



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

Volume 1, Number 3, November 2015

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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Missouri Celebrates Hands Around the Capitol

by Rob Honan

On October 6th, "Hands Around the Capitol-Missouri," took place on the south lawn of our state capitol. The two-hour event was billed jointly as a 25th celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a recognition of "October as Disability Awareness" month. There were dynamic political and personal speeches provided by many talented individuals. The crowning moment, and namesake, of the event occurred when the crowd, speakers, members of the community, and a local grade school surrounded the Capitol holding hands while aerial photos of the spectacle took place.

The lead up to and the planning of the event was probably the most cohesive process that I have ever been involved with. Members of the planning team included staff from Rural Advocates for Independent Living, Northeast Independent Living Solutions, Paraquod, West-Central Independent Living Solutions, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, and the Governor's Council on Disability. By design or luck, each member of the team gravitated to their strength and the final product reflected this. In my mind, there were FOUR distinct parts: *Facilities Management and the Flyover*: West Central Independent Living Solutions; *Media facilitation*: Missouri Mental Health Foundation and NEILS; *Speaker recruitment*: RAIL, GCD, Paraquod; *Audience Recruitment*: GCD and Paraquod.

there were speeches about the ABLE ACT, employment, the ADA and youth involvement from: State Treasure Clint Zweifel, Former State Senator Chuck Graham, Missouri Deaf and Hard of Hearing executive director Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Suzan Weller of Disability Resource Association, Representative John McCaherty, and youth speakers Matthew Pearl and Daniel Andersen. Rachel Baskerville assisted the festivities by introducing our two youth speakers.

As a precursor to the event, members of the planning team and Daniel Anderson were interviewed by KWOS and KBIA radio and KRCG TV. The media assistance was instrumental in making the local community aware of the event as well as showcase talent in our community.

The event was attended by more than 400 members of the public, including 20 of the 22 Centers of Independent Living in Missouri, 40 members from the Missouri School for the Deaf, and over 350 school children from neighboring St. Peter's School. The event was a true success!

The event itself began at noon with a fiery pep talk by Chris Worth of Paraquod. He spoke passionately about the need to see the disability community as "family" and "community." His talk set the tone for the rest of the event. After his talk, master of ceremonies Rob Honan, introduced Mike Nietzel from the Governor's Office who proceeded to read a proclamation from the Governor. After the proclamation was read,



Are You Registered to Vote and Accessible Voting

by Laura Mueth

Are you registered to vote? If not, registering to vote is easy!

The Secretary of State's website (<http://s1.sos.mo.gov/elections/goVoteMissouri/register.aspx>) provides access and a few options:

1. Fill out the application online from a computer, tablet, or smartphone.
2. Print your county voter registration application off the Secretary of State's website and mail it in.
3. Fill out a request form and the office will mail one to you.
4. Request an application by phone at 573-751-4936.

You can also fill out an application at any government office that provides public services, such as the local license office, the county clerk's office, and state agencies such as the Governor's Council on Disability.

Individuals can contact our office at gcd@oa.mo.gov or 800-877-8249 if they would like us to send them a voter registration application.

Centers for Independent Living may also have applications or computers that can be used to complete the online application. If individuals are 17 ½ or 18 years old they can check with their high school. Many of them have applications available.

It is also important to make sure your residence information is updated if you have moved so you will know the correct polling place to use.

There are a few important things people with disabilities should know about voting. If you have a mobility disability, you can request that election officials bring a ballot to your car so you can vote or you can contact your local election authority to be placed on a list to have an absentee ballot mailed

to you prior to each election. If your polling place is not accessible, you can request to vote at a more accessible polling place or a central location.

Every polling place must have an accessible voting system including the ability to enlarge the text of the on-screen ballot and an audio ballot which reads the ballot selections. If you are unable to cast your own ballot because of a disability, you are allowed to bring someone to the polling place to assist you or you may request assistance from the workers at your polling place. The Governor's Council on Disability produced a YouTube video last fall which covers these provisions and shows an accessible voting machine. It can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/p6M9uXnRW14>. The accessible voting machine used in your county may look different than the one in the video because there are a few companies which manufacture and sell the machines.



Service Animal Etiquette

by Laura Mueth

This is the second article in a series concerning service or assistance animals. This article will discuss etiquette for the general public and what the public should expect from assistance dogs.

Guidance for the general public:

- The dog is a tool just like any piece of assistive technology. It is not a pet.
- Ask for and be given permission before petting the animal. Many people think as long as they ask they can pet. That is not true. You should

wait for permission because some individuals have rules about how often or in what situations the dog can be petted or interact with others in order to maintain the dog's working attitude. Some people will pet the dogs without asking stating, "I'm a dog person."

- Do not cause distraction for the dog by offering food or water, whistling or making other noises. Distractions can cause the dog to lose focus on the handler and not respond as quickly as may be needed. Depending on the situation, it

could be an issue of safety for the individual with a disability.

- Talk to the individual with the disability, not the dog. While the dog may occasionally look as though it needs attention from you, it does not.

Expected behavior of the assistance dog/service animal team:

- The dog should be housebroken meaning it is not having accidents in public.
- The dog should not be bark-

ing or making other noises unless it is performing a trained task such as alerting that the individual with a disability needs help.

- The dog should not be eating things off the floor.
- The dog should be under the handler's control at all times. This can be in the form of a leash, harness, or voice.
- The handler should ensure that he/she or an assistant clean up after the dog including after the dog relieves itself outside.

2015 GCD Awards Programs

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is now accepting nominations for our annual awards programs.

The **Youth Leadership Award** recognizes a youth with a disability (age 16-26) that is demonstrating leader-

ship, advocacy, and dedication to the disability community in Missouri. To nominate a youth for the award go to <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

The **Inclusion Award** honors an individual, organization, or

business that demonstrates excellent leadership in the inclusion of people with disabilities. Please submit your nominations at

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



2015 APRIL Conference

GCD staff member Dawn Evans and MOYLF alum Rachel Baskerville attended the 2015 APRIL conference in Virginia Beach, October 16-19.

The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) is a national membership organization consisting of centers for independent living, statewide independent living councils, and other organizations and individuals who are concerned with independent living issues of people with disabilities living in rural communities.

APRIL invited Dawn, who chairs the Association of Youth Leadership Forums (AYLF) and directs the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MOYLF) to present to the conference on starting and sustaining a Youth Leadership Forum. Dawn took this opportunity to gather AYLF leaders across the states as well as bringing Rachel to represent the youth of Missouri to share the successes of the YLF program. The presentation resulted in several new states demonstrating interest in starting YLF programs.

Rachel is a 2005 graduate of the MOYLF and is the chair of the MYLIFE Alumni Associa-

tion for MOYLF. There are now 244 Alumni and many have demonstrated their leadership skills and support through speaking at public events including transition conferences, in the schools, and the 2015 Hands Around the Capitol. Rachel deserves much credit in providing opportunities to empower these youth and to keep them connected with the MOYLF family. Rachel was nominated and received scholarships from APRIL, MOSILC, and the MO-YLF to attend the APRIL conference. Rachel joined approximately 50 other youth ages 15 – 30 at the Youth conference held by APRIL. They focused on independent living issues and disability history highlighting the progress made and changes still needed. Rachel attended meetings with AYLF executive members giving input on future strategic planning of holding a National YLF Alumni conference, networked with other organizations, and brought back some fresh ideas to implement into the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, where Rachel serves on the steering committee.

The 2016 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is now accepting applications online at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>.

by Dawn Evans



Dawn (center left) and Rachel (bottom left) at APRIL conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia

To learn more about the AYLF visit

<http://www.nationalaylf.org>

To find out more about APRIL

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Michael Esser, Chesterfield
- Jeff Grisamore, Lee's Summit
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Fulton
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Derek Smith, Osage Beach
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Robert Honan, Executive Director
- Claudia Browner, Office Manager
- Dawn Evans, MO-YLF Coordinator
- Laura Mueth, Legislative Coordinator

Handing over the Gavel

During the Governor's Council on Disability's quarterly Council meeting in September, former acting chair James Trout officially handed over the gavel to newly appointed chair Yvonne Wright.

On behalf of the Council, Ms. Wright thanked Mr. Trout for his work on the Council and his leadership over the last four years (2011 - 2015), and presented him with a recognition plaque. (pictured on right)

Mr. Trout continues to serve as a Council member.

Upcoming Council meetings:

November 6, 2015
February 8, 2016
April 22, 2016
September 16, 2016
November 18, 2016

Legislative Education Project

The purpose of the Legislative Education Project (**LEP**) is to educate and motivate individuals by providing opportunities to become active in creating positive public policies for people with disabilities.

LEP at the Capitol provides the opportunity to receive updates on disability-related bills, attend committee hearings, and meet with legislators. It is facilitated by GCD staff who are knowledgeable on disability policies.

The LEP at the Capitol is a one-day experience that will be offered upon request to organizations or groups during the 2016 legislative session (January - May). Each LEP at the Capitol will be adapted to meet the organization's or group's needs.

LEP on the Road brings the LEP presentation to you. We can come to your office, meeting, center for independent living, or event. A minimum of five participants must be present.

Please contact the Governor's Council on Disability at 573-751-2600 or gcd@oa.mo.gov to get more information or schedule your group.

by Claudia Browner



Legislative Education Project (LEP) Online

The Legislative Education Project (LEP) provides three learning modules and three videos online.

The online LEP learning modules are:

1. **Understanding How a Bill Becomes a Law**
2. **Your Elected Officials and General Assembly**
3. **Navigating the House and Senate Websites**

The online LEP videos offered are:

1. **Accessible Voting** - Educates individuals with disabilities about their voting rights and includes a demonstration of an accessible voting machine.
2. **Attending House and Senate Hearings and Providing Testimony** - Educates on how one prepares for testimony and describes how a hearing is conducted.
3. **Building an Effective Relationship with Your Legislators** - Provides communication tips with your state representatives and state senators.

View online at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LEP.htm>