

Governor's Council on Disability

2011 Inclusion Award Winners

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the award winner and honorable mention of the 20th 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 also are encouraged to nominate state and local government divisions or employees they truly feel excel in inclusive practices.

2011 Inclusion Award Winner: Kent Schien, CEO of Innoventor, Inc.

Kent Schien, CEO and founder of St. Louis-based engineering firm Innoventor, Inc., dedicates much time to ensuring that people with disabilities are included and involved in their communities and workforce. Schien implemented a supported employment program at his company two years ago. Currently, three individuals with developmental disabilities gain valuable skills through their jobs at Innoventor -- in fact, a fourth position is being developed now -- increasing the company's diversity. As a board member of Life Skills, an organization that supports people with developmental disabilities as they find meaningful work and live in homes of their own in St. Louis, Schien heads up a local corporate council to encourage other businesses to employ people with disabilities. By raising awareness and sharing information and success stories through the council, Schien is making a tremendous community impact and helping to cultivate jobs that normally would not be easily obtained by individuals with developmental disabilities. Not only does Schien support inclusiveness on a local level, but he also advocates at the state level and internationally. A 25-year supporter of Easter Seals, which offers services to help people with disabilities achieve personal goals, Schien serves on the Missouri state board for the Easter Seal Society as well as the organization's international board. In fact, Easter Seals named Schien "Missouri Volunteer of the Year" in 1990 and 2005.

The Honorable Mention Recipient for 2011 is: Ameren

Ameren is committed to the advocacy of individuals with disabilities by increasing its focus on inclusion in the work environment and eliminating barriers to personal independence. Ameren provides assistive technology to their customers as well as employees.

Ameren Network for Disabled Employees' (ANDE - a professional employee resource group) mission is to engage, empower, and include employees by providing educational opportunities that will assist with the development of individuals with disabilities.

Since its inception, ANDE:

- Partners with St. Louis Public Schools by hosting consecutive annual Disability Mentoring Days, participates in the Annual Transition Fair, and assists with the All-Star Tennis Day Program.
- Serves on the St. Louis Area Transition Team (SLATT) by sharing employment practices to improve transition outcomes in the region for high school students with disabilities.
- Partners with St. Louis Arc's summer program, Teens in Motion, to provide informational tours at Ameren Missouri.
- Is a corporate leader for the Missouri Business Leadership Network by demonstrating best practices in hiring and retaining people with disabilities in the workforce
- Sponsors the Missouri Disabled Water Ski Association to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities by involvement in adaptive water skiing.

The awards will be presented at the 2012 Power Up Assistive Technology conference in Columbia on April 3, 2012.

For additional information, please contact the Council at 573-751-2600 or by email at gcd@oa.mo.gov. Governor's Council on Disability: www.mo.gov/disability/gcd, click on Inclusion Awards.