



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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2016 Legislative Education Project (LEP) is underway

by Rob Honan

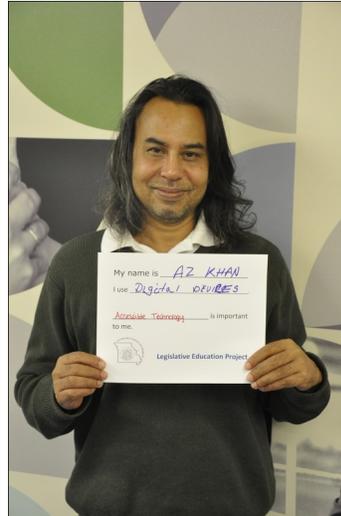
The 2016 Legislative Education Project (LEP) is off to an early and fast start.

LEP on the Road

Rob Honan and Laura Mueth have already presented at three centers for independent living in December, helping staff and consumers become more knowledgeable about the legislative process and ready for the upcoming legislative session.



LEP on the Road participant Barbara Simon holds up sign about a legislative topic important to her.



LEP on the Road participant Az Khan holds up a sign about an important legislative topic.

LEP at the Capitol

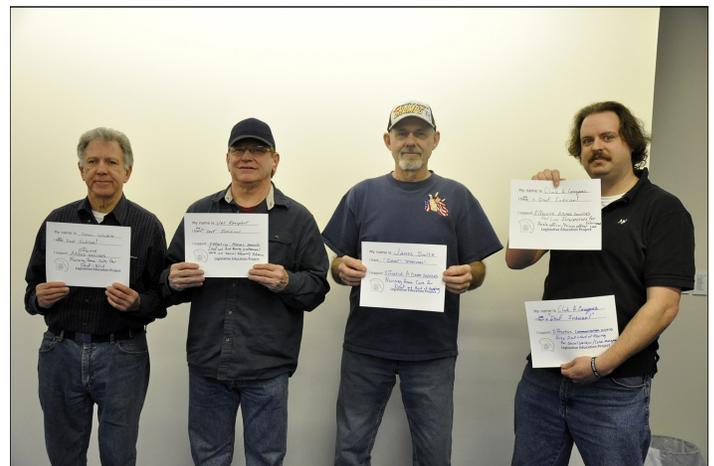
The Governor's Council on Disability staff is still offering a training at the Capitol in Jefferson City for those who are interested in receiving a legislative training "in the heart of the action." We have already had one school group schedule. There are no pre-set dates as in the past. If you would like to discuss bringing a group of advocates, contact Laura Mueth at 800-877-8249 or Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

LEP Online

Two of the learning modules: Understanding How a Bill Becomes a Law in Missouri and Your Elected Officials and General Assembly have been updated. The learning modules are available on the Legislative Education Project web page at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LEP.htm>.

Videos about hearings and testimony, building a relationship with legislators, and voting are also available.

Pictured below is a group of LEP on the Road participants displaying signs about legislative topics that are important to them.



We would like to thank The Whole Person in Kansas City, Services for Independent Living in Columbia, and West-Central Independent Living Solutions in Warrensburg for hosting us. The LEP on the Road training may still be requested once the legislative session begins. If your organization is interested in hosting a training for your staff, consumers, families, or advocacy organization, contact Laura Mueth at 800-877-8249 or Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

Service Animal Fraud

by Laura Mueth

The Governor's Council on Disability has received many calls over the last few months from people concerned that their business is letting in fraudulent service dogs.

There is nothing a Missouri business can do at this time to prevent fake service dogs from entering the business.

are making efforts to alert the U.S. Department of Justice to the severity of the situation on a national level in hopes that it may bring about future changes.



TAKE THE PLEDGE: >>>

Protect the Rights of People Who Legitimately Need Service Dogs

Your Action Needed! Our Target: 50,000 Signers

Business owners or individuals with disabilities can help to educate individuals and legislators by talking to their friends and family about the issue, signing the Canine Companions for Independence [pledge](#), and talking to your state representative or senator and the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Governor's Council on Disability is available to assist individuals or groups with crafting a message to share with your legislators.

Many individuals express concern about the inability to ask for some type of identification that the dog is a legitimate service dog. Many of them state they have no recourse under the current laws. Some comment that it is being abused by individuals who know they can get by with it.

The State of Missouri and the federal government do not have a law penalizing someone for impersonating a service dog, or that works to deter service animal fraud.

Several states have enacted laws making the act a crime. Organizations such as Canine Companions for Independence

MYLIFE Alumni Association

by Dawn Evans

Did you know that the Alumni of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum have formed their own organization called the *MYLIFE Alumni Association*?

panel discussions sharing messages on self-determination, advocacy, personal transition experiences, and outreaching for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. Many have volunteered at organizations and initiated their own community projects including holding a holiday party for a day program in Kansas City in December.

Alumni speaking or volunteering for an event at your organization, contact Rachel Baskerville by emailing wheelsrkb5@aol.com.

MYLIFE Alumni Association Officers are:

Chair:
Rachel Baskerville, 2005

Co-Chair:
Sarah Schwegel, 2011

Treasurer:
Brian Chao, 2007

Secretary:
Kaitlyn Thompson, 2009

Board Member:
Colton Rich, 2014



MO-YLF alumni at a holiday party in Kansas City

There are now 244 graduates of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) who are role models and mentors for youth following in their footsteps. MYLIFE's mission is to support and sustain the MO-YLF through alumni engagement in promoting continued educational and leadership opportunities. Within the past couple of years a variety of Alumni have stepped out of their comfort zones to serve as keynote speakers and participate on

Every year, Alumni return to the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum to serve as volunteer staff and mentors. The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is what it is today because of the involvement of its Alumni. If your organization is interested in a MYLIFE

Win a MacBook Pro: Play the MO-YLF Raffle

Start your New Year by *Winning a Mac When You Give Back to Missouri Youth with Disabilities!*

**1st Prize:
MacBook Pro with Retina display**

2nd Prize: iPad Mini

**3rd Prize:
\$100 Target Gift Card**

Raffle Tickets: 1 for \$5 or 5 for \$20



For contest rules and details, or to purchase raffle tickets, please visit

<https://rallyup.com/mo-ylf-fundraiser2016>.

The money raised from this fundraiser will be used to help provide opportunities for 30 high schools students from across the state to attend the 14th Annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum for Youth with Disabilities (MO-YLF) on July 12 - 16, 2016 at NO cost to the student or their families.

Funds raised from this raffle will also be used to help provide post-YLF training

opportunities for the graduates of the MO-YLF.



Save the Date: MO-YLF July 12-16, 2016

by Dawn Evans



ship, citizenship, social, and career development skills.

The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is hosted by the Governor's Council on Disability and Paraquod. This program is not funded by state revenues.

All funding is handled through Paraquod, a nonprofit, 501(c)3. Donations are tax-deductible.

If you know of a student with disabilities who has leadership potential, please share the information about this exciting program with them. GCD is

looking for applicants from all areas of the state. The application is [available online](http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm) at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>

For questions, please contact the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum at (800) 877-8249 or (573) 751-2600.



2015 MO-YLF delegates meet with Governor Nixon in his office

The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) is a unique 5 day training program for high schools students with disabilities, ages 16-21, designed to cultivate leader-

GCD publishes 2015 Annual Report

by Claudia Browner

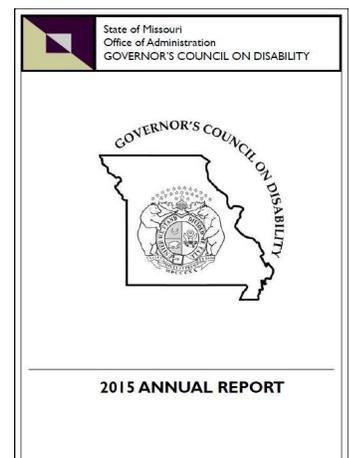
Per statute, the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is required to publish an annual report each year.

Compiling this report provided opportunity to reflect on the goals we have accomplished in 2015, and focus on the tasks that lie ahead for 2016.

Some of the highlights for 2015 were:

- Linda Baker retired from GCD after more than 19 years with the agency
- Rob Honan was rehired as the Executive Director
- Yvonne Wright was appointed as the Chair for GCD
- A record number of 27 delegates attended the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum
- GCD began publishing the quarterly newsletter
- GCD and partnering agencies hosted the Hands Around the Capitol event
- GCD introduced LEP on the Road

To read the entire [annual report](http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/files/2015_AnnualReport.pdf), please visit our website at http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/files/2015_AnnualReport.pdf



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

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

GCD names 2015 Award Winners

by Claudia Browner

2015 Inclusion Award Winners

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the award winner and honorable mention of the **24th 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.

The **2015 Inclusion Award winner** is the **THRIVE** program in Warrensburg.

Transformation, Health, Responsibility, Independence, Vocation, Education (THRIVE) are the goals of any college student. At the University of Central Missouri (UCM), they are the foundation of THRIVE. This two-year certificate program prepares students with disabilities for independent living, personal interaction, and employment fitting their goals and abilities. THRIVE provides improved academic abilities, interaction with age peers, computer skills, job skills, and career-focused internships. THRIVE partners with UCM's Communication Disorders, Kinesiology, Social Work, Counselor Education, and others to develop the knowledge of their own students for the benefit of the THRIVE program. Students in peer organizations of fraternities, sororities, intramurals, and other UCM groups embrace the THRIVE students and will ultimately become employers who hire persons with disabilities. THRIVE graduates have achieved results equivalent to other college students.

The **Honorable Mention for 2015** goes to **Kelsey Mack** of Blue Springs.

Kelsey's dream was to create and operate her own business, to assist other individuals with disabilities, to be more fully included and explore their talents through employment. As a result, Kelsey created The Bird's Nest in November 2014.

Located in Blue Springs, The Bird's Nest is a gift shop which sells items handcrafted solely by individuals with disabilities. Kelsey's secondary goal is to hire these same individuals to work within the shop. During 2014 and 2015, Kelsey signed 27 crafters, bakers, and artists to sell their creations, and has employed an adult with a traumatic brain injury to create her logo. Kelsey has demonstrated excellence in leadership and advocacy within The Bird's Nest.

For additional information about the Inclusion Awards, please contact GCD at 573-751-2600 or by email at gcd@oa.mo.gov On the web: <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

2015 Youth Leadership Award Winner

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has selected the winner of the **3rd Annual Youth Leadership Award**. The Youth Leadership Award is a program to recognize an outstanding Missouri youth (age 16-26) with a disability that has demonstrated exemplary leadership by making a difference in their community.

The **3rd Annual Youth Leadership Award winner** is **Caitlin Bartley**

Caitlin recently graduated from Lincoln University (LU) with a double major in Psychology and Social Work with Magna Cum Laude honors, and has been accepted into the Masters Program at the University of Missouri, where she will continue her quest to help others through social work. Caitlin's disability is severe, but she has never let this be an obstacle to her accomplishments. Attributes like self-awareness, proactive involvement, perseverance, goal-setting, and the use of effective support systems have led her to a successful and rewarding life. On LU campus, Caitlin initiated changes in two of the main buildings to make them accessible.

Her achievements and honors include: MDA Goodwill Ambassador for central Missouri; Missouri Youth Leadership Forum graduate; Speaker for Children's Miracle Network Radiothon, Women's Rights Conference, Transition Summit, and Power Up Assistive Technology Conference; Assistant Secretary to LU's Student Government Association, and member of the Women's Leadership Academy at LU.

For additional information, please contact GCD at 573-751-2600 or by email at gcd@oa.mo.gov Web: <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

The awards will be presented at the Missouri Assistive Technology's **Power Up conference** at the St. Charles Convention Center in St. Charles on April 19, 2016.