

# Governor's Council on Disability

## 2013 Youth Leadership Award Winner

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

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the winner of the **1st Annual Youth Leadership Award**.

### **First Annual Youth Leadership Award winner is Aaron Likens**

New in 2013, the Governor's Council on Disability initiated a program to award an annual Youth Leadership Award to recognize an outstanding Missouri youth (age 18-30) with a disability that has demonstrated exemplary leadership by making a difference in their community.

The winner of the 2013 Youth Leadership Award is Aaron Likens, a young man who was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome at the age of 20. After receiving his diagnosis and finding his way to a career of being an Autism Ambassador for Easter Seals Life Skills, Aaron began to spread the word about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). He is an accomplished speaker, having led presentations to more than 37, 000 people in Missouri over the last three and a half years. He is also a published author of a book titled "Finding Kansas: Decoding the Enigma of Asperger's Syndrome" and a blog, "[Life on the Other Side of the Wall](#)," which has thousands of followers. Aaron's most recent focus is on speaking to students with the hope of reducing bullying by increasing awareness.

The award 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](mailto:gcd@oa.mo.gov)