

Technology in the Disability Arena

USBLN Conference features Youth with Disabilities in Innovation Lab

The 2016 USBLN conference in Orlando, FL offer the Rising Leader Academy and pre-conference innovation lab (iLab). Sixty-eight students and recent graduates with disabilities participated in the iLab to design innovative products and services for businesses to be more inclusive of people with disabilities in both their hiring practices and workplace environments. Conference participants had the chance to learn about these ideas while visiting the exhibit hall and speaking to the students one-on-one and vote for their favorite. The top two teams then competed "Shark Tank" style at the closing conference plenary. The "EXcess Ability" team was selected by a panel of judges from Ernst & Young, Microsoft, Northrop Grumman, Prudential and Boeing as winners of the competition with their proposed idea to become the "Angie's List" of accessibility products and services for corporate America.

The US Business Leadership Network also hosts the Career Link Mentoring Program, which places college students and recent graduates with disabilities in a six month mentorship with business leaders in their desired career field. Thirty of this year's eighty-two mentees attended the conference as part of the Rising Leader Academy to interact with their mentors, company representatives, and other youth leaders. Eight of the Rising Leaders were actually offered jobs on the spot at this year's conference, with other offers in the works. For more information, please visit <http://www.usbln.org/>