2011 Job Seeker Symposium Write up:

In October of 2011 the Disability Coalition of the Golden Crescent held the first of two events during Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Job Seeker Symposium “Preparing Today’s Workforce” was held in the120 South Main Street Sam Houston Room on October 13, 2011 to help inform and advise Job Seekers with disabilities about programs and strategies to find and retain employment in the Golden Crescent region.

Workforce Solution’s Golden Crescent started the presentations with a “Dress for Success” presentation to give examples of proper and improper ways to dress for interviews and during the work day. Carole Kolle, Workforce Director in the Golden Crescent, narrated that portion and then explained Work in Texas and other Workforce Programs too all in attendance. She finished by inviting all attendees to visit the Workforce Center on the first floor for more help in locating access to employment and resources in the Golden Crescent Community.

Next Billy Blanchard, Disability Program Navigator and Disability Coalition secretary, spoke to the audience about the decision to disclose when someone has a disability. He went into detail about the appropriate times and methods to disclose a disability to an employer or potential employer. He explained that the disclosure decision is not mandatory, but it is wise to have a plan and necessary to claim when requesting reasonable accommodations at work. Billy mentioned a handout titled “Disclosure Decisions to Get the Job” that was available to pick up upon entering the Symposium, and suggested it could be used as one of many guides when making the decision to disclose because it contains questions and suggestions about how to prepare.

After Mr. Blanchard spoke, Albert Pulido from San Antonio Independent Living Center and Golden Crescent region’s Community Work Incentive Coordinator, spoke about Social Security Work Incentives. His main concentration was the Ticket to Work program so he mentioned how Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent, SAILS, and other service providers were all Employment Networks who could help Individuals with Disabilities to find Jobs.

To finish the Symposium, service providers that were in attendance sat at tables located around the room and conducted mock interviews. This was used to prepare Job Seekers for interviews and answering some questions that might come or during an interview. Job Seekers were excused to leave when they were finished with their interview practice.

Total Attendance: 42: 30 Total Students Job Seekers with Disabilities, 12 from Service Providers