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MOVING FORWARD: TRANSITION CONFERENCE FOR YOUTH
NOVEMBER 7, 2009
11:45 A.M.
AHEDD DESSERT TALK

Captioning Provided by:
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>> JEN GARMAN: Excuse me, everyone. We are just going
to have a brief dessert talk by Bill Apter who is an
employment specialist at AHEDD and Michelle Leahey who is a
transition counselor with AHEDD, so, here is Bill.

>> Good afternoon, everybody, are you all enjoying your
lunch?

>> Yes, sir.

>> You are enjoying your lunch as well?

>> You could speak in here. It's on. It's okay.

>> Yes. Yes.

>> And your name is Vangeli.

>> This gentleman all morning has been walking over to
me and asking me if I know Miley Cyrus.

And how can he get a date with Miley Cyrus.

I happen to know Miley Cyrus's dad. Does anybody here
remember Miley Cyrus' dad?

>> Billy Ray Cyrus.

>> Now, for the door prize, only you can answer this,
what was his hit song?

>> "Achy Breaky Heart."

>> You got it. Do we have a door prize?

>> Can we come up with chocolate or something for him?
We will work out a door prize for you. So somebody get
someone from the Holiday Inn to take the door off. How
many people here -- she thought that was funny. How many
persons here with disabilities are already employed? Show

of hands, please? Quite a few. All right.

[Applause]

>> Are you co hosting this with me?

>> Are you going to be my partner for this? I was going back, but I noticed you started.

>> Okay, all right, you can help me if you like. I work for the past three years, I work for a company called AHEDD, how many people are familiar with AHEDD? A lot of people back there. I have seen familiar faces here. AHEDD has been in the non-profit business of helping persons with disabilities for the past 31 years find successful employment and retention. We are also an approved Social Security Administration Employment Network, so if you have -- how many people here have a Ticket to Work? Any hands. Well, if you have one hand back there, if you have a Ticket to Work and you are over 18 and you are looking to go to work, we are an approved Social Security Administration Employment Network, so we can help you find a job, we can help you with your retention for the job, and we can with the help of this lovely lady in the back, Michelle Leahey we can help advise you of your Social Security benefits and any problems you may be having with Social Security. The people that raised their hands that are employed, how many of you got your job through employment agencies? Through employment networks? Anybody?

>> Okay. Well, we are here. Don't walk in front of the screen. Can I duck? We will do that once. As I mentioned, if any of you are looking to become gainfully employed AHEDD is certainly one of the groups out there that can help you gain employment and retention, and help you with Social Security. So while you are having dinner or lunch or dessert, any questions that Michelle or I might be able to help you with regarding employment or Social Security? Not one question? Michelle, do you have a question?

>> Can I only work 20 hours a week?

>> Can you only work 20 hours a week is the question from Michelle. And I will go to Michelle and see if she might have an answer to that. A lot of people think that if you are on SSA, you -- all of your benefits will be taken away, but you can earn more money on Social Security and having a great job at the same time. Is that correct, Michelle?

>> Yes, it is. Ladies and gentlemen, a nice round of applause for Ms. Michelle Leahey here.

>> Well, how can I follow an act like bill? Well, we at

AHEDD are really dedicated to working with transition to AHU. Along with the disability rights network and goodwill and all of these different agencies across Pennsylvania, we actually developed a special initiative to really work with children between the ages of 16 to 24. This whole big age that I don't -- the confusion of parents, the confusion of the barriers for employment, the confusion of all 6 these services and how do they work together? Our purpose is really to help eliminate some of those fears.

And because I know we have them, and I'm sorry, I'm short. I wheel around, I always bring my own chair. Thank goodness, because we have a full house in here. So but really, the purpose of this program today is what our agency does and all of these other great community agencies is really to help these kids figure out their dreams and be able to achieve them and achieve realistic goals. To achieve realistic goals to find employment, to find fulfillment, and to be able to be self sustaining and as independent as they -- as they can be. And one of the ways we do this is through helping provide ongoing counseling, navigating their Social Security benefits because if you don't, if -- you need that safety net. So really that's what we are all about today, all of these things, and thank you, Bill.

>> Thank you, Michelle.

[Applause]

>> Any questions at all that we can help you with regarding employment? Yes, question? All the way over there. Hang on a minute. This is great exercise here.

I'm trying to find an empty aisle here.

And your name is?

>> Deb.

>> And what's your question, Deb?

>> It's not about employment. It's about the whole Social Security thing. And maybe probably you can't answer it in two minutes, but what is the criteria? I don't understand how kids are -- would even be eligible for Social Security when they are still in school and don't they look at -- don't they look at parents' income and I just don't understand that whole thing?

>> Michelle, is that a question that you can intelligently answer.

>>

>> Well, when you are under the age of 18, you are deemed underneath your parents' income, so you are actually -- your parents are responsible for children until the age of 18, when you are 18, you are old enough to vote,

you are considered an independent citizen and can go ahead and apply for Social Security benefits underneath their own name, and that includes SSI, which is an assets based program, and SSDI, if that's the case of their parents being deceased, disabled themselves or retired.

I know Disability Rights Network will be going over this at the meeting at 1:00 and if there is any other questions, I, Phyllis, Jessica, Larry, and Jen can all answer questions for you.

>> What she may be talking is I know students that are 14 or 15 that are getting SSI or SSDI and how they are able to qualify for that as a student I think is what she is --

>> Well, some students are eligible for that under the age of 18 because their parents have low incomes, and under the age -- that's for the SSI benefits. If they are receiving Social Security benefits, it's usually the age of 18 survivor benefits and it may or may not be classified as disabled until they are 18. So it may have to do with that. If you are receiving SSI benefits before the age of 18, it means that you are -- you have a disability according to the Social Security Administration, and you don't have a lot of resources. Or your parents don't have a lot of resources. That's why SSI is very prevalent in Philadelphia, and in lower sections of Montgomery and Chester and Delaware Counties. Okay? Does that answer your question?

>> Do we have any other questions before we wrap up? May I take one more question? Do we have time? The young lady over there in the corner. You are going to make me come all the way over there. We have someone right behind you, too.

>> My question is I just started going back to school and I go two days a week, because I have been out of the work force for six years. And a lot of the technology has changed. Since I am on a partial grant and because of my Social Security and his income, his Social Security, we weren't eligible for full grants. Now, my question is, it's a two-part, I'm going to school and I had to take student loans to cover the rest of my tuition. I notice that they do educational training. Would they be able to help with part of my tuition for the school I -- I go to Lansdale school of business?

>> They meaning Social Security?

>> See, we didn't look into that before I applied?

>> Michelle? Is there another person from Social Security here who might -- talk to Michelle afterward and maybe we can find out that answer. You go to Lansdale

school of business. Was Andrea the lady who brought you in there?

>> That's my wife. Wow!

You set that up perfectly.

Thank you.

We had a question from this lung lady over here. Please let me -- young lady here. We have time for one more question.

Excuse me, let me sneak in between there. Thank you.

>> What's your name first of all?

>> My name is Althena, I was wondering if a kid is still in school and they are past the age of not supposed to be in high school or whatever, and they want to go for SSI, under they allowed to still go because of what their parents make and what they earn?

>> Michelle is bowing her head yes. So talk to her in the foyer. We have a table all set up out there and please come and see us. Thank you, Jen, for letting me.

>> JEN GARMAN: Thank you, Bill and Michelle, and, again, we will have the meet and greet from 3:00 to 4:00, so for any questions you have for Bill or Michelle, feel free to contact them during the meet and greet session. One final announcement that I have following this morning during the plenary, there is a petition for the waiting list campaign out on the Vision for Equality resource table in the hallway outside of the main breakout session rooms and for anyone who is interested in signing that petition, that is available for you to sign. So, thank you, and we should start kind of wrapping up lunch. The next session starts at 1:00. Thank you, everyone.