Utah Parent Center receives CAC award

Sue Reeves

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From left: Peggy McMillan, chair of the Utah Parent Center board of directors; Tom Brownlee, CAC member; and Helen Post, executive director of the Utah Parent Center.

The Utah Parent Center (UPC) is the recipient of the Consumer Advisory Council’s most recent Community Investment Award. The UPC, now in its 30th year, helps parents help their children, youth and young adults with all disabilities to live included, productive lives as members of the community.

A check in the amount of $1,000 was presented on Thursday, Aug. 29 to UPC Executive Director Helen Post by Tom Brownlee, a self-advocate, member and former chair of the CAC at Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities. The CAC is comprised of self-advocates, family members and representatives from state agencies. Brownlee nominated the UPC for the award.

“The Utah Parent Center accomplishes its mission by providing accurate information, empathetic peer support, valuable training and effective advocacy based on the concept of parents helping parents,” Brownlee wrote in his nomination letter. The center provides training related to special education law, effective communication, participation in planning processes and other relevant topics.

CPD Director Bryce Fifield explained the idea behind the Community Investment Award.

“We wanted a way to give people with disabilities a voice in the community,” Fifield said. “We wanted to help those with disabilities to develop a stronger, more informed voice than we often have in self-advocates. It often feels like people on advisory councils are only there to rubber stamp what the feds say. This was a chance for the CAC to decide for themselves how to administer and control a small amount of money.”

Post said the center always appreciates acknowledgement, whether for its training materials or other activities.

“The ones that speak to us from the community are the ones that mean the most to us,” she said. “This means more to us than some other accolades. It’s really meaningful for the CAC to give this to us.”