



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD Update

by Claudia Browner

Welcome to the August issue of the GCD Newsletter. The Governor's Council on Disability has had a couple of exciting months, with the highlights being the 16th annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (see the article on page 2) and the hiring of two new staff members—Rachel Rackers and Christina Brazell.

Rachel Rackers (Top left photo) started July 2 as a Disability Program Specialist and the new coordinator for the annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum.

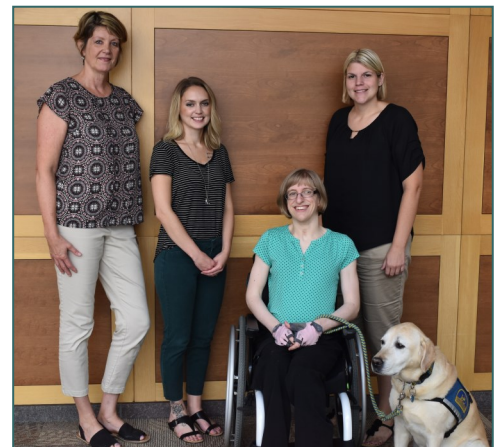


Christina Brazell (Bottom left photo) joined the GCD on August 1 as an Administrative Office Support Assistant.



I am very excited to have all staff positions filled and look forward to continuing the mission of the GCD by providing disability-related information and referrals, training, education and resources to the citizens of Missouri.

GCD staff (Top right photo): Claudia Browner, Christina Brazell, Laura Mueth, Rachel Rackers, and service dog Syler.



Changes for Disabled Placard Renewal

by Claudia Browner

Recent legislation changed the physician's statement recertification requirement for individuals with disabilities who use a disabled placard/license plate for their vehicle(s) from every four years to every eight years, effective August 28, 2018. The legislation did not change the requirement for the renewal of the placards, which are still required to be renewed every four years.

The Missouri Department of Revenue has mailed a "Disabled Placard Renewal Notice" to all Missouri residents who currently have a 'disabled placard' to explain the changes.

Applicants who are at least 75 years of age, military service veterans with a permanent disability, or not-for-profit organizations who provide transportation for individuals with disabilities are exempt from providing a physician's statement.

Details about the new requirements can be found on the Department of Revenue's [website](#) at:

<http://dor.mo.gov/motorv/placards/permanent.php#renew>

2018 MO-YLF a Great Success!

by Rachel Rackers



The 2018 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) was a great success. We had 17 delegates from 14 different Missouri counties who graduated to become alumni. After this year's MO-YLF, there are a total of 314 alumni who have graduated from the program. There were 14 alumni from past years that returned to participate in a staff member role, and two additional alumni who participated in the mentor event.

Each year, MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities a week-long college setting experience, where they learn about disability history, advocacy, the legislative process, transition to employment or higher education, adaptive technology and adaptive sports. It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences,

which is what MO-YLF provides. The program is designed specifically to help students grow into leaders. Students were selected to become delegates at the forum based on an application process. In addition to leadership skills, the delegates learned to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to the community.



There were many great experiences and events that the delegates were able to partake in throughout the week. During the day, delegates participated in a variety of small and large group learning sessions, followed by planned fun-filled evenings. Some of the highlights were the keynote speaker, Amberley Snyder, adaptive sports night, a day at the Capitol, a talent show, dance and photo booth. It didn't take very long at all,

for the delegates to bond and join together to enjoy these activities!



Each year, the delegates participate in a community service project. This year's selection was Operation Gratitude, which sends 250,000+ Care Packages to Deployed Troops, New Recruits, Veterans, First Responders, Wounded Heroes and their Care Givers. With the help from delegates and staff, we were able to collect and donate nearly 8,000 items and a monetary donation for shipping the items. Once these items were brought in, they had to be sorted, bagged, and boxed before being shipped to Operation Gratitude. This project was very much so a team effort, but everyone stepped up to the challenge.

MO-YLF wouldn't be a great success without all of the wonderful people, who take time out of their own busy schedule to lend a helping hand. There are a wide variety of roles that must be filled during the week and it takes a solid team, which is exactly what we had. We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors and partnering agencies for 2018 MO-YLF: Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Edward Jones, Paraquad, Integrity Home Care and Hospice, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, Camden County Developmental Disability Resources, Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, and The Whole Person, as well as several other agencies that provided in-kind donations. New on board this year as volunteer staff were employees from Central Workforce Development Board - Youth 180.

Everything that is needed to make MO-YLF a great and successful experience was present---great delegates, fantastic staff and alumni, and excellent sponsors. A giant thank you to each of you!

We look forward to next year's MO-YLF.

*Photos: **Top right**—staff and delegates with keynote speaker, Amberley Snyder. **Center left**—delegate, Joseph Hill, looking over Governor's Proclamation. **Center right**—delegates and alumni at dance.*

Meet MO-YLF Alum Isaiah Shields

by Rachel Rackers



Every year, the Governor's Council on Disability puts on the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) for students with disabilities. Since this 5-day leadership and transition program started in 2001, 314 delegates have graduated from the MO-YLF. The key success to the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is leadership by example, and that is what Isaiah Shields does.

Isaiah attended MO-YLF in 2017 before entering his senior year at Central High School in Springfield, MO. During his time as a delegate, he learned more about his disability and how to use accommodations at the collegiate level. Not only does Isaiah have leadership skills, he also has talent in performing, which led him to winning first place in the 2017 MO-YLF Talent Show. After attending as a delegate, he knew that he wanted to continue to be a part of MO-YLF.

For the 2018 Forum, Isaiah returned as a Team Member. He enjoyed being a part of staff and said, "I loved getting to know new people and seeing new faces around the program. It's a small organization, but all of the students and facilitators have big hearts for everyone at the forum. This year for me was definitely amazing because I had such a great time being the hype-man this year as a team leader". During the 2018 MO-YLF, he also played a part in organizing and setting up this year's Talent Show.

As far as future plans go for Isaiah, he plans on obtaining a Registered Nurse degree and becoming a full-time traveling nurse around the United States. Also, in the future he would like to help build an organization to prevent human-trafficking and sex-trafficking. There is no doubt that wherever life takes Isaiah, that he will bring leadership, positivity and a smile to everyone's face.

Meet Council Chair Yvonne Wright

by Claudia Browner



Yvonne Wright is the current chair of the Governor's Council on Disability. She was appointed to this role on July 21, 2015.

Yvonne currently serves as the Director of Workforce Engagement and Innovation for the Missouri Division of Workforce Development. She began this new role June 1, 2018, and works to oversee collaboration of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other partners to better serve all of Missouri's job seekers. Prior to this, she worked almost 25 years for Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation. She served in several capacities there, including counselor, supervisor, Assistant Director of Independent Living and in her last job as Director of Workforce Development and Business Engagement.

Yvonne sees her role as chair to not only serve and support the Council members and staff, but to show commitment to improving and enhancing the lives of people with disabilities.

"It is an honor to serve in this role. Since taking on this role in 2015 the Council has gone through many changes, but what has never altered is the undying dedication of the Council members and staff to serve our Missourians with disabilities and support their needs."

- 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**

- Christina Brazell,
Administrative Office
Support Assistant
- Claudia Browner
Executive Director
- Laura Mueth,
Disability Program
Specialist
- Rachel Rackers,
Disability Program
Specialist

2018 Legislative Priorities Poll

By Laura Mueth

Each year the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) sends out a poll to hear from the public regarding disability related legislation and areas of concern. This year's poll will be released August 27, 2018. The GCD staff and council members encourage every Missouri citizen impacted by disability to complete it. The deadline for responses is Friday, November 9, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Each response received is reviewed by staff and will be used as we shape the Council's legislative priorities and interactions with legislators for the 2019 legislative session. The results will also be shared with members of the legislature.

The legislative priorities poll may be completed via Survey Monkey or PDF. The PDF can be filled out electronically, or printed and completed by hand. The poll will be available on the Legislative Priorities Poll page of the GCD website, at events, and the online survey link will be sent to the GCD email lists.

Hard copies can be returned via fax (573-526-4109), email (gcd@oa.mo.gov), and mail (Governor's Council on Disability, 301 West High Street, Room 840 PO Box 1668, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1668). Assistance with completion is available by contacting the GCD office at 800-877-8249.

We look forward to reading the responses!

Upcoming Events

- August 8 MO State Highway Patrol Drivers Examiners Disability 101 training, Jefferson City
- August 21 MO Dept. of Corrections ADA Title I training
- August 24 GCD Quarterly Council Meeting, Runge Conservation Nature Center, Jefferson City
- Sept. 7-8 [Parent & Caregiver Retreat conference](#), Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark
- Sept. 11 [The Arc of Missouri Annual Education Summit](#), Courtyard Marriott, Columbia
- Sept. 12 [Missouri Symposium on Supported Decision Making](#), Holiday Inn EC, Columbia
- Sept. 12 New VR Counselor Training, Jefferson City
- Sept. 14 State Human Resource Management Council (SHRMC) presentation, Jefferson City
- Nov. 4-5 [Missouri School Counselors Association conference](#), Tan-Tar-A, Lake Ozark
- Nov. 29-30 [First Responder training](#), Jefferson City