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Contact:
Emily Pieplow
C&E Communications, LLC
(410) 203-1970
epieplow@candecommunications.com

LOCAL DISABILITIES ADVOCATES RAISE FUNDS, TRAVEL ACROSS
COUNTRY FOR HISTORIC NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Pierre, SD --The commitment that the South Dakota Association of Community Based Services (SDACBS) is demonstrating to help people with disabilities realize full inclusion within their communities is truly inspiring. This September, the SDACBS will send 45 individuals to the first ever Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) Summit in Washington, DC, thanks in great part to the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities (SDCDD), who awarded the SDACBS a \$19,000 grant to make the trip possible. Combined with \$8000 of SDACBS' money, the grant will pay for the transportation to the historic AFP summit. The AFP Summit is the first of its kind, and will involve thousands of developmental disabilities advocates coming together to work toward the same goal - full participation for people with disabilities in their own communities.

“South Dakota and its network of community support agencies feel very strongly in the vision of full participation and self determination for persons with disabilities,” said Thomas Scheinost, Executive Director for the SDACBS. “Helping communities fully accept and integrate people with disabilities into their every day lives is the ultimate goal, and attending the [AFP] Summit is a huge step toward accomplishing that goal.”

The vision of AFP, made up of eleven leading organizations serving the developmental disabilities field, is that of people with developmental disabilities living meaningful, productive and personally satisfying lives in their community of choice. The purpose of AFP Summit, which takes place on September 22 and 23, is to have many individuals come together to establish national strategic social and policy goals, and to create a proactive and responsive action plan that will allow full participation to become a reality.

“It’s inspiring to know that we are reaching so many groups and individuals across the country, and the SDACBS’s dedication is a great example of how important the issue of inclusion is throughout America,” said Renee Pietrangelo, chair of the AFP Founders Committee and CEO of the American Network of Community Options and Resources. “We hope that the Summit will help enable the SDACBS to take back a plan of action to achieve their goals on a local level.”

The SDACBS, an association representing 17 community private not-for-profit providers of services and supports for persons with developmental disabilities in South Dakota, will send 25 self advocates, 19 support staff and one family member on the approximately 30 hour bus trip to Washington, DC.

For more information on the Alliance for Full Participation Summit, please visit www.allianceforfullparticipation.org.

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