



Texas Beacons of Excellence

Newsletter: October 2023

### Project Events

#### Amarillo ISD Parent Informational Sessions

Friday, November 10, 2023  
6:00pm-7:30pm

Saturday, November 11, 2023  
9:00 am-10:30am

#### U & I Spread the Light Parent Informational Sessions

Tuesday, December 5, 2023  
2:00 pm-3:30 pm  
6:00 pm-7:30 pm

### Upcoming Conferences

**Annual Texas Workforce Commission Conference**  
Nov. 29th - Dec. 1st, 2023  
[ttc.tamu.edu/](http://ttc.tamu.edu/)

**Texas Transition Conference**  
Feb. 28th - Mar. 1st, 2024  
[twc.texas.gov/events](http://twc.texas.gov/events)

### Informative Links

**Job Accommodation Network:**  
[askjan.org](http://askjan.org)

**Texas APSE:**  
[txapse.org](http://txapse.org)

[disabilityinnovation.unt.edu](http://disabilityinnovation.unt.edu)

Partnership Led by:



(Pictured above from left to right: Elyse Luke (TWS-VRS), Ticcara Cassell-UNT, Ryan Cole-UNT, Karina Saucedo-UNT, and Lucy Gafford-UNT)

## Texas Beacons of Excellence in the Community

UNT WISE, TWC-VR, project partners, and site partners attended the first annual Texas APSE conference in Galveston, TX with keynote speakers Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. James Williams. The event was attended by a wide array of people including colleges, educators, service providers, self-advocates, and more presenting on topics that ranged from Universal Design and Disability Etiquette—presented by UNT WISE colleague Lauren Taylor—to Engaging Families in the Employment Process by project partner, Crystal Hence from Virginia Commonwealth University. There was a large turnout for this first conference, and we have received a lot of great feedback. We are already looking forward to the TX APSE Conference in 2024.

The Texas Beacons of Excellence (TBE) team and partners also traveled to Amarillo to conduct the first training session for teachers and staff on 1.) The History of Employment for People with Disabilities and 2.) Social Security Benefits. Teachers and staff expressed leaving with a strong knowledge base to support their students and several resources to assist them along the way. The TBE team was also represented at Amarillo ISD’s Caprock High School Outside Community Agency Night. During the event, parents and students were provided information about the project and encouraged to RSVP for the upcoming informational sessions to learn more details about how their students can participate in the project.

The team also conducted the first informational session for Goodwill Dallas parents, guardians, family members, and caregivers. The turnout exceeded our expectations, with 15 families expressing interest in participating in our project (which is almost half of the individuals participating in 14c work). The team is excited to begin meeting with interested project participants and their parents, guardians, family members, and caregivers to begin the intake process.

Overall, the month of October proved to be both busy and highly productive for the project, setting us on a promising path as we look ahead to the upcoming months.

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