



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

Volume 3, Number 3, June 2017

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

Inside this Issue

Page 1:

- [GCD Director's Report](#)

Page 2:

- [Meet GCD's Newest Staff Member](#)
- [MO ABLE Accounts Now Available](#)

Page 3:

- [Meet Council Member Rosemary Hendon](#)
- [First Responder Disability Awareness Training in Missouri](#)

Page 4:

- [Missouri Celebrates 115th State Fair in August](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)

GCD Director's Report

by Amy Bledsoe

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) by statute is to have a council of twenty (20) and a chairperson. Council members are appointed by the Governor. Ms. Wright, Council Chair, and I have met with staff members of the Boards and Commissions Office a couple of times. Mr. Turk and Mr. Hogan are certainly engaged and understand the mission and importance of GCD. We currently have eight (8) open council seats. I thought I'd share qualities we are all looking for in council members. In addition to the requirements by statute, qualities of council members include passion, commitment, and leadership. Council members run on passion for the mission of GCD – "To provide leadership and support so people with disabilities achieve inclusion and independence." Recently, council members shared passions to include employment, education, transportation, housing, independent living and universal design, as well as specific disabilities. These are causes that excite us and as we serve the citizens of Missouri we are fueled to continue to do more. As an agency, we truly want to help others achieve a life of inclusion and independence; we want those we serve to achieve more than they ever thought possible.

I was recently reminded of the book "How Full is Your Bucket" by Tom Rath. The book is based on the theory that each person has an invisible bucket that is either filled or emptied throughout our daily lives. Our buckets are filled by others interacting with us in a positive manner. This may include compliments and acts of kindness. When our bucket is filled or full, we feel amazing. Others also have opportunities to take dips out of our buckets by saying or doing things that impact us in a negative manner. The lower the amount in our bucket, the worse we feel (or make others feel as we dip from their buckets). A full bucket provides us with energy just as one that is low or empty zaps our energy. Upon entry into my office at GCD you'll notice a sign that reads "Attitude is a little thing that makes a BIG difference," and another sign that reads "Each day comes with 86,400 seconds...tick tock." As you reflect upon the brief of the bucket and these signs, please remember we make choices every moment of every day. Those choices can either fill or dip from the bucket of others or ourselves. Let's continue to find ways to fill buckets and renew our passion for the important work we do for the citizens of Missouri.



We are all pleased that our team is back up to four members in the office. Wendy Molitor joined us May 22nd. She brings extensive experience working with people who live with various disabilities. Please read more about Ms. Molitor in this newsletter. Our team has decided we will implement monthly team meetings to include sharing of various trainings and meetings attended, as well as professional development for our team. I'm honored to lead this team of amazing women who appreciate and desire professional development, as well as work daily to improve lives and fill buckets.

Photo above: GCD Staff (from left to right) - Amy Bledsoe, Claudia Browner, Wendy Molitor, Laura Mueth, and Syler

Meet GCD's Newest Staff Member

by Wendy Molitor



I would like to introduce myself as the new Disability Program Specialist. I will be taking over the exciting task of coordinating the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum \(MO-YLF\)](#) this year in July. My name is Wendy Molitor and I am a provisionally licensed professional counselor with a Masters in Education and Agency Counseling.

I love a good challenge, staying busy and finding new ways to advocate and to help create true inclusion. I have several years of experience working with individuals with disabilities, ranging from providing community support and advocacy to volunteer work and individual vocational counseling.

I have three unique children that have helped form me into the person I am today. Their ages are 22, 20 and 18. I have an amazing husband, John, who is an incredible father and the one that keeps me centered. I also have 3 dogs, 2 German shepherd's and a Great Pyrenees, all of which think they are human and keep me on my toes in any spare time I muster. My family, my dogs and I all love camping, kayaking on rivers, and enjoying the outdoors.

I am looking forward to working with all of the staff, Council members, liaisons, and community partners of the Governor's Council on Disability.

MO-YLF is approaching quickly and much work is being done behind the scenes to ensure another successful year in which a group of our Missouri youth with disabilities jumps into an intense week of leadership training.

The schedule is in the process of being finalized as are all of the logistics. We have 25 delegates from all over the state of Missouri joining us along with 11 returning MO-YLF alumni who will be volunteering their time as staff.

During the Forum, the delegates will be doing a community service project to give back to our community. This year staff and delegates will be collecting items to support MU Children's Hospital. MU Children's Hospital makes sure there are clean, new toys in the playrooms, treatment rooms and as birthday gifts. As a first leadership challenge we are asking each delegate to collect items on the list and bring them to the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum in July. The delegate that brings the most items will be recognized and awarded a prize.

Photo on left: Wendy Molitor



Missouri ABLÉ Accounts Now Available

by Laura Mueth



Over the last few years you may have heard conversations about Missouri implementing an Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) program. The wait is over!

Individuals with disabilities that were developed or acquired before the age of twenty-six can now open an ABLÉ account through which they can save and invest money to pay for qualified disability related expenses in the areas of basic living expenses, housing, transportation, assistive technology, employment training, education, health and wellness, financial management, and legal fees. Any money in the account is not counted toward limits for federal benefit eligibility therefore an individual can have an ABLÉ account and still maintain eligibility for programs such as SSI or MO HealthNet (Missouri's Medicaid program). It is also not subject to federal or state income tax.

Treasurer Eric Schmitt's office developed a website (<https://www.moable.com/>) for the program. It provides information about all the facets of the program and is the avenue for opening an account.

Meet Council Member Rosemary Hendon

by Rosemary Hendon

Hi, my name is Rosemary Hendon and I am currently living in West Plains, in Howell County, Missouri. I was raised in Imperial, in Jefferson County. At the age of four I had rheumatic fever which damaged my heart valves. I began working for the State of Missouri in St. Charles at the Family Services office in 1985. In 1988, I had open heart surgery to replace the aortic valve with a mechanical valve. Upon recovery, I decided to attend college and moved to West Plains. While in college I had a massive stroke which resulted in paralysis on my left side. It took a great deal of hard work, determination, and therapy to regain some movement I lost as a result of the stroke. I was very close to completing my college degree yet was unable to travel to Springfield to do so. The Dean of Hotel and Restaurant Administration was not in favor of me completing my degree requirements through the mail or online. It took a great deal of persuading and I completed my B.S. in Hotel and Restaurant Administration in 1998. What a year I had. I also got married that summer.



Council member Rosemary Hendon

I wanted to return to work but finding jobs that I could manage with my disabilities was a challenge. The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in West Plains provided a referral and I was hired as an Independent Living Specialist at Ozark Independent Living in 2002 where I continued to work through 2016. In this role I assisted people of all ages and disabilities by helping them obtain ramps for easier access, demonstrating phones through the Tap Phone Program for persons with hearing and/or vision disabilities, and serving as a peer counselor, to name a few.

My passion has always been to help make people aware of their abilities instead of focusing on their disabilities. My hobbies include traveling around the world and making my voice heard for accessibility within the travel industry. Many times a reservation is made for accessibility in travel and when the person takes the trip, staff state they do not have accessible accommodations. There is more work to do.

It is an honor to be on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and to be a voice for others. Ms. Hendon was appointed to the council January 6, 2017.

First Responder Disability Awareness Training in Missouri

by Laura Mueth

Niagara University's First Responder Disability Awareness Training (FRDAT) program began in Missouri this month. The program has developed a curriculum specific to each first responder discipline: Law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical services, and 9-1-1 operators. It includes information that each discipline needs to know to interact with and respond to individuals with disabilities in a positive manner.



The curriculum was developed by subject matter experts per disability, disability advocates, and first responders. David Whalen, project director, has conducted over 100 trainings specific to first responders/emergency response. It has been customized for Missouri through suggestions and resources from Missouri disability and first responder agencies and organizations including Laura Mueth from the GCD. It is designed in a Train the Trainer format whereby first responders in attendance will own the product and train as it fits their schedule.



The program is being funded in Missouri through a two year grant from the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council. The inaugural law enforcement training was conducted June 12th and 13th and the inaugural firefighter/emergency medical services training was conducted June 14th and 15th in Kansas City. More information about the FRDAT program can be found at <http://frdat.niagara.edu/>.

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
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Derek Smith, Osage Beach
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Amy Bledsoe, Executive Director
- Claudia Browner, Office Manager
- Wendy Molitor, MO-YLF Coordinator
- Laura Mueth, Legislative Coordinator

Missouri Celebrates 115th State Fair in August

By Jennifer Hentges, Missouri Department of Agriculture

The Missouri State Fair, located on the historic Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia, is celebrating its 115th year in 2017.

The Fair is the premier agriculture showcase in the state, with approximately 30,000 entries each year in categories including livestock, fine arts, floriculture, home economics and more. More than 3,200 Missouri 4-H and FFA youth participated in the State Fair last year.

The Fair also offers top-notch entertainment. Concerts this year include:

- Sawyer Brown with Royal Wade Kimes, Aug. 10
- Halestorm with Skylar Grey, Aug. 11
- Alan Jackson with special guest Lee Ann Womack, Aug. 12
- Granger Smith feat. Earl Dibbles Jr. with Chris Lane, Aug. 15
- Southern Uprising Tour with Travis Tritt, The Charlie Daniels Band, The Marshall Tucker Band and The Outlaws, Aug. 16
- For KING & COUNTRY with Jordan Feliz, Aug. 17
- Red Dirt Country Night with Casey Donahew, Wade Bowen and Mo Pitney, Aug. 18
- Little Big Town with Seth Ennis, Aug. 19

Concert tickets go on sale to the public starting June 20.

In addition to concerts, the Fair offers rodeo, bull riding and motorsports action as well as an impressive line-up of free and family-friendly entertainment around the fairgrounds.

All this - plus fantastic fair food, varied shopping experiences, thrilling carnival rides and more – is offered August 10-20, 2017, at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia! Visit mostatefair.com for more information.

In addition to the excitement of the Fair, the Missouri Department of Agriculture is excited to introduce Jennifer Hentges as their Governor's Council on Disability liaison.



Upcoming Events

- Missouri Youth Leadership Forum—July 18-22, 2017 at MU, Columbia
- Missouri Advocacy Summit—October 7, 2017 Save the Date!