



2735 Whitney Road, Clearwater, FL 33760

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CONTACT: Taylor Ham
(703) 970-3675

ServiceSource Network Board of Directors Members Visit Abilities of Florida

Clearwater, FL—Members of the ServiceSource Network Board of Directors had an opportunity to get a first hand look at the work ServiceSource Network affiliate Abilities of Florida is doing during a Board of Directors meeting held May 27-29 in Clearwater, Florida.

Board Members were briefed by Abilities of Florida staff on the affiliate's various rehabilitation, employment and housing programs before taking a tour of three housing sites. The tour was comprised of visits to one unit from each of three Abilities housing programs: HUD 811 Subsidized Rentals, Home Ownership and Owner Rehabilitation.

The first stop was a visit with Barbara McSherry, a seven-year tenant at Morningside Condominiums, Abilities' first HUD 811 subsidized rental site for persons with disabilities who have incomes at or below fifty percent of the area median income level. Barbara explained to Board members how the scattered site housing concept fit her lifestyle, and how Abilities helped her ensure that her rent was not more than 30 percent of her adjusted income.

The second site Board members visited was the home of Heather and Andy Griffith a couple who are extremely proud of their home; a unit Heather purchased six years ago. Board members learned how Heather's unit was retrofitted to accommodate her electric scooter, including the addition of exterior ramps, curb cuts and interior modifications to increase accessibility. The Abilities housing program helped Heather obtain affordable mortgages that allowed her to make the modifications.

The third and final stop was to see the home of Ronald and Clara Simon, a unit that had gone through more than \$47,000 worth of accessibility modifications, including roofing, flooring, a new kitchen, accessible bathroom, completion of a family room, code upgrades to electric and hurricane resistant windows. Although Mr. and Mrs. Simmons both acquired mobility limitations due to unexpected disabilities, they wanted to stay in the home they had lived in for

more than thirty years. The Abilities housing program helped them obtain an accessibility grant and deferred loan that helped make the improvements possible.

The briefing and tour was designed not only to give Board members a closer look at one of the ServiceSource Network affiliates; it was also an opportunity for them to connect to the organization’s mission and see first hand how it translates into meaningful changes in the lives of people with disabilities. “Having the opportunity to get out and actually see the programs in action and meet the people who benefit from them is an invaluable experience,” said Joseph J. Sorota, Jr., Board Chairman. “Experiences like these really bring our mission to life.”

The ServiceSource Network combines national expertise with local experience to provide individuals with disabilities an exceptional service delivery experience through innovative and valued employment, training, rehabilitation and support services. With operations in nine states and the District of Columbia, The ServiceSource Network collectively serves more than 10,000 people with disabilities and directly employs more than 1,300.

For more information about the ServiceSource Network, please visit our website at <http://www.ourpeoplework.org>.

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ServiceSource Network Board Members visit the home of Ronald Simon, an individual who has received assistance from Abilities of Florida’s housing program.