



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

GCD Update

by Claudia Browner

The year 2016 was a very busy and eventful year for the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD). The [Annual Report](#) was completed in December 2016 and summarizes all of GCD's activities. It has been published and is posted online at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/annualreports.htm>

The start of the new year has already brought some changes to our agency. Robert Honan resigned from his position as Executive Director in January and the new director is scheduled to start with GCD on March 1 and will be announced at that time.

The GCD staff has been busy continuing its programs—the Legislative Education Project, the Inclusion, Youth Leadership and Website/IT Awards programs, and the planning and preparation for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. Updates on all of our programs are featured in this issue.

GCD Awards Programs

by Claudia Browner

The Governor's Council on Disability has received many highly qualified nominations and selected the award winners for 2016:

The [Inclusion Award](#) honors a Missouri resident, organization or business that illustrates excellence in leadership for the "best of the best inclusion practices".

The 2016 winner is **UD for Yoga** in Kirkwood, and the Honorable Mention goes to **Art Inspired Academy** in Springfield.

The [Youth Leadership Award](#) honors a youth with a disability that is demonstrating outstanding leadership, advocacy, and dedication to the disability community in Missouri.

The 2016 winner is **David Vector** from St. Louis.

New in 2016, the [Website/IT Award](#) honors an organization, business, or local government that provides an outstanding and fully accessible website.

The 2016 winner is **Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living—MERIL** in St. Joseph.

The awards will be presented to the winners at the Power Up conference in Columbia on April 4th. Look for more information about awards presentation and the winners in the next issue of our newsletter!

Legislative Update

by Laura Mueth



Have you heard about the [Legislative Update](#) produced by GCD and want a copy delivered to your inbox every Friday? Contact Laura with your name and email address. She can be reached at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov (preferred method), 573-751-2600, or 800-877-8249. The email includes a Microsoft Word version, a PDF version, and a plain text version to accommodate a variety of needs and preferences.

The Legislative Updates are also posted on our website at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legupdates.htm>

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Legislative Education Project

by Laura Mueth



The [Legislative Education Project](#) has already been “on the road” this year. The first training was held on January 3 at ADAPT in St. Louis. The audience was organization staff and participants with severe, persistent mental illness.

January 23 and 24 brought an across the state trip with trainings in Kirksville for the staff of Rural Advocates for Independent Living on Monday and two trainings in Kansas City at The Whole Person on Tuesday. A training for staff and professionals was held in the morning and a training for consumers and others with disabilities was conducted in the afternoon. In total, fifty-eight people have participated in the LEP on the Road program. The trainings have all been very well received. In the month of March another will be held in West Plains to train staff from various organizations.

If your organization is interested in participating in the Legislative Education Project at the Capitol in Jefferson City or the LEP on the Road, please contact Laura Mueth at 573-751-2600 or by email: laura.mueth@oa.mo.gov

The photos below (left to right) show LEP participants in St. Louis, Kirksville, and Kansas City.



Disability Rights Legislative Day 2017

by Laura Mueth



Disability Rights Legislative Day will be **Wednesday, March 15** from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda. Registration begins at 10:00 a.m.

The theme for the event is “We Choose Inclusion”.

The topics focused on this year during the rally will be proposed changes to the guardianship laws, MO HealthNet buy-in for workers with disabilities, focusing funding on community-based supports, and systemic threats to services. For those who are not familiar with this event, it has been done annually for sixteen years and is designed to provide an opportunity for individuals with disabilities, family members, service providers, and others to have constructive conversations with legislators regarding the issues which impact them daily. Each year specific topic areas are chosen by the planning committee based on discussions and bills in the legislature. Invitations are given to bill sponsors and other elected officials as well as advocates so that they may share their thoughts and ideas with those in attendance.

If you would like more information about this year’s event, you can contact Laura Mueth at the GCD office at 573-751-2600 or the committee co-chairs, Karen Gridley and Becky Dickey. Karen can be reached at 816-627-2270. Becky can be reached at 573-634-3223.

Missouri Youth Leadership Forum Update

by Judy Grainger



Jessica Cox, Think Outside the Shoe™

Jessica Cox is this year's [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) keynote speaker and is scheduled to speak at to the delegates and Alumni on Tuesday, July 18th. Jessica's inspirational message will motivate the crowd to live beyond limits!

Jessica Cox, Think Outside the Shoe™

Born without arms, Jessica Cox could have succumbed to the low expectations that ushered her into this world. In spite of them all she graduated from college, learned to swim, drive a car, surf, scuba dive, fly an airplane, become a Taekwondo State Champion, and live independently using her feet in ways others who take their hands for granted can only imagine. She holds the title of the first person without arms to get a black belt in ATA Martial Arts and the Guinness World Record for the first pilot to fly with her feet. Yet, her greatest triumph in life stands far above any physical feat. It is her unrepentant regard for herself as a whole person, her high degree of self acceptance that gives her the freedom and power to insist that society accept her, too, just as she is.



YLF Alumna Caitlin Bartley is scheduled to close out the week's events at the Closing Ceremony on Saturday, July 22nd. Caitlin will speak to this year's delegates and their families about the importance of self-determination and taking risks!

Thank you to our dedicated MO-YLF Steering Committee: Rachel Baskerville, Alissa Marlow, Dawn Cook, Diane Wieland, Kim Gee, Jaki Jefferson; Jessica Miller, Letiah Fraser, Mark Ohrenberg, Debbie Reed, Amy Siekerman and Stephanie McDowell. These individuals work with the staff at the GCD throughout the year to plan this one of a kind program.

Applications for delegates and volunteer staff are still being accepted and available on our website at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/y/f.htm>.

DMH Blue Ribbon Award recognizes Kirksville Area's employment efforts

by Duane Shumate, DMH/DD

The Kirksville area of the Central Missouri region received a Blue Ribbon Award in February from the Department of Mental Health (DMH). This area includes Adair, Clark, Grundy, Knox, Lewis, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Mercer, Putnam, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby and Sullivan counties. The award recognizes the efforts to connect more than 25 percent of the individuals it serves to employment services. Two individual service organizations, Adair County Senate Bill 40 Board and Macon County Commission for Developmentally Disabled, received Blue Ribbon Awards in late 2016. Now the entire Kirksville area has reached Blue Ribbon Status.

The Blue Ribbon Award for **Empowering Individuals through Employment** is given by the DMH Division of Developmental Disabilities. The employment services, which include career planning, job development/placement and employment supports, enable Missourians with developmental disabilities to find and keep jobs within their communities.

"Individuals with disabilities want jobs where their skills and strengths are recognized and valued," said Division Director, Valerie Huhn. "Through partnerships with local Senate Bill 40 Boards, Targeted Case Management organizations, community providers, and area businesses, the state has built a committed team to help individuals gain the skills they need to work, earn money and connect with others to build a better life."

Gaining access to employment services is often the first step. Many times, services are only needed for a period of months as the individual learns the duties of a job. Then, they can maintain their job without paid supports.

Missouri is an *Employment First* state, meaning that all individuals who want to work can work, when given the opportunity to build upon their unique talents, skills and abilities. For more information contact Debra Walker by e-mail debra.walker@dmh.mo.gov or call (573) 751-1647.

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
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Derek Smith, Osage Beach
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Acting Executive Director
- Judy Grainger, MO-YLF Coordinator
- Laura Mueth, Legislative Coordinator

Visually Impaired: Now What?

The American Foundation of the Blind's VisionAware™ website helps adults who are losing their sight continue to live full and independent lives by providing timely information, step-by-step daily living techniques, a directory of national and local services, and a supportive online community.

One of the GCD's Council members, DeAnna Quietwater Noriega, is featured on VisionAware's website in a blog entitled Visually Impaired: Now What? Noriega's blog posts cover topics such as, "The iTouch-Project: Personal Safety For People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired".

[DeAnna Quietwater Noriega's blog posts](http://www.visionaware.org/blog/visually-impaired-now-what/deanna-quietwater-noriega/author/145) can be found at: <http://www.visionaware.org/blog/visually-impaired-now-what/deanna-quietwater-noriega/author/145>

Missouri Advocacy Summit

by Judy Grainger

SAVE THE DATE—OCTOBER 7, 2017

Alumni of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Partners in Policy Making and Paragard's Tuscher Institute invite you to join us for a day of advocacy and fun!

The Missouri Advocacy Summit's outcome is to develop an infrastructure to collaboratively advocate by cultivating grassroots efforts in various communities, while simultaneously coalescing statewide.

The event will take place Saturday, October 7, 2017 at Maryville University, St. Louis; other communities around the state such as Springfield, Kirksville, St. Joseph, Kansas City etc. will be linked into the event via Facebook live.



Keynote speaker Stephanie Woodward, Director of Advocacy Center for Disability Rights, Inc. (CDR) Rochester, New York

CDR is a disability led, not-for-profit Corporation that works for national, state, and local systemic change to advance the rights of people with disabilities.

Prior to joining CDR Stephanie worked as a litigator in Miami, Florida focusing on disability rights. Stephanie previously worked for Senator Tom Harkin (IA) and assisted his Disability Counsel on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions by researching, drafting Legislation, and making recommendations for legislative action in regards to disability rights issues.

The keynote and advocacy session will be conducted statewide; then each site will be breaking into local community action during lunch and the afternoon.

The event flyer can be found on GCD's website at http://disability.mo.gov/files/Missouri_Advocacy_Summit.pdf

Registration information will be shared in the upcoming newsletters. For questions about the event, please contact the GCD at 573-751-2600.

Upcoming Events

March 2017: Circle of Friends Art Show Exhibit featuring art from artists with disabilities
Kirksville Arts Center, 1902 South Baltimore, Suite 101, Kirksville MO

March 15, 2017: Disability Rights Legislative Day
Missouri State Capitol Rotunda, Jefferson City (see page 2 for more info)

April 2-4, 2017: [Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo](http://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/)
Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia, MO
<http://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/>