

URLEND Trainees Experience Exchange Program | CPD

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01/05/2016

Trainees from the Utah Regional Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities program at Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities presented their experiences in an exchange program at a poster session at the recent Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD) conference.

The Utah trainees traveled to difference PacWest LEND programs in Alaska, Hawaii/Guam, California and Colorado for the exchange opportunity

Ana Caballero, a URLEND trainee in audiology, visited Hawaii and had this to say: "This experience gave me the opportunity to compare and learn how programs function, as well as to meet strong leaders from different fields in different systems, states and cultures that were loving and caring for children with special health care needs and their families ... Getting to know these wonderful personalities full of hope, joy, and happiness taught me that there will always be a solution to problems, no matter how hard this could be, a smile and a friendly hand can make a huge difference to the people we work with ... A life-changing experience!"

Jennifer Goldman-Luthy, a URLEND trainee in pediatrics, also visited Hawaii and had this to say: "The Hawaii group uses a notebook/binder full of printed fliers from different groups. They periodically gather to update the contents and then disseminate it to settings like primary care clinics so that staff can share copies of the information with families in need. In Utah we keep our resource database in electronic format and update it periodically through interfacing with other databases and occasional focus groups ... This has indirectly impacted my leadership by making me more aware of different approaches to achieve the same ends, and the some of the benefits and drawbacks of each."

Nicole Graham, a URLEND trainee in nursing and public health, visited Alaska and had this to say: "The leadership project pushed me and helped me increase my confidence in many skills such as communication, prioritization,

having a long-term vision, and teamwork. I also had the chance to see what it is like to provide developmental therapy and public health nursing at the very top of the world in Barrow, Alaska ... This experience impacted my view on how important it is to try and maximize our resources so we can provide care to those who would not have access to it otherwise."

Valerie Collier, a URLEND trainee and genetics counselor, also visited Alaska and had this to say: "My experience in Alaska exposed me to the unique healthcare challenges of rural areas. I was able to see how leaders from the LEND program in Alaska and other healthcare workers ... have created solutions to overcome these challenges. It helped me to recognize that the status quo is not always the best way to get a job done and it takes people willing to advocate for change to improve the system."