

# Governor's Council on Disability names 2014 Award Winners

*Winners exemplify standards of excellence in enhancing life for individuals living with disabilities*

## 2014 Inclusion Award Winners

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the award winner and honorable mention of the **23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Inclusion Award**. The Inclusion Award and one Honorable Mention are presented annually to recognize private and public employers, individuals, and organizations that have successfully included people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, and leisure activities. Individuals are also encouraged to nominate state and local government divisions or employees they truly feel excel in inclusive practices.

**The 2014 Inclusion Award winner is Wayne Crawford**, Executive Director of the non-profit Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation, who has been promoting livable environments for people with disabilities for many years. Wayne's mission is to bring awareness to communities and developers concerning the need for accessibility in housing. His organization provides support to individuals with disabilities as they search for a home that meets specific needs. He has worked closely with the Department of Mental Health and the Missouri DD Council to build accessible homes throughout Missouri.

In 2013, Wayne collaborated with several partners including the Governor's Council on Disability to lead a campaign among stakeholders to identify specific universal design criteria that would serve the disability and aging community, and fit with the practical aspects of affordable housing initiatives.

**The 2014 Honorable Mention goes to Mercy Hospital's Disability Inclusion Services**, an outstanding leader in promoting an inclusive work environment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through its Supported Employment program, Mercy currently employs 60 people with developmental disabilities (with a goal of 100 by 2016) in a wide range of jobs. Supported Employment at Mercy offers individuals with disabilities competitive wages, comparable benefits, accessible transportation, and career advancement opportunities.

The concept of inclusion is infused into the hospital's culture, which is demonstrated by their Disability Inclusion Training and annual celebrations of employment disability awareness. Additionally, Mercy recently created a Director of Diversity and Inclusion position within the Human Resources Department because at Mercy it is important that all employees are cognizant of the needs of their fellow co-workers. Furthermore, everyone in Supported Employment goes through the Mercy Leadership Training program.

The success of Supported Employment led to the creation of Mercy's Volunteer Supports in March 2009. Volunteering at Mercy allows individuals with developmental disabilities the chance to learn new job skills, build their resume, socialize, and network within the Mercy community, and has led to volunteers receiving jobs elsewhere in the community. Since 1999, the Supported Employment program has developed collaborations with the SB-40 funding boards and local nonprofits to implement a highly successful model for supported employment in the corporate sector.

Mercy opened a Learning and Development Center in January 2012, which provides assistive technology to Mercy employees and outside agencies that support people with disabilities. Mercy is a clear example of how inclusion works and makes for a stronger community.

The awards will be presented at the Power Up conference at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia on April 14, 2015.

For additional information, please contact the Council at 573-751-2600 or by email at [gcd@oa.mo.gov](mailto:gcd@oa.mo.gov)

On the web: <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

## 2014 Youth Leadership Award Winner

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the winner of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Leadership Award**. The Youth Leadership Award is a program to recognize an outstanding Missouri youth (age 18-30) with a disability that has demonstrated exemplary leadership by making a difference in their community.

### **The winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Leadership Award winner is Claire Solomon**

Claire Solomon is an alumni of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities. Claire takes her knowledge of leadership skills and applies them to everyday life. While she was still in high school, she provided presentations on invisible disabilities to her peers. Claire exemplifies the spirit of giving back to her community and demonstrates her willingness to take the initiative in being active in her community by taking part in the St. Louis Arc's Neighborhood Experiences project, the Paraquad Youth Group, and Variety's Bike for Kids Program. Currently, she is an art student at Missouri State University and continues to go out of her way to become active on her campus by participating in the Maroon Madness, a dance marathon, and volunteering at the Turner center, assisting other young people with their art.

The award will be presented at the Power Up conference at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia on April 14, 2015.

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