

Governor's Council on Disability

2013 Inclusion Award Winners

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

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the award winner and honorable mention of the **22nd 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 2013 Inclusion Award winner is Deborah Baldini, University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL)

UMSL has emerged as a leader in fostering a culture of inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the implementation of its [SUCCEED](#) program. UMSL has spent the last five years developing this program, utilizing the principles of universal design. SUCCEED is a post-secondary program that allows people with disabilities the opportunity to live on campus, while taking classes that help them focus on employment that matches their skills and interests, and experiencing internships with local employers. The program was initially proposed to UMSL by Dr. Deborah Baldini, a parent of an individual with an intellectual disability and Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences at UMSL. Her vision, commitment and leadership lead to the implementation of the SUCCEED program for the 2013-14 Academic Year. SUCCEED is the only residential post-secondary program in the State of Missouri at this time.

The Honorable Mention for 2013 goes to Jeff and Andrea Cunningham; Melaina's Magical Playland

Jeff and Andrea Cunningham had a beautiful little girl named Melaina. Born with Nemaline Myopathy, Melaina died from complications of her condition and has been the inspiration for the all-inclusive, [accessible playground](#) that is now a reality in Cape Girardeau. The Cunninghams formed a not-for-profit organization that worked to raise the funds to build this inclusive playground. Adults and children of all abilities now have access to a playground where children with disabilities can play alongside their peers without disabilities, and adults with disabilities can play with their children.

The awards will be presented at the Power Up conference at Tan-Tar-A in Osage Beach on April 15, 2013.

For additional information, please contact the Council at 573-751-2600 or by email at gcd@oa.mo.gov