

MIDWEST TRANSITION INSTITUTE 2022

SustainABE-L Futures A HUGE SUCCESS!



Image credit: Lisa Poff, Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project

Image Description: On the left, a brick wall with the Loyola emblem ends with an open metal gate, and there are trees and green grass in the background. On the right, an outline of the state of Illinois is filled with a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Across the bottom is the text SustainABE-L Futures.

The 2022 DeafBlind Midwest Transition Institute (MTI) was a success! Some activities (a Talent Show, student work on a transition portfolio, a seminar by Olaya Landa Vialard and George Stern on “Informational Interviews,” and a Services and Technology Fair) were completed virtually. The first in-person MTI was on August 5 – 8, 2022 in Woodstock, Illinois at the Loyola University of Chicago Retreat and Ecology Campus. With nine other partner states and two national agencies, young adults, mentors, and parents of young adults met to share experiences that support youth transition plans as outlined in individual youth portfolios. Activities for young adults included:

- Mentor led sessions and panels on topics like “My Transition from School to Adult Life” and “Tips for Leading Your Portfolio Meeting,”
- Yoga, a trip to North Wall Rock Climbing, and casual games into the night (including photo booth fun!)

Sessions for parents included

- “A Child-Parent Retrospective: Transition from High School to College & Work” by a DeafBlind college student and his mother, “Letting Go: Specific Strategies to Let Your Child Take Charge,”

- A trip to a speak-easy and making doggie snuffle pads to donate to Leader Dogs.

Young adults all agreed that the information they learned was useful, and that they learned something they will use at home or school (such as learning about magnifiers, live stream captioning, trying a guide dog, using kitchen tools and gadgets designed for people with visual impairments, learning sign language, working with anxiety, and speaking up for themselves). Parent evaluations noted all parents strongly agreed or agreed that MTI was relevant to their family, and 100% strongly agreed that their young adult will benefit from attending. Parents said they planned to follow up on referral to vocational services, different tips about transition to college, things to help with vision changes, requesting live captioning for classes, accessible pharmacy options, and allowing their child to self-advocate. Soon there will be recorded sessions to view – check the “[What's New](#)” section of the Project Reach website for updates. Next year MTI will be at Webster University in St. Louis, MO from July 13 – 17, 2023. If you know a young adult and family who would benefit from attending, please contact Project Reach! Enjoy these candid photos from this year's MTI!



Image description 1: A white dog face with brown nose and dark eyes faces the camera. A hand and a guide harness are visible. The dog is wearing a cheese-head style hat.



Image description 2: A person with longer white hair is standing by a microphone behind a podium. To the left of the person is a blue screen with print. In front of the person are people, seated and facing the podium, some turned to the text. A Sign language interpreter is seated in front of and to the side of the podium, close to some seated persons.



Image description 3: A photo of a large room, with many people in the background. In the foreground there are two people seated behind a table. On the table, there are printed materials and devices. In front of the table there are two young adults. One is standing and appears to be looking at the items on the table, and a second is bending down and touching an item.



Image description 4: A wall with colorful projections resembling rocks fills the background. A person in the lower half of the picture is holding a rope. That rope appears to move upwards and back down towards a person with a ponytail in a harness. The person in a harness is partway up the rock wall.



Image description 5: A group of young adults sit in a circle. Sign interpreters are seated in the middle, and throughout. Print is being projected on the wall.