



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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Governor's Council on Disability [website](#)

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## GCD Publishes First Newsletter

Welcome to volume one, issue one of the new Governor's Council on Disability newsletter. This short newsletter will provide you with information relating to the Governor's Council on Disability programs and activities specifically and to disability rights and disability information in general.

The first order of business is to re-introduce myself as well as to introduce my office mates. This is my second term as the director of the Governor's Council on Disability, having been here from 2002 to 2006. For those that are interested, I was in Washington state for five and a half years, and Germany for three years.

I have an all-star cast to help me carry out the mission of the GCD.

First, I am reunited with Claudia Browner, who fills in as the finest office manager this agency has ever seen. She brings so much energy and good humor to the job and I am truly blessed to be working with her again.

The other two members of the team are bring their own brands of uniqueness to the Council. The first is Laura Mueth. She is informally known as my "policy guru" since she handles the Legislative Update, the legislative day for the Youth Leadership Forum and has been a great Missouri political resource for me.

The fourth and final member of my immediate team is Dawn Evans, the Youth Leadership Forum director. I am entirely impressed with her dedication to the MO-YLF cause. She is seemingly all over the map, all over the country and most importantly all over the state. Our MO-YLF is definitely in good hands with her.

*We hope you enjoy this newsletter and encourage feedback. One unique feature to note is that certain words will be [hyperlinked](#) (please click) so that you can get more information. Pay attention to these!*

## Missouri Universal Design in Housing

The Governor's Council on Disability was among many individuals and agencies that advocated for the inclusion of universal design (UD) concepts for all new housing construction funded by the Missouri Housing Develop-

ment Commission (MHDC) incentives or credits.

UD is about providing an affordable, livable space that everyone can use, regardless of their aging or disability status.

Acting Council Chair James Trout has been instrumental in this process.

## 2015 Legislative Session Wrap-up by Laura Mueth

The 2015 legislative session is now complete, ending on May 15, 2015. The Governor's Council on Disability tracked 217 disability-related bills and resolutions through our weekly [Legislative Update](#).

One of the major bills that we followed, Senate Bill 174, was truly agreed to and finally passed. It was signed into law by Governor Jay Nixon on June 29<sup>th</sup> in Cape Girardeau. The Missouri Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) will allow individuals who acquired a disability prior to age 26 the opportunity to create accounts in which they could save money to assist with expenses related to a disability.

House Bill 343 was another bill that passed and was signed into law by Governor Nixon on June 19<sup>th</sup>. This bill created a committee to study the continuation of the "Money Follows the Person" program beyond the end of the federal grant.

Governor Jeremiah "Jay" Nixon recognizes Council member Todd Mayfield for his advocacy on behalf of HB 174, the ABLE Act, as his son Elijah looks on.

*(Photo on right: Governor Nixon looking at Todd Mayfield in a room full of people. Photo courtesy of Scott Holste, Gov. Nixon's press secretary.)*

There were several other bills that made it close to but did not quite cross the finish line. One was Senate Bill 322. This very important and timely bill would have increased the personal "countable" asset limits for blind, aged and permanently disabled from \$999.99 to \$5,000 for an individual and from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for a couple in order to remain eligible for Medicaid services. In addition to the "asset limits", Medicaid expansion was not appropriated.

Representative Todd Richardson, a Republican from Poplar Bluff, was elected as the new Speaker of the House. He began his position on the last day of the legislative session and will remain the Speaker through at least the end of the 2016 legislative session.

The legislators have now returned to their home districts. The Governor has until July 14, 2015 to sign,

veto, or take no action on bills passed by the General Assembly.

August 28 is the effective date for new laws unless another date is specified. Legislators will return to the Capitol in September if a veto session is called.

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**"Helping children with disabilities is not a partisan issue, it's a human issue. It is about the right of all children to realize their God-given potential."**

**Gov. Nixon**

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(Photo of State Capitol on a sunny day)



## 2015 MOYLF is ready to roll

by Dawn Evans and Rob Honan

Thirty delegates and numerous staff are getting amped up for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum \(MOYLF\)](#) to be held at the University of Missouri in Columbia, July 26 -30. GCD Staff along with multiple organizations have been busy planning over the past year, making MO-YLF even more exciting by adding an additional day to the program and fine-tuning details. The minds and hearts of the delegates will be expanded in ways they did not envision before, and delegates will leave this life-changing event with more tools to lead productive and full lives.



With a theme of “Be Your Own Hero”, delegates will engage in many different activities. All of the activities are designed to help each youth become confident community leaders.

Throughout the week, youth will be exposed to a variety of mentors and well-known leaders, and in celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will recognize Heroes such as Ed Roberts and Justin Dart.

Activities include a community service project, a visit to the State Capitol, an employment event focusing on career exploration, mock interview exercises, networking, and tips on when and how to disclose disability status, information on volunteer opportunities, and a resource fair.

Teams will collaboratively prepare and present their experiences to family members, staff, and sponsors at the closing banquet.

Throughout the week they will also engage in fun social events including adaptive sports night, a talent show, and a dance.

The MO-YLF is funded solely through sponsorships and donations. Without the overwhelming support from multiple agencies, businesses, and organizations, the MO-YLF would not be what it is today. We want to thank each and every one of the individuals and agencies who make this life-changing event possible.

## 2014 Inclusion Awards

The 23<sup>rd</sup> [Annual Inclusion Awards](#) were presented on April 13, 2015 in Columbia. These awards recognize private and public employers, individuals, and organizations that have successfully included people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, and leisure activities.

The 2014 Inclusion Award winner is Wayne Crawford, Executive Director of the non-

profit Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation, Marshall.

The 2014 Honorable Mention goes to Mercy Hospital's Disability Inclusion Services, St. Louis.

The winner of the 2nd [Annual Youth Leadership Award](#) winner is Claire Solomon, St. Louis.

Claire is an alumna of the

Missouri Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities.

For more information, please click on the hyperlinks.



Photo of 2014 Inclusion Award winner Wayne Crawford (left) with GCD Executive Director Rob Honan, April 13, 2015

**Missouri Governor's  
Council on Disability  
Members**

- James Trout, Acting Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Edward Duff, Joplin
- Michael Esser, Chesterfield
- Jeff Grisamore, Lee's Summit
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Fulton
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Derek Smith, Osage Beach
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

**Missouri Governor's  
Council on Disability  
Staff Members**

- Robert Honan, Director
- Claudia Browner, Office Manager
- Dawn Evans, MO-YLF Coordinator
- Laura Mueth, Legislative Coordinator

## Statewide Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary Celebrations

With the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, there are many celebrations of this milestone event around our great state. Please check the [Disability Web Portal](#) for a list of the celebrations.



(Pictured: Logo of 25th ADA anniversary)

(Photo: President George HW Bush signing the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990.)



## Missouri Department of Conservation – Accessible Outdoors

The Department of Conservation is working to remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from enjoying the outdoors. Throughout the state, construction of new facilities and renovations at older properties are providing access to Conservation Department areas, buildings, and shooting ranges. If you enjoy spending time outdoors, visit their website to get more information.

<http://mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places-go/accessible-outdoors>

## Annual Legislative Priorities Poll coming soon!

Watch your email for the 2015 [Legislative Priorities Poll](#) on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Complete it and let your voice be heard!!!!

## Upcoming Council Meeting Dates:

September 18, 2015  
(Governor's Office Building, Room 315,  
Jefferson City)

November 6, 2015  
(Videoconference)

For more information about the meetings,  
please contact GCD at 573-751-2600 or [gcd@oa.mo.gov](mailto:gcd@oa.mo.gov)