



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

Volume 4, Number 2, April 2018

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

## Inside this Issue

### Page 1:

- **GCD Update**
- **GCD Awards Presentation**

### Page 2:

- **2nd Annual Access Ability Business Summit**
- **MO-YLF grooms future leaders**
- **Meet MO-YLF alumna Lily Womack**

### Page 3:

- **GCD Awards**
- **Meet Council member Opeoluwa Sotonwa**

### Page 4:

- **Upcoming Events**
- **Opioid Crisis**



**April is Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month**

## GCD Update

by **Claudia Browner**

Welcome to the April issue of the GCD Newsletter. We are all excited that spring has finally arrived! Here's a recap of some of the activities GCD staff have been involved in since February:

Claudia Browner was hired as the new executive director for GCD on April 2. Claudia has been working for the State of Missouri for 25 years, with more than 12 of those years for the Governor's Council on Disability. To complete the team, GCD will be hiring another staff member in the near future.

Disability Rights Legislative Day was held March 14 at the Capitol in Jefferson City. At least 336 people attended and shared their thoughts with legislators.

Laura Mueth provided disability awareness and legislative presentations to various groups throughout the state in February and March, and will be presenting disability awareness training twice in May. See her article on page 2 regarding one of the events at which she will be presenting.

Wendy Molitor collaborated with the Lake Transition Network, Cole County Youth Connections, and Warrensburg Regional Transition Network to put on transition fairs in mid Missouri for high school students living with disabilities.

Wendy Molitor and the MO-YLF planning team have been working on getting ready for the 2018 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF). The team has interviewed the applicants and selected 24 delegates for this year. See page 2 for an update on the MO-YLF.

Collaboration with the Missouri Interagency Transition Team has opened the door for GCD's involvement in the Transition Institute, held June 26-28 in Columbia, where GCD will present a breakout session.

GCD staff provided an exhibit booth and attended conference sessions at the Power Up conference hosted by Missouri Assistive Technology on April 16-17 in Columbia. On day two of the conference, GCD presented the 2017 Inclusion, Youth Leadership, and Website award winners with their recognition awards.

## GCD Annual Award winners honored

The Governor's Council on Disability initiated its annual awards programs over 25 years ago to recognize individuals and organizations who champion efforts in the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

The [Inclusion Award](#) and one Honorable Mention are presented to recognize private and public employers, individuals, and organizations that have successfully included people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, and leisure activities.

**The 2017 Inclusion Award winner is Talent Connect, an employment program of UCP Heartland for individuals with disabilities.**



Richard Coleman, Program Director, Talent Connect

(Continued on page 3)

## 2nd Annual Access Ability Business Summit

by Laura Mueth



For the second year the Access Ability Business Summit will be held in Jefferson City. This year's date is May 17, lasting from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will be held at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital.

The event provides an opportunity for human resource professionals to be educated about the value people with disabilities can bring to their workplaces and assists them in determining how to reach and welcome this group into their businesses.

GCD staff Wendy Molitor has served on the planning committee. GCD staff Laura Mueth will be presenting on disability awareness and etiquette at the event. GCD Council members Todd and Elijah Mayfield will be the keynote speakers. Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) credit will be provided to attendees.

More information and registration can be found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-accessability-business-summit-tickets-44042843330>

## MO-YLF grooms future leaders

by Wendy Molitor



The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) follows the California Youth Leadership Forum model. The California model has been implemented successfully since 1992. Missouri has successfully implemented the Youth Leadership Forum since 2001. GCD has learned a lot along the way. At the end of the day, what GCD really wants to see is alumni leadership in the MO-YLF through and through. We have graduated some amazing individuals that possess stellar leadership skills and qualities. With the right continued training, supports and partnerships, alumni absolutely have what it takes to take on leadership roles in the program.

We have several alumni that have returned to MO-YLF to volunteer their time nearly every year since their graduation from the program. Stop for a moment and consider the dedication these individuals have to this program. That is 5 days dedicated away from their homes and jobs; some of them even save up their vacation time specifically to be available every year. If that does not show leadership, I am not sure what does.

GCD's goal is to collaborate with other agencies across the state to provide continued training to the MO-YLF alumni. Specifically, we would like to focus on preparing the alumni to take on many of the leadership roles within the MO-YLF program. Missouri is unique in that we have excellent partnerships and resources that allow us to do this with ease. If your agency is interested in collaborating with us, please do not hesitate to contact us and see how you can get involved.

The 2018 MO-YLF will be July 10-14, 2018 on the Mizzou campus. We have selected 24 delegates this year and this group is going to shine. Be sure to read our alumni highlight as well. These are the next Missouri leaders, definitely people you are going to want to know and connect with.

## Meet MO-YLF alumna Lily Womack



Hello I'm Lily Womack, I am an alumna of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. My goal in life is to make a difference in my school, community, and in others' lives.

I recently received 6th place in the state for early childcare teaching through Skills USA. I am in the leadership role of junior schoolboard representative where I sit on my school board and tell them how school life is going for me and my peers. I help in many community service projects.

The Forum has helped me with my everyday life in my leadership role. whether it be speaking at a community event or leading an activity. I use the skills the Forum taught me in everyday life.

I would like to return to the Forum as staff to pay forward the confidence it has given me to the future alumni and leaders. I would also like to return to help better myself and improve my leadership skills for my soon to be preschoolers next fall.

## GCD Annual Award winners honored

by Claudia Browner

(Continued from page 1)



**The Honorable Mention recipient for the 2017 Inclusion Award is Kate Hannon**, an early educator and inclusion advocate who currently serves as a senior director of Belle Children's Services of St. Louis Arc.

The [Youth Leadership Award](#) program recognizes an outstanding Missouri youth (age 16-26) with a disability that demonstrates exemplary leadership by making a difference in their community.

**The 2017 Youth Leadership Award winner is Andrew Tollefson**, who has made it his mission to help people understand the ability behind the disability. Andrew serves as a tutor and mentor for elementary school children, and as an annual DisABILITY Awareness speaker to educate others and advocate for people with disabilities.



The [Website Award](#) recognizes Missouri-based organizations that provide a user-friendly websites that are accessible to all.

**The 2017 Website Award winner is Deaf Inc.**

Deaf, Inc's website has a great overall design. The featured videos are in American Sign Language with accurate captions and the text content is easily accessible through refreshable readers for people who are blind or visually impaired.

*Photos: Top left—Claudia Browner presents the award to Kate Hannon, Right—Andrew Tollefson displays his award, Left—Deaf, Inc.'s Director of Community Programs, Tia Morris, and Marketing Director Tony Nitko display their award.*

## Meet Council Member Opeoluwa Sotonwa



One of the most recent appointees to the Governor's Council on Disability is Opeoluwa Sotonwa, who was appointed as a council member on March 7, 2018.

Mr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa is the Executive Director of Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). He was formerly with the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH). Mr. Sotonwa has been involved with disability rights issues since becoming a lawyer in Nigeria. He holds an LL.M. (Master of Laws) from Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., where he graduated Cum Laude and currently a doctoral candidate of Law and Policy at Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts.

Mr. Sotonwa is a former Vice President of the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA). He also served as the Chair of the NBDA Board of Directors and continues to serve on the board of NBDA. Mr. Sotonwa is a member of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Missouri Association of the Deaf as well as several think-tank organizations that focus on disability rights advocacy.

By virtue of his position as the Executive Director of MCDHH, he is a member of Missouri Board for Certification of Interpreters, Relay Missouri Advisory Committee, Missouri Department of Mental Health Deaf Advisory Council, and Missouri Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project Advisory Committee. A consummate advocate; Mr. Sotonwa brings a lot of passion and a constituent-centered leadership approach. He lives in Jefferson City with his sons Bolu and Lekan.

## 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
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Jefferson City
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

## Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

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

## Upcoming Events

- May 1-3, 2018 [Missouri Association for Workforce Development Conference](#), Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark
- May 17, 2018 [Access Ability Business Summit](#), St. Mary's Hospital, Jefferson City
- May 20-22, 2018 [Missouri Rehab Association Conference](#), Tan Tar A Resort, Osage Beach
- June 26-28, 2018 [Transition Institute](#), Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia
- July 10-14, 2018 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#), MU Campus, Columbia

## Opioid Crisis Response

The State of Missouri is facing an Opioid Public Health Crisis of epic proportions. It is tragically impacting the lives of families and communities every day. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) has received two federal grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide prevention, treatment and recovery services in response to the Opioid Crisis. Below are brief descriptions of these federal grants.



### Opioid State Targeted Response (Opioid STR) Grant

[MissouriOpioidSTR.org](http://MissouriOpioidSTR.org)

DMH and the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH) are leading this project. Collaborative partners include substance use disorder and healthcare agencies, organizations, and academic affiliates throughout the state. The grant was received in May 2017.

The primary goals of the Opioid STR project include:

- 1) Increase provider and consumer-focused opioid use and overdose prevention initiatives and programs through school-based prevention, telehealth consultation on safe opioid prescribing in primary care, and expanded overdose education and naloxone distribution efforts;
- 2) Increase access to evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment for uninsured individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) through rigorous provider training, direct service delivery, healthcare integration, and improved transitions of care in hospital and outpatient settings;
- 3) Increase the number of individuals with an OUD who receive recovery support services through four (4) new Recovery Community Centers, supportive recovery housing, and peer specialist services; and
- 4) Increase the likelihood of sustainability through policy and practice change as well as demonstrated effectiveness of grant-supported protocols.

### Prevent Drug/Opioid (PDO) Overdose-Related Deaths Grant

[MO-HOPEProject.org](http://MO-HOPEProject.org)

DMH provides overall coordination and leadership, with the National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse (NCADA) leading the implementation and MIMH leading the administration and evaluation of the program. This grant was received in September 2016.



### MO-HOPE Project

The goal of the Missouri Opioid-Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education (MO-HOPE) Project is to reduce the number of opioid overdose-related deaths and adverse events among individuals 18 years of age and older.

Key components of the grant include training emergency responders, substance use disorder treatment providers, and other key community sectors on the prevention of opioid overdose-related deaths. The primary focus is on secondary prevention strategies, including the purchase and distribution of naloxone to persons at risk of experiencing or witnessing an overdose.

MO-HOPE training for diverse professional and community audiences focuses on evidence-based practices to reduce rates of overdose through public health and harm reduction strategies.

For information on the Statewide Departmental efforts go to [opioids.mo.gov](http://opioids.mo.gov).