

Governor's Council on Disability

2017 Inclusion Award Winners

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

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the award winner and honorable mention of the **26th 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 are also encouraged to nominate state and local government divisions or employees they truly feel excel in inclusive practices.

2017 Inclusion Award winner: Talent Connect, UCP Heartland, St. Louis

Talent Connect, a program of UCP Heartland, is changing the way hotels in the St. Louis metropolitan area fill open positions by offering a single point of entry for businesses and streamlining the hiring process. UCP staff partners with regional adult service providers and state departments to source potential program candidates. More than 53 individuals with a disability have been hired by collaborating St. Louis area hotel and hospitality companies. Because of the program's unique design and embedded on-site supports, 85 percent of these employees have retained their position, many receiving awards and accolades from their managers.

Honorable Mention: Kate Hannon, St. Louis Arc

Kate Hannon's career as an early educator and inclusion advocate spans more than 30 years. For many families in the St. Louis area, Kate was the person who "opened the door" to inclusion for their child. As a therapist working in homes, as a teacher in the classroom, and an advocate and program director, Kate's commitment to inclusion has made a lasting impact on the St. Louis Community. Kate currently serves as a senior director of Belle Children's Services of St. Louis Arc, where she oversees programs serving more than a thousand young children and families each year.

For additional information, please contact the Council at 573-751-2600 or by email at gcd@oa.mo.gov