



July 2021

vol 11, no 16

# The Focus



## BILL GILBERT, A COOL LIFE!

By Dan Peccia, Oregon APSE Board Member At Large

Bill Gilbert lives in Forest Grove and is known to anyone who shops at the local Safeway. He shared his journey to employment. His first job was in the summer before his sophomore year. Bill wanted to work in a veterinarian's office so he stopped by a local vet, picked up an application and took it home. His mom helped him complete it and he got hired. Bill liked the job but one day when he had to hold a bull mastiff down to be euthanized, he decided the job was a little too painful for him. He felt ready for a job change.

During high school, Bill had a variety of work experiences. He worked in the school cafeteria but that didn't pay except for a free lunch. When Bill was 18, he went back to work for the school, but this time as a paid employee.

To get transition services and paid employment, Bill and his family had to fight to get the right job and to advocate for a full life. Bill insisted that not just any job would do and continued asking for work that fit his skills and interests. Finally Bill's persistence paid off and on March 13, 2000 Bill was hired at Safeway as a courtesy clerk. Bill is still there today after 21 years!





## A COOL LIFE (cont'd)

Bill has good benefits and four weeks of vacation time each year. He really likes his job and is only 9 years away from retirement – if he chooses to retire then.

Bill continues to work at Safeway through the pandemic. When the pandemic first started he noticed a customer spraying a cart with Lysol. It caught his attention and made him realize that something different was happening. Bill got serious about masks and hand sanitizer.

Bill is active in his community. He loves the theater and is an actor, assistant director and stage manager. Bill has run the lights and sound board, made sets, and has even managed the Forest Grove Historical Society. He combined his love of theatre and history to help create a unique event using a diary of A.T. Smith, one of the founders of Pacific University. This event featured walking tours around the Pacific University campus with actors in character explaining the origins of the school and life at the time.

A leader for many years of the Washington County Self-Advocates, Bill is a graduate of the Blue Print Project and Partners in Policymaking. He also currently serves as the Board President of Self-Determination Resources, Inc.

Bill's advice for new people starting out in the work world: "See if you can't get an aptitude test to see where you would be a good fit. Because going out on your own is confusing and scary. Having direction is really helpful."

A message  
about the  
Board Advance  
(Retreat) from  
our President.



OR APSE President,  
CJ Webb

## ABOUT OREGON APSE

Emerging from months of Zooming, the Oregon APSE Governing Board gathered on May 26th at the Tigard Embassy Suites for the bi-annual Board Retreat. First, **THANK YOU** to our Washington APSE friend, Wally Tablit, for facilitating. At his suggestion, the day became a "Board Advance" rather than a Retreat, as it resonated with **moving forward**. See page 3 for highlights.



Guest Speaker

**Marlee  
Matlin**

Academy  
Award Winning  
Actress & Activist

**SAVE THE DATE**

9.21.2021 | 9 - 11am

Annual Oregon APSE  
Chapter Meeting



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**August 4** — Work Opportunity Tax Credits, Heidi Dirkse & Glen Bishop, **APSE Hour 4-5pm.**

**August 11** — The Power of Language, CJ Webb, **Training 1:30-3:00pm.**



## Who is our Oregon APSE Mystery Member (MM)



*"Most important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."*  
Dale Carnegie

July's Mystery Member's favorite quote.

MM is a native Central Oregonian who holds a BS in Human Development and Family Science from OSU. Life is full with a family cattle ranch and a private employment consulting business.

MM has a heart for helping others and finds great joy in assisting people to find the employment of their dreams. MM's career began by volunteering for non-profits before working for the County Supported Employment. For the past two years, MM has provided employment services through VR for Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook Counties.

MM raises crossbred show cattle who are also considered family. MM's four daughters have shown cattle all over the Western United States and are highly successful.

Can you guess our July Mystery Member?

[See who it is at our website](#)



## ABOUT OREGON APSE Board Advance Highlights

We are almost 10 years old since the Oregon Chapter rebirthed in June 2012! We discussed intersectionality and our commitments. A **strongly shared commitment is that "everyone (who wants) can work...with the right support."** We will be re-defining committee goals with this key commitment at the center. The day-long discussion illustrated that committees are not always working in unison. I will work to create a cohesive structure that assures leadership and support to be productive. I encourage and welcome all Oregon APSE members to join the Membership, Employer Engagement, or Communications committees as this is an excellent way to get involved.

A key component we discussed is being responsive to member needs. As such, we host Employment related trainings, and the monthly APSE Hour on various topics (1st Wednesday at 4pm) for members but open to all. Your thoughts and ideas are needed, wanted, and appreciated. We are also developing a succession plan for Board members and Officers. We desire Chapter Board members who bring commitment, diversity and intersectionality. Currently, we are specifically seeking someone who brings the voice of family members. If you are interested in this, other Board positions, or joining a committee email me at [oregonapse@gmail.com](mailto:oregonapse@gmail.com). I hope to hear from you!

