EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

2024 Hawai'i Summit on Employment First

Hawai'i APSE - Association of People Supporting Employment

By Patrick Gartside and Sandee Oshiro, Hawai'i APSE, info@HawaiiAPSE.org

Photo - Welcoming ceremony at the summit of attendees on February 29, 2024. Photo credit Patrick Gartside.

The 2nd Annual Summit on Employment First drew an enthusiastic crowd on February 29 as the Pacific Rim Conference post-event provided inspiration and training for participants aimed at increasing sustainable jobs for those with disabilities.

Expert speakers informed self-advocates, professionals, service providers, and policymakers about the ongoing efforts and strategies to improve employment for those facing challenges in the job market.

Photo - Keynotes Derrick & Julie Tennant.

Highlights of the event included:

- Hearing an uplifting keynote presentation by brother-sister motivational speakers Derrick & Julie Tennant on overcoming obstacles to achieve one's dreams.
- Learning practical steps in approaching employers with a solutions-forward case for hiring people with disabilities.
- Understanding how evidence based supported employment models such as individual placement supports are implemented while keeping mental health and other factors in mind to increase employment success.

The event's lead organizer, Patrick Gartside, said the summit exceeded its goals, reaching more than 120 participants.

> *"It is exciting to see Employment First stakeholders come together from around our island communities to paint a vision of equitable employment for all people in Hawai'i, but we must continue to work together to lay the groundwork for these opportunities to become reality."*

Anyone interested in helping to create a more equitable, inclusive employment future for the disability community in Hawai'i can take these steps:

#1 Watch the summit presentations

available now by visiting go.hawaii.edu/nvL. More videos and slides will be added as available.

#2 Join the Hawaii APSE chapter

The Association of People Supporting Employment First is leading the effort for inclusive workplaces and fair wages and benefits. Help amplify our voices in support of full participation in work and careers.

#3 Sign up

for the Employment Support Professional Community of Practice. Network and share best practices with other professionals who are seeking quality jobs for all.