Jacobb Goodwin is an eighth grader attending Smiths Station Junior High School. He enjoys wrestling and go-carting with his family on the weekends. Jacobb played baseball for many years, but was interested in finding a new athletic activity. His parents encouraged him to try wrestling, and he loved it. He currently wrestles with Smiths Station High School’s Varsity Wrestling team. Jacobb’s post-school goals include attending college and pursuing a career as a high school math teacher and wrestling coach.

Jacobb developed an interest in math due to the positive influences of some excellent math teachers who have taught him over the years. According to Jacobb, these teachers motivated him and helped him enjoy the subject. When asked what makes a good teacher, Jacobb said, “Some teachers treat you like you can’t do it. The good teachers tell me that I can do it and help me believe in myself. They push me to do more than what I could have done otherwise.”

Jacobb recognizes that his classes will probably be more difficult next year when he begins ninth grade. He said that in order to do well he will take the initiative to be organized, take more notes, study harder, and continue to ask for help when he needs it.

GO PANTHERS!!
Auburn University CATTS Scholars host the 2011 Community Transition Expo

Preparation for Tomorrow — Today!
by Addie Littrell

Making the transition from being a teenager to young adult can sometimes be challenging, and for youth with disabilities, this time can be especially difficult. The Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialists (CATTS) scholars from the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, in collaboration with the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI), hosted a Transition Expo on October 27, 2011.

Over 300 area middle and high school age students with disabilities, their family members, and school personnel filled the Auburn University Student Center Ballroom, as well as two additional meeting rooms. State and local community agencies, program representatives, and organizations were present to describe services available to assist these youth as they transition and assume young adult roles and responsibilities.

Information was shared about services and programs available to assist these students in postsecondary environments such as school, leisure, daily living, and employment. Agency and program representatives explained their services through displays, handouts and informative sessions. The keynote speakers for this event were Mr. Nathan Waters and Mr. Jared Rehm from the Auburn University’s Office of Accessibility.

Special thanks to the representatives from these agencies and organizations that made this event possible:

- Achievement Center - Easter Seals of Opelika, Alabama
- Alabama Association for Persons in Supported Employment
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
  Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  Division of Children’s Rehabilitation
- Alabama Department of Mental Health
- Auburn University Best Buddies
- Auburn University, Center for Disability Research and Service
- Auburn University, Office of Accessibility
- Auburn University STEM Program
- Alabama’s Youth and Young Adults in Transition (YAiT)
- Camp ASSCA - Alabama’s Special Camp for Children and Adults
- Montgomery Center for Independent Living
- One-Stop Career Center
- Social Security Administration - ALAWIN
- Southern Union Special Needs Counseling Services
- Storybook Farm Incorporated

We also thank the students and their parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, job coaches, and other professionals who attended this event. From all accounts this event was a great success!
Mr. Bedarius Bell is the State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services for Alabama’s Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). Mr. Bell majored in psychology as an undergraduate and wanted to pursue a “helping” profession, working with people. He found that a career in rehabilitation counseling matched who he was as a person, and allowed him to reach his goal of helping others. Mr. Bell stays current on best practices in transition, as well as policy changes, by representing ADRS on Alabama’s State Interagency Transition Team (SITT).

At ADRS, Mr. Bell coordinates statewide services for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing with rehabilitation counselors, deaf support specialists, sign language interpreters, audiologists, and technology specialists. He makes sure that ADRS provides uniform services across the state and that rehabilitation counselors have the tools they need to serve individuals who may need such services. There are 16 rehabilitation counselors and 7 deaf support specialists who work specifically with individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing in Alabama. Some examples of services that ADRS can provide youth who are deaf or hard of hearing during their transition years include vocational evaluations, college/vocational training, assistive technology, job readiness training, job development and placement.

Knowledge is the key to success. All parties involved in the transition process should learn about the roles of others as they work together for the common purpose of helping youth with disabilities successfully transition from school to post-school-activities and responsibilities.

Mr. Bell encourages students to learn as much as they can about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the role their rehabilitation counselor can play during the transition process. Students can also benefit from understanding their rights and accommodations as they learn to advocate for themselves. Mr. Bell believes that the students who are most successful through the transition process are the ones who understand the role of VR and what VR can and cannot do.

In the spirit of developing a shared knowledge base, Mr. Bell encourages teachers who serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing to learn all they can about ADRS’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and all the specialized services that they can provide. He says the best thing we can do is to work cooperatively and build better partnerships in order to serve all students more effectively.
The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute held its initial advisory board meeting in July 2011. The purpose of the advisory board is to oversee the activities at the institute. Members of this board gathered in July to discuss the purpose of their roles as advisory board members and how they were selected. Dr. Karen Rabren gave an overview of the ATLI in the form of a presentation and a Status Report, highlighting the past 10 years and the Institute’s current status. The presentation and report can be found by visiting ATLI’s homepage, auburn.edu/atli.

**Newsletter Notes**

Do you have an interesting personal story to share about the transition process? Our newsletter staff would like to hear from you!

Call 334.844.5927

Archived issues of ATLI “Directions” are saved at auburn.edu/atli (click on “Publications”).

**Guest Editor**

Christina Adams, M.Ed.
ATLI Graduate Assistant &
CATTSS Program Manager

**ATLI Advisory Board Meeting**

by Myra Thomas

**Advisory Board**

**Dr. Paul Bates**
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

**Dr. Cary Boswell**
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

**Dr. Phil Browning**
Auburn University

**Mrs. Trisston Wright Burrows**
Advocate

**Mr. Brian Burrows**
Advocate

**The Honorable Mike Hubbard**
Alabama House of Representatives

**Dr. Joyce Ringer**
Georgia Advocacy Office

**Dr. Mabrey Whetstone**
Alabama Department of Education

2012 Alabama Transition Conference
March 5 & 6
Marriott at Grand National, Auburn-Opelika
Keynote Speaker: Shari Rusch
For updates visit, auburn.edu/atli

**College of Education**

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