

## **News Release**

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**Photo cutline:** Each year, the Iberville Parish School System (IPSS) presents a resource rally called "Iberville Family Forum," designed to link students with disabilities to agencies, organizations, job opportunities, and training beyond their high school years. The event was held on November 13 in Plaquemine with more than 200 students from area public schools and many of their parents attending. On stage at the event were Post South staff members, who were one of the businesses recognized for hiring individuals with disabilities. Shown are (left to right) Keith Byars, Liz Trosclair and Editor Tryve Brackin, who spoke at the event. Also on stage were speakers Iberville School Board member Yolanda Laws, Job Corps recruiter Robert Grace, and Families Helping Families leader Cindy Ardion. Speaking at the event was IPSS Superintendent P. Edward Cancienne, Jr. who recognized the Special Education division for recent efforts and he praised the Iberville Family Forum and other outreach to students seeking to transition to jobs and to additional training.

### **Community Supports Students with Disabilities Family Forum Helps Students Transition to Work and Higher Education**

Seven social service agencies, three community college and universities, and local businesses joined the Iberville Parish School System's Special Education division for its annual "Iberville Family Forum" on Friday, November 13, in Plaquemine. More than 200 students from area public schools and many of their parents attended the event, designed to link students with disabilities to resources beyond high school.

Laura Simmons, a student at Plaquemine High School, performed the national Anthem and the ROTC team presented the colors.

Superintendent P. Edward Cancienne, Jr. spoke to the group encouraging the students to move forward to the next level of education and acknowledged recent advances in special education in the parish. Cancienne spoke of technology resources and other advances within the system designed to aid all students with disabilities.

Also speaking at the event was Iberville Parish School Board member Yolanda Laws, who has dedicated many hours of service to leadership in special education services. Laws commended the staff on their recent efforts to bring regular education and special education teaching resources together through workshops and hands-on trainings. She urged the parents to use all of the resources presented during the Family Forum and thanked all of the agencies and companies for participating.

Welcoming the special guests and the Transition Team was Diana Jones, Transition Coordinator, who introduced all of the agencies, the Transition Team, and the event speakers.

Agencies represented were Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Tabitha Bell, 295-8900; Capital Area Human Services District, Developmental Disabilities, Hollette Flowers, 925-1910; Capital Area mental Health Services, Linda Melancon, 925-1910; ARC of Iberville, Linda Johnson, 687-4062; Families Helping Families, Cindy Ardoin and Cynthia Chesterfield, toll free 1-866-216-7474; Social Security Administration, Susan Simonneaux, 687-3586; Workforce Investment, Janecia Fountain, 687-0969; Southern University, Dr. Patricia Hebert, 771-3950; Baton Rouge Community College, Danielle Crockett, 216-8644; Louisiana Technical College, Westside Campus, 687-6392; Job Corps, Robert Grace, 642-0699.

Speakers at the event were Cindy Ardion, Families Helping Families, Tabitha Bell of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Dr. Patricia Hebert, Southern University; Hollette Flowers, Development Disabilities Division, Capital Area Human Services District; Linda Johnson, ARC, and Robert Grace, Job Corps Center in Carville.

Also honored were area businesses recognized for hiring individuals with disabilities. They were East Iberville Culinary Arts, McDonald's, PostSouth newspaper, Popeye's, Citizens Bank, Wiggins Family Dentistry.

Dr. Patricia Hebert of Southern University told parents that each higher education institution has an Office of Disabilities. Students and parents must ask for disability services, she said. Dr. Hebert encouraged students to reach out and seek these exceptional services to help them negotiate higher education on campus. Robert Grace of Job Corps told students of many job training programs and on campus residences for students enrolled in the Job Corps program.

Kathy D'Albor, supervisor of IPSS's Special Education division, has been instrumental in directing educational programs for students with disabilities. Iberville Family Forum is an annual event, which draws students from throughout the parish.

Diana Jones, IPSS Transition Coordinator, introduced seven student success stories, including their current jobs and their individual successes. She praised the students, parents, and the industries for their outreach and opportunities for employment.

The School System's Iberville Family Forum Transition Team members were Diana Jones, Coordinator, Andrea Broussard and Debra Jackson-all schools; Phyllis Martinez, Crescent; Rose Beal, East Iberville; Cheryl McClay, Iberville Elementary; Meshone Zanders, Optional Education Center; April Hamilton, North; Edna Molden, Plaquemine High; Deborah Collins, Crescent; Loretta Pania, Iberville Elementary; Ira Anderson, White Castle; Sharloyn Henderson, Optional Education Center; Tia Campbell, PAS; and Chiketta Oubre Hawkins,

secretary, Special Populations. Parents assisting with the event were Henry Nicholas and Tyrone McClay. Decorations were provided by Phyllis Martinez.

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