



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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

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## GCD Welcomes Yvonne Wright

by Rob Honan

The Governor's Council on Disability is pleased to announce that Yvonne Wright of New Bloomfield has been appointed as chair of the Council by Governor Jay Nixon. Her term begins immediately and will officially expire on October 1, 2015. At that point, she will remain as chair until confirmed by the Missouri Senate and will then serve a full four-year term after that.

Wright brings a great deal of expertise in employment issues surrounding people with disabilities. Her long career in the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will be an asset for the Council as we move forward. Executive

Director Rob Honan is pleased with her appointment. "She has been a real asset in Missouri and I am pleased to be working with her to forward the mission of the Council."

## Youth Leadership Forum

This year, the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum took place at Mizzou under the leadership of staff member Dawn Evans. Because I did not arrive on the job until April, the planning for the forum was left in the hands of staff members Evans, Claudia Browner, and Laura Mueth. Along with other partner agencies, including Paraquad and The Whole Person among

many others, they pulled off a wonderful YLF 2015. I was most amazed by the sheer numbers and quality of the delegates, and am pleased to see how this event has grown in stature and importance. On page 3 of this newsletter, Craig Aslin, YLF class of 2006, writes some thoughts about this year's event. I hope you enjoy that article.

## Legislative Priorities Poll

Watch your email for the 2015 [Legislative Priorities Poll](#) on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Complete it and let your voice be heard!!!! You may also access the Poll using the link provided above.

## GCD wins travelling Division Trophy

by Claudia Browner

The Office of Administration's Wellness Committee promotes healthy lifestyles for state employees and their families.

Weekly email messages provide tips and information on healthy eating and exercise.

Employees are encouraged to participate in the Governor's 100 Missouri Miles (#100MoMiles) challenge by exercising and exploring Missouri's many state parks and trails.

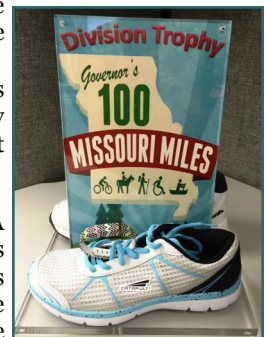
In a friendly competition between the divisions of the

Office of Administration (OA), employees log their exercise miles each week and the OA Wellness Committee tallies the miles each Friday to determine which division has logged the most miles.

The winning division receives the travelling trophy to display for one week, until the next winner is determined.

For four weeks in a row, the OA Commissioner's Office, Councils and Commissions has won this award based on the average miles logged per employee. The Governor's Council on Disability

was awarded the trophy in week two because of the high average miles logged by its employees!



For more information: <http://100missourimiles.com>

## Does the GCD decide Disability Claims?

by Laura Mueth

***If individuals need assistance with filling out applications or have questions regarding their SSDI or SSI, they can call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213.***

One of the main daily tasks handled by the staff of the Governor's Council on Disability is answering calls from Missouri citizens and other states regarding disability issues. Many of these calls involve some aspect of Social Security such as how to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The Social Security programs are administered by the Social Security Administration which is part of the federal government. The Governor's Council on Disability is not

involved in the application, review, or decision-making on any Social Security related matter. If individuals need assistance with filling out applications or have questions regarding their SSDI or SSI they can call the Social Security Administration at (800) 772-1213.

Missouri has several Social Security field offices. A listing of all Social Security offices in the state can be found at <http://www.disability-benefits-help.org/social-security-disability-locations/Missouri>. There is also a link to this web page on the *Benefits* page of the State of Missouri Disability

Portal.

There are a few items individuals should remember when talking to the Social Security Administration. One is if an individual calls an office for information and are unable to wait for the next available representative to answer, he or she can leave a voice mail message and a representative will return the call. Another is the representative may give little or no information to you if you are calling on behalf of someone else. Third, the phone call and conversation may be monitored.

## Types of Service Dogs

by Laura Mueth

This will be the first in a series of service animal newsletter articles. Today, I will discuss the types of service or assistance dogs. Assistance dogs is the overall term preferred by the community of people who train and use and train any dog to assist someone with a disability. Service animal is the term used in the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act.

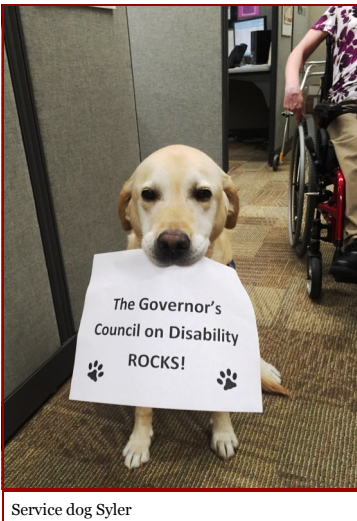
There are three main types of service or assistance dogs:

- 1. Guide dogs** are those trained to assist individuals who are blind or visually impaired. They help the individual navigate around obstacles in his or her path, cross the street, and locate objects such as chairs, trash cans, counters, or doors.
- 2. Hearing dogs** are trained to assist individuals who are

deaf or hard of hearing by alerting them to sounds such as alarms, timers, sirens, doorbells, and someone calling him or her.

- 3. Service dogs** assist people with disabilities other than deaf/hard of hearing and vision impairment. The dogs are trained to assist individuals with physical disabilities by performing tasks such as retrieving dropped items, carrying bags, opening and closing doors, giving a credit card to a salesperson, alerting to a drop in blood sugar, disrupting a self-injurious behavior, or reminding the individual to take medication.

Due to the broad nature of the "service dog" category, sometimes you will hear or see this category delineated further



Service dog Syler



Assistance dogs in training visit GCD

## 2015 MOYLF Wrap up

by Craig Aslin, 2006 YLF Alum and current Community Living Specialist at MERIL

*The following article was written and submitted by Craig Aslin, a co-facilitator at this year's forum.*

Do you have what it takes to be a leader? Do you think people with disabilities can be leaders? If you think that this task is impossible to achieve because of your disabilities, the answer is NO! Anything is possible if you set your mind to be a leader!

It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences. The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MOYLF) is a leadership program for sixteen to twenty-one year old students with disabilities, and was held this year from July 26<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> at the University of Missouri in Columbia (Mizzou).

The program is designed specifically to help students grow into leaders. Students were selected to become delegates at the forum based on an application process. In addition to leadership skills,

the delegates learned to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to the community. While I was a high school student, I was selected to attend the forum as a delegate. I returned to my hometown in St. Louis from Mizzou, feeling confident and understanding about myself in my community.

This year, I was asked to return to the Forum as a co-facilitator for a team of approximately seven delegates with various disabilities. Throughout the week, I took many trips down memory lane as I recalled my experience as a delegate almost a decade ago. The council reached out to several people with various disabilities to speak about their experiences in their lives to the delegates and staff, and I believe that everyone was touched by their stories.

Some of the highlights included going to the Capitol and meeting the Governor (Jay Nixon) of Missouri in his office. Another big highlight was assembling approximately 7,000 items (toiletries, magazines, skin products, etc.)

into about 250 bags, and eventually sending the bags to the Ronald McDonald House in Columbia. The delegates went home feeling more confident about themselves due to the leadership and advocacy skills learned at the Forum. Even though I was on staff at the Forum, I was inspired by Governor's Council on Disabilities' mission. To those delegates who are reading this article, I am incredibly proud of you!

For more information on Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, please visit the Governor's Council on Disability's website at

[disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm](http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm)



2015 MOYLF delegates met with Governor Nixon in his office

## Knowledge is Power

Are you looking for presentations on disability related topics? The Governor's Council on Disability staff is available to provide free presentations and trainings to state agencies, non-profits, and businesses throughout the state.

For several years, a Governor's Council on Disability staff member has provided training

to the Missouri State Highway Patrol during new driver examiner training regarding disability awareness and etiquette. It will be provided again on September 14, 2015. The Warrenton 8 Cinema recently asked for a presentation on service animal requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act. This was presented on August 24, 2015.

GCD staff is available to give presentations on topics related to the legislative process and communicating with legislators, youth efforts, assistive technology, the Governor's Council on Disability, and independent living.

Contact our office if you are interested in us providing a presentation.



Rob Honan speaks at State Rehabilitation Council meeting

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

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- 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
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

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

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

**Hands Around the Capitol**

Mark your calendars for "Hands Around the Capitol, Missouri style." On **Tuesday October 6<sup>th</sup>**, the Governor's Council on Disability, Northeast Independent Living Services (NEILS), Paraquad, Rural Advocates for Independent Living (RAIL), and West-Central Independent Living Solutions (WILS) are sponsoring this exciting one-day event. Modeled after a similar celebration in Idaho, this event celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and October as "Disability History and Awareness Month." We hope to see you there! The event has a [Facebook page](#), and if you are on Facebook, please "like" the event to show your support.

**Hands Around the Capitol**

Missouri State Capitol, Jefferson City

<https://www.facebook.com/handsaroundcapitolMO>

Advocacy

Civil Rights

Celebrate

Road to Freedom

Inclusion

Awareness

October 6th  
12 p.m.

**ADA 25**  
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT  
1990-2015

- Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the ADA at the State Capitol
- Come listen to speakers
- Receive resource information
- Raise disability awareness
- Everyone is invited

**12 p.m. Event Speakers**

**1 p.m. Surround the Capitol holding hands**

For more information, please contact Rob Honan, Governor's Council on Disability, 573-751-2600