



# 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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As summer recedes into fall, it is time to reflect on what has recently transpired and what lies ahead of us. After a long, hot summer, we are now experiencing cooler weather. Along with the cooler weather, the days are getting shorter, school has begun, the Chiefs and Tigers are battling it out on the gridiron and October is just around the corner. So, begins a very busy month.

The Youth Leadership Forum wound down in July with a record number of delegates. Even though the event ended, the process is year-round. Next year's planning started on July 17<sup>th</sup> (the day the forum ended). Because we had to say goodbye to Dawn Evans, the first step was to hire a go-getter, a planner and someone who already has connections. We are very fortunate to have hired Judy Grainger to carry the baton forward. Please see page 2 for more about her.

October is "National Disability Employment Awareness Month." I know that it sometimes sounds strange and redundant that we have to actually "celebrate" a month for employment of people with disabilities, but I like it because it reminds all of us that we still have a lot of work left to do in this area. The

promise of full employment of people with disabilities has not yet been met, but we must continue this effort to create jobs for all of us. I am hopeful that with the concentrated emphasis on youth transition in the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) employment outcomes will improve. WIOA is a tool that has a lot of promise.

This is an election year and there are elections on all levels of government. The implications of these elections are huge. There is a lot at stake at the local, state and national levels—and we are a better nation when we have full voting participation. You can still register to vote until the October 12<sup>th</sup> deadline. And if you are registered, please make every effort to vote.

At the end of the month, I'll be attending two conferences: One here in Missouri and one in Nevada. The Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services or MACDDS, for short, will host its conference in late October. It will be a great opportunity to learn more about what is happening on the county level, but also to reconnect with colleagues from around the state to see what innovative

things they are doing. The other exciting opportunity lies in Reno, Nevada, where the National APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living) conference will be taking place. The focus of this gathering is the empowerment of youth in the independent living movement.

At our recent council meeting, the Council presented and passed a motion to add a third award, "The Website/IT Award" to the list of GCD recognition awards. This award will recognize a business or local government (state and federal government are not eligible) that has an outstanding and fully accessible website. Please check back to [disability.mo.gov/gcd](http://disability.mo.gov/gcd) for more information in the coming days.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the Governor's Council on Disability, please do not hesitate to contact us at 573-751-2600 or email: [Robert.honan@oa.mo.gov](mailto:Robert.honan@oa.mo.gov)

## Introduction to Judy

by Judy Grainger



Judy Grainger

I appreciate the warm welcome that I have received from the staff and council members of the GCD. In my role as the Disability Program Specialist, I will focus on facilitating the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). I have spent the last 24 years working with individuals with disabilities providing residential, employment and case management supports. Most recently, I have worked in the adult service provider community focusing on the development of employment programs responding to the needs of persons with disabilities and the business community.

I am the current President of the Board of Directors for Missouri Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). I have also served as an officer and on the Board of Directors for the Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF), a coalition of statewide community providers committed to enhancing

the lives of Missourians with disabilities through legislation. Additionally, I was a founding member of the Inclusion Coalition for Employment of Metro St. Louis, which is a local collaboration formed to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

I am off to a quick start and have jumped into the planning of the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. For more information on how to get involved in the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum – either as a delegate, volunteer or donor contact me at [judy.grainger@oa.mo.gov](mailto:judy.grainger@oa.mo.gov) or 800-877-8249.



The 15th annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) will be held July 18-22, 2017 at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

For more information, please visit <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/y lf.htm>

## October is Disability History & Awareness Month

by Claudia Browner

October is  
**Disability History and Awareness Month**  
in Missouri



This year marks the 5th anniversary of the passage of HB 555 in Missouri, which designated the month of October as Disability History and Awareness Month.

Nationwide, October is celebrated as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The Governor's Council on Disability celebrates these events by hosting a Disability History and Awareness, and Employment display in the Truman State Office Building during the month of October. Stop by and see the display on the 2nd floor if you are in Jefferson City.

To learn more about disability history and find great resources on how to promote and celebrate Disability History Month, download the

**[Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide for Missouri](#)**

or visit [disability.mo.gov](http://disability.mo.gov) and click on Educational Resources.

You can always stay up to date on what's happening at the Governor's Council on Disability by visiting our website or following us on [Facebook](#). **Please stop by and "Like" our page!**

To find the GCD on Facebook, click here:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Governors-Council-on-Disability/102027953218042>



## Employers Embrace Hiring People with Disabilities

by Svetlana Bostick (St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment: SLATE)

The second annual *Accommodation for Success* event, sponsored by numerous organizations (see below), highlighted the transformative benefits of hiring persons with disabilities and addressed the fears about employing these individuals. The two-day event took place on August 9 – 10, 2016, at the St. Louis Community College's Florissant Valley Campus. The employment rate for individuals with disabilities remains at 20 percent but key stakeholders believe this can be improved dramatically – the overall goal of this event.

This year's *Accommodation for Success* focused on the successes of hiring people with disabilities.

New was a Job Fair, a separate event where job seekers with disabilities had the opportunity to network with the employers. Over 100 individuals, representing estimated 70 different businesses, attended the keynote and panel discussion on August 9. An estimated 229 job seekers, along with 49 participating employers, attended the Job Fair on August 10 – participation beyond everyone's expectations.

A keynote speaker, Andrew Sartorius, delivered a powerful and inspiring message. An attorney and successful graduate of the Starkloff Disability Institute and a MO-YLF alumnus, Sartorius is legally blind and had to learn to advocate for his needs early in his life. Now, he continues to support the disability community, and emphasized personal empowerment: "People with disabilities have to meet halfway for accommodations... Stop hiding behind excuses. Move forward, *be bold*," he said.



Keynote Speaker Andrew Sartorius

The 2016 *Accommodations for Success* event would not have been possible without the generous support of Gold-level sponsors - US Bank, Kiosite, Ranken Technical College, Challenge Unlimited and SSM Health. In-kind contributions

were provided by MERS / Missouri Goodwill (continental breakfast for both days). St. Louis Community College (location), Job News USA (advertising), various Missouri Job Centers, including SLATE (staffing, career workshops), Job Corps (students for parking lots, greeters), and Independent Living Centers, such as Delta Center, Paraquad, Disability Resource Association and others (volunteers and outreach).

A Dress for Success mobile trailer was parked nearby for use by participants. The outpouring of support was truly heartwarming.

Special recognition goes to the members of St. Louis Regional Disability Committee who selflessly donated their time and energy to making this event a huge success. The committee consists of individuals from Missouri Job Centers representing St. Charles County, St. Louis County, Jefferson/Franklin Counties, and St. Louis City, Vocational Rehabilitation, MERS/Goodwill, Department of Mental Health, and Challenge Unlimited.

Jennifer Trudeau, PR Advocate for Challenge Unlimited, member of St. Louis Regional Disability Committee, said: "People with disabilities constitute the largest minority group... we've come a long way, but it's really these types of events that pave the way to action and transformation for generations to come."



Photo on left: Accommodations for Success Job Fair

## Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

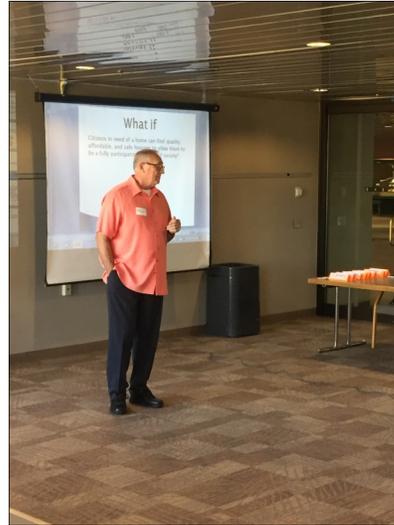
- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Fulton
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Derek Smith, Osage 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
- Judy Grainger, MO-YLF Coordinator
- Laura Mueth, Legislative Coordinator

## Housing Taskforce Meeting

By Rob Honan



The Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation, the Missouri DD Council and the Governor's Council on Disability hosted a housing planning workshop on September 30, 2016 to develop some "next steps" in creating a state where safe, accessible, and affordable housing is available for all Missourians. The workshop was led by Wayne Crawford (pictured here), and was attended by 20 people representing organizations and agencies from across the State of Missouri.



## GCD Awards Programs

By Claudia Browner

The Governor's Council on Disability recognizes individuals and organizations who exemplify and promote full inclusion of people with disabilities through its annual award programs.

The [Inclusion Award](#) honors a Missouri resident, organization or business that illustrates excellence in leadership for the "best of the best inclusion practices".

The [Youth Leadership Award](#) honors a youth with a disability that is demonstrating outstanding leadership, advocacy, and dedication to the disability community in Missouri.

New in 2016, the [Website/IT Award](#) will honor an organization, business, or local government that provides an outstanding and fully accessible website.

Nominations for these awards will be available online beginning in October and will be due January 31, 2017. The award winners will be honored at the Power Up conference in April.

## 2016 Legislative Priorities Poll

The [GCD Legislative Priorities Poll](#) continues!

We appreciate those who have taken time to share their views and spread the word. If you have not, make sure and complete it by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 28!

The responses received help shape the Council's legislative priorities and interactions with legislators for the 2017 legislative session. It can be completed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YL39SDJ>. It is also available in Word and PDF format. Please contact Laura Mueth ([Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov](mailto:Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov)) for details.