



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

GCD Director's Report

by Rob Honan

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While the Summer Heat still scorches, a time of transition is upon the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD), the state, and the nation.

One of GCD's major programs, the 2016 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#), was just held. Dawn Evans, who did a great job leading this program for the last five years, is moving on to other adventures, and we are about to start the process of hiring Dawn's replacement.

Governor Jay Nixon finished signing the last set of bills sent to him by the General Assembly before he leaves office in January. Some of the bills he signed were important to the disability community. These bills are discussed in more detail in the next few paragraphs.

In the May newsletter, we reported that three bills had passed the General Assembly, including [HB 1565](#) and [HB 1583](#). Both of these bills are extremely important and I am happy to say that the Governor signed them in June.

HB 1565 has a long history in Missouri because limits for MO-HealthNet eligibility for singles and couples has remained constant since the early 1970s. And we know that the prices of items people buy don't necessarily stay still. And, of course, having a disability is not very cheap. So, it was quite welcome when Governor signed the bill into law.



Governor Nixon speaks about the importance of HB 1565 at Paraquad, Inc. (above) Paraquad Executive Director Aimee Wehmeier looks on as Gov. Nixon signs HB 1565 (below) Photo credit: Paraquad, Inc.



Hearing, created grants for agencies to train SSPs (Support Service Providers) for Deaf/Blind Missourians. There are more details on this piece of legislation forthcoming, but the signing the law was a great first step.

For a long time, and still to this day, having a disability often makes you the target of unwanted harassment and bullying. There is no simple and singular way to address this issue, but it is very important that young kids should be aware of how harmful it is, and for that reason I was very pleased that Governor Nixon signed HB 1583 into law. This law will give additional resources to schools to fight bullying.

An additional bill that GCD was tracking was [HB 1696](#). This was also signed by Governor Nixon. This law, administered by the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of

On the federal front, as I write this column, many of our disability advocate brothers and sisters are in Washington D.C. working with the U.S. Congress to fight for additional funding for Centers for Independent Living, advocate for more dollars for in-home services and to safeguard against encroachments against the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Notification Act).

On this 26th anniversary of the ADA, it is still important to remember the words of Justin Dart, "Get involved in politics as if your life depended on it—because it does."



Rob Honan presented Dawn Evans with a plaque for her 5 years of service to the Governor's Council on Disability

2016 Paralympic Games: Missouri Connections

by Laura Mueth

Olympic fever will not end in August. For those with disabilities it continues into September.

The 2016 Paralympics will take place from **September 7 to 18** in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Twenty-three sports will have competitions. They are: archery, athletics, boccia, sprint canoe, road cycling, track cycling, equestrian, five-a-side soccer (football), seven-a-side soccer (football), goalball, judo, power lifting, rowing, sailing, shooting, sitting volleyball, swimming, table tennis, triathlon, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair fencing, wheelchair rugby, and wheelchair tennis. The sprint or paracanoe and triathlon will be making their debut. Some sports such as goalball and judo have only athletes with visual impairments.

The official website is <https://www.rio2016.com/en/paralympics/>.

At least six of the athletes have ties to Missouri. Colleen Young will be competing in swimming. She was born and currently lives in St. Louis. She is also an alumna of the Youth Leadership Forum.

Kerri Morgan will be competing in track and field. She is employed by Washington University and is the chair of Paracad's Board of Directors.

David Brown will also be competing in track and field. St. Louis is his hometown and he graduated from the Missouri School for the Blind in 2011.

John Gilbert, born in Fairfax, Missouri, a graduate of the University of Missouri -- Columbia and currently residing in Salisbury, Missouri will be competing in men's wheelchair basketball.

Vanessa Erskine, whose hometown is Kearney, will compete in women's wheelchair basketball.

Dan Regan who is originally from St. Louis will be competing in Men's Sitting Volleyball.

Two paralympic staff members also reside in Missouri. The head coach of the Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team is Ron Lykins who is the head coach of the Mizzou wheelchair basketball team. Scott Meyer, the team leader for the Men's Wheelchair Basketball Team resides in Columbia.

[Disabled Athlete Sports Association \(DASA\)](#) in St. Peters is a Paralympic Sport Club that works with athletes in some of the summer paralympic sports.

Cheer on these Missourians and all the other athletes by watching coverage on NBC, NBCSN, and [TeamUSA.org](#).



Kerri Morgan, Paralympic athlete from St. Louis



Colleen Young, Paralympic swimmer and alumna of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum

Photo credit: Special School District of St. Louis County

14th Annual MO-YLF a Great Success

by Claudia Browner



A record number of 29 delegates from 16 different Missouri counties attended this year's [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF), held July 11-16 at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Each year, MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities a week-long college experience, where they learn about disability history, advocacy, the legislative process, transition to employment or higher education, adaptive technology and adaptive sports.

In addition, delegates meet with successful mentors with disabilities, visit the state capitol for a mock legislative session with state legislators, and hear exceptional keynote speakers.

After small and large group learning sessions throughout each day, the evenings are filled with fun activities such as Adaptive Sports Night, a Talent Show, and a Dance Party with the MO-YLF Alumni.

The MO-YLF ends with a graduation banquet with staff, parents, and guests where the delegates give presentations about the things they have learned during the week.

Selecting the most qualified delegates is very important for a successful MO-YLF, but having a solid planning committee and finding the right staff to lead the teams is just as critical. New on board as volunteer staff this year were several employees from MU's Hook Center, a non-profit initiative for pre-employment transition services, along with employees from Easter Seals Mid-Missouri, The Whole Person, and 10 alumni of the MO-YLF.

The alumni have founded the MYLIFE Alumni Association and after this year's MO-YLF, there are 273 alumni who have graduated from the program. The alumni association keeps the alumni connected by organizing meetings and events throughout the year and helping with the planning for the

annual MO-YLF conference, as well as volunteering as staff.

The MO-YLF is funded entirely from sponsorships and donations. Delegates attend the conference at no cost. Without the support and investment of the sponsors, this conference would not be possible.

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors of the 2016 MO-YLF:

Vocational Rehabilitation, Edward Jones, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council, Missouri Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Services for Independent Living, as well as several other agencies who provided in-kind donations.

This year, all the components came together for a successful MO-YLF—great delegates, fantastic staff and alumni, and exceptional sponsors.

Thank you to all of you!

We are looking forward to next year's MO-YLF already.



Photos:
2016 MO-YLF delegates and staff inside the Governor's Office (top)
Delegates and staff in meeting room on MU campus (bottom)

**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
- 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

Your Vote is Your Voice

By Laura Mueth

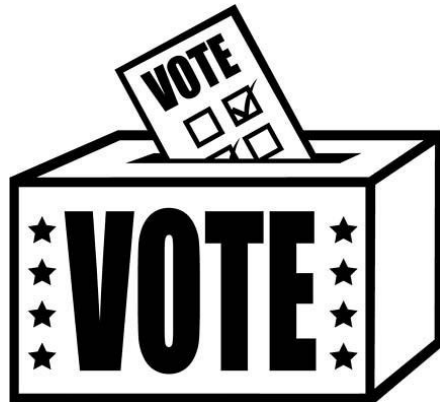
Be sure to register to vote before the November election. Use one of the following ways to ensure your voice is heard.

1. The Secretary of State's website: <http://s1.sos.mo.gov/elections/goVoteMissouri/register.aspx>
2. Request an application by phone at 573-751-4936.
3. In person at a license office, county clerk's office, or any other government office that provides public services.

Upcoming election dates:

August 2: Primary (deadline to register was July 6)

November 8: General Election (deadline to register is October 12)



"Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

**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

2016 Legislative Priorities Poll

The **2016 GCD Legislative Priorities Poll** will be coming soon!

Each year the Governor's Council on Disability develops and distributes a Legislative Priorities Poll to assist the GCD in understanding issues important to Missourians with disabilities and those who work and live with them.

Watch your email for details. If you would like to be notified when it is released, email Laura Mueth at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.