



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

Volume 3, Number 6, December 2017

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

GCD Director's Report

by Amy Bledsoe

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"It's the most wonderful time of the year" certainly rings true. The month of December is always busy. Following Thanksgiving, it is a time to reflect on all that we have and all we can do. When we all focus on what we can do, and what others can do instead of the disability one happens to have, we can accomplish so much more. We are more than our disability.

Think of all of the types of disabilities that exist in our world today. So many that are visible and many that are invisible. Let's flip it and think of it the other way...how many things can be done? So many things one can accomplish when one's mind is put to it. This brings me to a couple of my favorite quotes. Coach John Wooden once said "Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do." Think about that...have you ever spent (or wasted) time thinking about how unfortunate it is that you cannot do something? All of that time is wasted time...time you could have used doing something you are able to do! Henry Ford said "If you think you can or can't, you are right." Ah, self-fulfilled prophecy.

One of the greatest lessons I've learned over the years is that we never know what others are going through. We all wear masks. We often have a mask for work, a mask for school, a mask for church, a community mask, and on and on. Under that mask, only we know what hurdles we face in life. The same is true for others. If we try to just treat everyone with kindness the world would be a better place.

Here at GCD we are thankful for another year of "Yes we can!" and we are certainly looking forward to another great year of achieving more individually and collectively. As you experience the holiday season and the coming of the New Year, focus on all that you and others can do. Celebrate those abilities. Take off your mask with those who are most dear to you. Spend your time with those closest to you. Plan for a great new year of what you can do.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,



Date set for 2018 MO-YLF

by Wendy Molitor



The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning committee has been working diligently to plan and prepare for the 2018 MO-YLF to be held at the University of Missouri Columbia campus July 10th-14th 2018.

Several modifications are being implemented in order to make the application and review process more accessible and streamlined for applicants. Strategies are also being discussed on how to better engage, empower and educate the parents of the MO-YLF delegates for 2018.

Applications are now open for staff, volunteers and delegates. The delegate application deadline is February 28, 2018.

The MO-YLF planning committee and alumni would love to see GCD council members and state liaisons volunteer this year and experience this life-changing event.

Meet MO-YLF alumna Rachel Baskerville

by Claudia Browner



Rachel Baskerville

This month's [MO-YLF](#) spotlight is on Rachel Baskerville. In July of 2005, just before she started her senior year in high school, Rachel attended the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, a leadership program for students with disabilities. Rachel's personal experiences and the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum helped her decide to pursue a degree in social work. In 2013, Rachel graduated with her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. Rachel is employed as a Community Resource Specialist for Camden County Developmental Disability Resources.

Since attending the MO-YLF in 2005 as a delegate, Rachel has continued to serve as a volunteer staff member with the MO-YLF almost every year. The program had such an impact on her life that she wanted to give back and watch other students be impacted by the program. In her last semester of college, Rachel did her practicum with GCD, and helped start a non-profit organization for the alumni of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, the MYLIFE Alumni Association. Rachel currently serves as chair of the MYLIFE Alumni Association. She also serves on the planning committee for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum.

Rachel has also been involved with various Centers for Independent Living in the state of Missouri. She currently serves on the Independent Living Resource Center board and the Arc of the Lake board. Her job allows her to learn about various resources to help advocate for people with disabilities and educate people within the community about people with disabilities.

Rachel is a great advocate for herself and other people with disabilities. She believes that self advocacy is about getting involved and understanding issues that affect the lives of people with disabilities, and how to stand up for yourself and your rights and improving the lives of others.

In January 2018, Rachel will be a panel speaker at the Life Conference in Delaware. She will be talking about her journey and the importance of self-advocacy and finding the potential within you to be a self-advocate.

In 2018 Rachel and her coworker are planning on starting a pilot program in Camden County called Choices. The Choices Program for high school students teaches students that the choices they make while in high school can affect them later in life. In the Choices Program, there will be discussions on topics such as prioritizing, time management, working versus not working, and budgeting. For more information on the Choices Program, please visit www.choices.org.

Money Follows the Person Program

by Elise Davenport

Missouri's MFP, or Money Follows the Person, is a program that has helped over 1,600 people transition from facility settings back into the community since 2007. The program got its name because the Medicaid money, which can pay for care in a facility setting, can instead be used for Home and Community Based Services. Assisting people to navigate the steps necessary to regain their independence and live a life in the community is what MFP does.

The overall goal of MFP is *"to support people who have disabilities and those who are aging to move from a nursing facility or habilitation center to a quality community setting that meets their needs and wants."*

The objectives of MFP are:

- to move people from a facility to the community;
- identify and eliminate barriers that prevent people from being able to move to the community;
- improve the ability of MO HealthNet to provide in-home services;
- and to ensure that there is continuous quality improvement of in-home services provided.

To learn more about MFP and see success story videos about MFP participants, go to on.mo.gov/mfp.

Article written by Elise Davenport, Money Follows the Person Program

Council members unanimously approved a letter of support for continuation of the Money Follows the Person program at the November meeting. The letter was sent to the Governor and General Assembly.

Meet Council Member Katie Jones

by Claudia Browner

The Council's newest member appointed by Governor Greitens on October 27, 2017 is Katie Jones from St. Charles, Missouri.

Katie's passion for working with adults with disabilities began as a college student while working at Willow's Way. In 2001, Katie graduated with a bachelor's degree in Social Work and a minor in Sociology from Lindenwood University. After career positions with the Division of Family Services and Cardinal Ritter Senior Services, Katie came to work for BCI as an Employment Support Specialist in 2004. Today, Katie continues to be an integral part of BCI as the Director of Organizational Employment Services & Political Advocacy.



In a statement about her appointment to the Council, Katie said, "Much of my background has focused on employment. This economy presents a perfect scenario to prove what an asset adults with disabilities bring to the workforce. I'm excited to be a part of this reputable council and plan to serve with both passion and pride."

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
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Amy Bledsoe, Executive Director
- Claudia Browner, Executive
- Wendy Molitor, Disability Program Specialist
- Laura Mueth, Disability Program Specialist

GCD Program Updates

GCD Position Papers

The Governor's Council on Disability has developed [position papers](#) on topics that are important to people with disabilities, such as Education, Employment, Housing, and Transportation.

Most recently, the Council's Advocacy Committee developed a position paper on Healthcare, which was approved by the full Council in November.

The position papers are available to the public on GCD's website at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/positionpapers.htm>

The Governor's Council on Disability invites you to read the position papers and share the information with others who might be interested.

GCD Awards Programs

GCD is accepting nominations for its annual awards programs through January 31, 2018. Please send in your nominations for individuals or organizations who deserve to be recognized for their accomplishments in inclusion, youth leadership, or Website accessibility!

The [Inclusion Award](#) showcases individuals or organizations that have demonstrated best practices in inclusion of people with disabilities. The [Youth Leadership Award](#) recognizes emerging leaders in the disability community, and the [Website/IT Award](#) honors Missouri non-profit organizations that offer accessible and user-friendly websites.

Please submit a nomination for one (or more) of these prestigious awards!

The nomination forms can be found and completed online at https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/files/2017Nomination_Information.pdf

Legislative Updates

For those who aren't aware: GCD produces a legislative update which tracks Missouri House and Senate bills impacting individuals with disabilities. It is distributed every Friday of the legislative session.

If you would like to subscribe to the weekly update, please contact Laura with your name and email address. She can be reached at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov (preferred method), 573-751-2600, or 800-877-8249. The email includes a Microsoft Word version, a PDF version, and a plain text version to accommodate a variety of needs and preferences.

Upcoming Events

- January 31, 2018 Nomination deadline for [GCD Annual Awards](#)
- February 28, 2018 Application deadline for [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#)
- March 2, 2018 Lake Area Transition Fair, State Fair Community College, Osage Beach
- March 14, 2018 Cole County Youth Transition Fair, Lincoln University, Jefferson City
- July 10-14, 2018 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, MU Campus, Columbia

For more information or questions about the events, please contact our office at 573-751-2600.