme-oriented groups focus on improving functionality and skill development of the people served. Each containing eight to nine people, the groups allow for individualized attention and have a unique focus and specialized activities:

Social Interaction & Environmental Awareness

Groups 1 and 6 include activities centered on arts and crafts, adaptive cooking, music exposure and pet therapy. Individuals become aware of choice-making indicators, develop multi-sensory awareness, and improve their functional living skills, including self-care and personal hygiene.

Receptive Communication

Group 2 involves interactive games, multi-media visual stimulation and even horticulture therapy. Group members learn how to explore choice making while also focusing on developing listening and auditory skills.

Expressive Communication & Computer Skills

Group 3 focuses on methods of communication through group projects, stories, computer games and dramatic presentations. In addition to enhancing computer skills, group members gain vocabulary development and increased verbalization and communication.

Creative Arts

Through use of multi-media materials to create art projects, *Group 4* emphasizes pre-vocational skills such as following instructions, on-task focus, and initiation and completion of projects.

Vocational & Production

Aiming to develop a foundation of vocational skills in service and production areas, *Group 5* projects include recycling, document shredding, assembly and packaging. These activities help teach task completion and functional money management while emphasizing community integration.

Music Performance Appreciation

Focusing on music exploration through instrument use, song and dance, *Group 7* provides a hands-on approach to skill development. The music positively affects behavioral issues, while also reinforcing functional skills and the idea of sharing.

Domestic Skills

As the newest group, *Group 8* helps individuals develop domestic skills, such as cooking and housekeeping. This group increases functional ADL (activities of daily living) skills and provides education on personal hygiene and nutrition.



Thank You to Our Supporters

The sixth annual **Quest for Independence Luncheon** was held in November to raise the awareness and resources needed for Quest to provide high quality services to the Central Florida disabled community. Guests enjoyed a live program featuring personal stories from the people we serve, while learning more about all the services Quest offers.

We'd like to extend a special thanks to all **alliance members, donors, table captains, board members, staff, corporate supporters and other contributors** that helped make our event a success!



 **Happy Holidays!**



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