

Michigan Hosts National Conference

AgrAbility staff, clients, and stakeholders converged on Grand Rapids at the Amway Grand Plaza hotel the first week in October for the AgrAbility National Training Workshop (NTW). Approximately 150 people from various state projects participated in networking, break-out sessions, tours and work groups for the four day conference.

The week started off on Monday evening with a welcome reception on the Riverfront Patio and a display of different state and stakeholder displays. Tuesday was a full day of morning meetings, break out sessions, and a special dinner with Jim Gibbons, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries International, giving the keynote address. A lively auction was held after dinner with items

that were donated by the state projects. Over \$2000 was raised for the farmer scholarship fund. This money allows clients to attend the NTW.

Wednesday consisted of the "unconference" session. This was an opportunity to have discussions about topics without the constriction of traditional break-outs, and was well received. A lot of great discussions and ideas were generated. Val Farmer was the luncheon keynote speaker.

The Thursday tours highlighted Michigan agriculture or Michigan Rehabilitation options. The agriculture tour started in the morning with a client in Pullman and highlighted some of the different modifications he has made. The afternoon was spent at Wal-

ter's Gardens, a wholesale perennial grower. The rehabilitation tour started with tours of Goodwill Industry operations in the Grand Rapids area in the morning. A tour of Mary Free Bed, a regional rehabilitation



hospital, concluded the day in the afternoon. Both groups met at Meijer Gardens for lunch and time to wander the gardens and sculpture parks.

Golfing for Farmers with Disabilities

On a warm September evening, 52 golfers from The Andersons company came together to support Michigan AgrAbility. The golfers were from The Andersons Grain Division, Albion, White Pigeon and Reading facilities, as well as other friends and family. The 13 teams met at Tomac Woods Golf Course in Albion for a nine hole scramble.

Amy Garrison, an Account Representative with the Andersons, heard about Michigan AgrAbility through the annual Alpha Gamma Rho hog roast. "We knew we wanted to donate the money to a charity and we thought this would be perfect," Garrison said. "The \$4000 donation will be used to directly help farmers with their modifications," Michigan AgrAbility Coordinator, Kelly Kack-

ley said. "Through the grant, we are unable to pay for modifications, so this type of donation can go a long way in helping clients who may need some financial assistance." The annual outing concluded with a dinner and awards. For more information on The Andersons, contact Amy Garrison at amy_garrison@theandersonsinc.com



Did you Know?

- Michigan AgrAbility has worked with over 180 farms/farmers
- One of the most common disabilities with our clients is arthritis
- An on-farm accident is not the only reason to call us. Many of our clients have had chronic conditions or off-farm incidents
- There are 22 states with AgrAbility programs and Purdue hosts the National program
- Michigan has worked with farmers in 53 counties

Upcoming Events

November 14-16 - MiOTA Conference	Kalamazoo
December 8-10 - Great Lakes Fruit & Veg Expo	Grand Rapids
January 16 - Michigan Family Farms Conference	Battle Creek
January 30 - Northern MI Small Farm Conference	Grayling
February 3-4 - SW MI Horticulture Days	Benton Harbor

For more information, contact
Michigan AgrAbility at:
989-227-6455
ewaltkel@msu.edu
www.michiganagrability.org

These materials are based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services (CSREES), United States Department of Agriculture, under special project number 2007-41590-03789.

Michigan State University Extension Programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status.