



National Disability Institute's REI Tour
1667 K Street NW, Suite 640 | Washington D.C., 20006
Phone: (202) 296.2040 | Fax: (202) 296.2047

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Contact:

Johnette Hartnett
(202) 296.2043

The Real Economic Impact Tour Tops 600 Million Dollars in Refunds for Low Income Workers with Disabilities

Real Economic Impact Tour 2011 Kick Off October 19, 2010

October 19, 2010, Washington, D.C. – For the fifth year in a row, the Real Economic Impact Tour (REI Tour) led by the National Disability Institute (NDI), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and over 700 community partners set a new record for reaching low income workers with disabilities providing free tax preparation assistance, financial education, and a pathway to saving and economic stability. With an unprecedented mobilization of volunteers in 100 cities nationwide, over 180,000 individuals with disabilities were the recipients of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other favorable tax credits and deductions in 2010. Backed by business, government, and community groups, the Real Economic Impact Tour brought the five year total of assistance to 693,402 individuals with disabilities and over 663.8 million dollars in tax refunds. Knowledge, a new way of thinking, determination, peer support, and partnerships define the elements of the REI Tour.

"In these uncertain economic times --- where the majority of working age adults with disabilities are living in poverty and becoming further distanced from their American Dream --- the REI Tour is making access to free tax and asset building advice and services a life line of hope for a better economic future," stated REI Tour Director Johnette Hartnett.

Before an expected overflow crowd at the National Press Club, government partner IRS and corporate sponsors Bank of America, AT&T, Walmart, and Acorda Therapeutics will make the business case for supporting outreach and education activities to this growing market segment.

The highlight of the Press Club event will be the presentation of the first Annual American Dream Video Award to Kenzi Robi of San Francisco, CA. Sponsored by Bank of America, individuals nationwide submitted their personal video about what it means to seek the American Dream as a person with disabilities. Thousands of individuals cast their vote after watching the five videos selected by an expert panel. Kenzi Robi is an individual with significant disabilities; injured at 19 from a gunshot wound, he has struggled but continues to believe in the power of the American Dream. He lives in his own apartment, is engaged to be married, is a talented artist, and helps others with significant disabilities as a counselor and mentor. "I hope my video allows people to realize how lucky they are, disabled or able-bodied, and to realize that anything is possible, if you put your mind to it," said Kenzi. To accept the award in person, Kenzi will fly to Washington, D.C. and stay in a hotel for the first time in his life. This is also his first trip outside of San Francisco.

The kickoff event will additionally honor outstanding cities, organizations, and individual leaders inside and outside of government for their achievements in 2010. REI Tour City Awards will be given to Birmingham, AL; Salt Lake City, Utah; Hartford, CT; and Tampa, FL. The Federal Employee Awards will be given to Jim Gatz of the Office of Community Services, Administration on Families and Children, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Don Dill, Senior Tax Analyst, IRS. The Outstanding Leadership Award will be given to Brian Gallagher, CEO of United Way Worldwide. REI Tour Outstanding Achievement Award will go to Tom Foley, Assistance Director of the World Institute on Disability.

October 19, 2010 marks the kick off for year six of the REI Tour. Expected to touch over one million individuals with disabilities and their families over the next 12 months in 100 cities, the REI Tour challenges conventional thinking about the status quo of disability synonymous with poverty and incapacity. The REI Tour will continue to design a roadmap to financial freedom with advice, education, and services that believe in the possibilities that result from work, savings and asset development.

“One in five families has a member with a disability. Disability cuts across race, gender, age, and ethnicity. People with disabilities are the fastest growing minority in America,” said Michael Morris, NDI Executive Director.

Join us at the National Press Club, at 529 – 14th Street, NW, 13th floor, Washington D.C., on Tuesday, October 19 from 1 P.M. to 3 P.M. for the 2011 REI Tour Kick off and celebration.

For more information, please visit www.reitour.org

Website: <http://www.realeconomicimpact.org/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/realeconimpact>

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