



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD HOSTS ANNUAL MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Claudia Browner

What makes a great leader? How can you overcome barriers and reach your goals? What qualities are employers looking for in an applicant? What does disability community mean, and why is disability history an important part of the American history? These, and many other questions were answered during the 19th annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) for high school students with disabilities (MO-YLF), hosted by the Governor's Council on Disability and its partner agencies—Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, Paraquad, and Missouri Centers for Independent Living.



From July 18—22, 2023, a record number of 32 delegates from 17 counties in Missouri participated in the MO-YLF, at the University of Missouri's MU campus in Columbia. The delegates had the opportunity to experience college life, and to participate in a variety of learning sessions and fun activities. The MO-YLF also provided extended leadership opportunities to the ten returning program alumni who participated as team leaders for the incoming delegates.

The program's learning topics included disability history and advocacy, self-determination, independent living, assistive technology, and how to become involved in the legislative process in Missouri.

Other highlights included keynote speaker Jordan Toma, a mentor event with successful leaders from the disability community, a community service project for the WAGS Therapy Dog Training Program, employment/college and career day, and a resource event. The legislative day at the Capitol in Jefferson City included a special welcome from Governor Parson, who spoke to the delegates about becoming leaders in their communities. In addition, house representatives Proudie, Stinnett, Toalson Reisch,



Governor Parson welcomed the delegates in Jefferson City and spoke to the youth about the qualities of a good leader.



MO-YLF delegate TJ Clime pets a WAGS therapy dog

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GCD HOSTS ANNUAL MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

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and Walsh Moore conducted a bill hearing with the delegates, followed by a floor debate in the House chamber. The legislative day activities ended with a debate in the Senate chamber, lead by Senator Black.

Evening recreational activities included an adaptive sports night hosted by Midwest Adaptive Sports, a talent show and a dance with a DJ and photo booth.

Throughout the week, the delegates worked on their personal leadership plan and poster to set goals for their future. They were able to grow their leadership skills and learn about helpful resources and future leadership opportunities. The delegates graduated from the MO-YLF after presenting to staff, parents, and guests at the closing ceremony on the last day of the event. We cannot wait to see the great things these young leaders will be doing in their future!



MO-YLF delegates and staff are seated on stairs on MU campus

We appreciate and recognize all of the volunteers who participated as staff for the event, as well as the mentors, panelists and speakers. The MO-YLF would not be possible without their tireless work throughout the week.

A special thank you goes to the agencies and organizations who fund the MO-YLF through sponsorships and donations.

The MO-YLF is very grateful for their support of this life-changing program!! For more information about the MO-YLF, and the list of the program sponsors and donors, please visit

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>

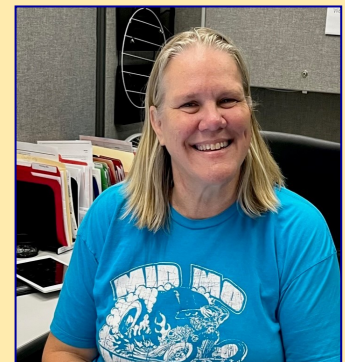
In July 2024, we will be hosting the **20th annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum!!** Stay tuned for more information to come this fall, and share this exciting opportunity with high school students in your communities.



**CELEBRATING GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON
DISABILITY (GCD) WORK
ANNIVERSARIES**

**RACHEL RACKERS—5 YEARS
JENN PETTIT—1 YEAR**

CONGRATULATIONS!



WE ARE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU ON OUR TEAM!

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL COMING IN AUGUST

by Laura Mueth

The 2023 Legislative Priorities Poll is an opportunity for you to share with us, as well as state legislators and elected officials, issues you have with education, housing, transportation, employment, and health care for people with disabilities along with changes you would like to see.



The poll will be available for completion beginning on August 28 and closing on November 3 at 5:00 p.m. It has been updated to reflect changes over the last year and current issues/concerns.

Keep your eye out for the Survey Monkey link to participate. It will be distributed via email and posted on GCD's [Facebook](#) page and [Poll](#) web page. PDF versions which can be completed and returned to our office will also be available through those avenues. Our staff will be available to assist anyone who will have difficulty understanding the questions or completing it independently.

If you have not received the Poll in the past and would like to receive it directly once it is ready, contact Laura Mueth at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

Because GCD wants to hear from a wide variety of individuals, we encourage sharing the Poll with anyone connected to disability issues. This includes people with disabilities, families, employers, friends, employees, medical professionals, caregivers, agency staff, community members, educators, organizations, etc. The GCD looks forward to hearing from everyone!

CALLING ALL MISSOURI ARTISTS FOR GCD POSTER CONTEST

by Claudia Browner

Don't miss your opportunity to have your artwork featured on the Governor's Council on Disability's 2023 poster in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

All Missouri residents are invited to participate in the annual poster contest. You must submit your artwork by September 15 to be eligible to win. The winner will receive a framed copy of the poster and the poster will be shared statewide during the month of October and featured on the GCD website, annual report, newsletter, and social media.

NDEAM is celebrated nationwide in October to recognize and highlight the important contributions of workers with disabilities. This year's NDEAM theme—Advancing Access and Equity—recognizes the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have equal opportunity to prepare for and succeed in employment. In addition to this theme, artwork can relate to Inclusion, Employment and Community.

Find more information and contest rules at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest>

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council Members

- Ronald Hack, Council Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Traci Ritter, Cape Girardeau
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Senior Program Specialist
- Jennifer Pettit, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

MISSOURI CLAIM NOW CALLED MISSOURI SHIP

by Claudia Browner

The Missouri Department of Commerce and Insurance (DCI) has been providing valuable assistance to Missourians with Medicare for the past 30 years, through its Missouri CLAIM program. The program has now been rebranded as Missouri SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program).

Funded through a grant from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in coordination with Missouri Connections for Health, the Missouri SHIP program offers free assistance to Missourians eligible for Medicare, and their caregivers. The program helps consumers choose the best plan to meet their needs and assists those with limited income in determining whether they qualify for a low-income subsidy and/or Medicare Savings Program.

Missourians can contact Missouri SHIP for free assistance during Medicare open enrollment (October 15—December 7), or anytime throughout the year, by phone at 800-390-3330 or online at missouriship.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **August 10-20, 2023 ([August 16 Senior Day](#))**
Missouri State Fair, Sedalia
<https://www.mostatefair.com/>
- **August 27-29, 2023**
Real Voices—Real Choices Conference, Osage Beach
<https://www.missourimhf.org/real-voices-real-choices-conference/>
- **September 27-29, 2023**
MACDDS Annual Conference, Columbia
<https://macdds.org/annual-conference/>
- **September 28-29, 2023**
Center for Disability Inclusion—Inclusion Summit, Kansas City
<https://www.centerfordisabilityinclusion.org/inclusion-summit-2023.html>
- **October 16-17, 2023**
Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training, Adair County
<https://frdat.niagara.edu/training/trainings/>
- **October 18-19, 2023**
Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training, Warren County
<https://frdat.niagara.edu/training/trainings/>

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.