



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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October is Disability History and Awareness Month

by Claudia Browner

October is a very important month in the disability community as advocates and disability organizations celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month in Missouri.

[National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\)](#) celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

The United States Department of Labor's theme for 2018 is *America's Workforce: Empowering All*. More about this year's theme and other information can be found here: [National Disability Employment Awareness Month News Release](#)



Disability History Month

In May 2011, the Missouri legislature passed House Bill 555, which authorizes school boards to require the provision of disability history and awareness instruction in public schools during the month of October of each year and designates the month of October to be "Disability History and Awareness Month."

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is proud to participate in celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month:

- Governor Parson issued proclamations recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month in Missouri
- The Governor's Council on Disability features an exhibit about National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month in the Truman State Office Building in Jefferson City throughout the month of October

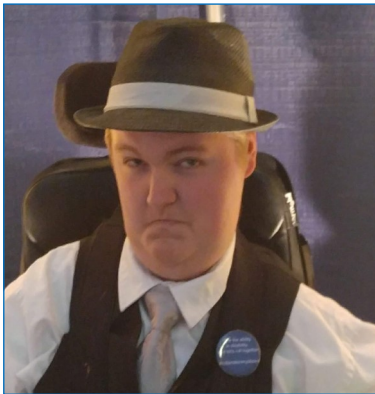
- The GCD participates in the MPACT Transition Summit for students with disabilities
- The GCD [calls for nominations](#) to recognize individuals and organizations that exemplify inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace and all aspects of life. Awards are presented annually in the categories of [Inclusion](#), [Youth Leadership](#), and [Website/IT](#)

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](#) and click on Educational Resources.



Meet MO-YLF Alum Daniel Andersen

by Daniel Andersen



Daniel attended the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum just after completing high school in 2015. He took MO-YLF's lessons of leadership and advocacy to heart and decided to search out ways that he could improve his community and stand as an example of the potential that all people with disabilities have inside of themselves.

Daniel is a junior studying political science and communications so that he can better become a public advocate and community leader. He hopes to become a professional public speaker when he graduates so that he can share his life with the world as a way to break social barriers for all people with disabilities. He learned of this passion when he spoke during the Hands Around the Capitol event and the MPACT summit in 2015 directly following his Youth Leadership Forum experience. One day he hopes to serve the people in a public office as a representative of all people, especially those minorities that have been under represented by the government.

This past August Daniel was named the new Chairman of the MYLIFE Alumni Association, an association for all graduates for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum program. He plans to use his leadership skills learned from the Forum and his three years experience as the campus president of the on-campus housing student government at Brigham Young University in Provo Utah where he attends school, to help improve the Alumni Association. Daniel hopes that the Alumni Association will become a more involved, vocal force in the community and help to continue the development of all leaders within it's reach. He is excited to take on this role and is hopeful for what the future holds.

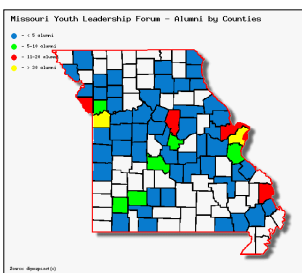
Youth Leadership and Transition

by Rachel Rackers



Although the 2019 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) is nearly 10 months away, the planning committee has already begun preparations for next July's event. The dates for 2019 MO-YLF will be set soon and information will be sent out and added to the GCD website in the coming weeks.

There have been a couple changes discussed already, such as extending the deadline for delegate applications until March 31, 2019 and adding or expanding topics to be discussed throughout the week. Those topics are relationships and independent living, which will be of importance in all delegates' lives.



The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is an excellent and life-changing event for our delegates. Since MO-YLF started in 2001, 314 alumni have graduated from the program. A goal for this year and those to follow is to expand on the number of counties represented. As of 2018, alumni have come from 63 out of 114 counties and the City of St. Louis. In order to be able to expand into the other 51 counties, it will take more outreach to spread the word about MO-YLF. To help obtain this goal, it will take making connections with school districts and agencies within those areas. The best way to spread the word is to talk about MO-YLF to others so if you get the opportunity, be sure to share the information!

GCD participated in the 10th Annual [MPACT Transition Summit](#) on October 9 in Jefferson City to do outreach to potential MO-YLF delegates, educators and service providers.



Together with two MO-YLF alumni, GCD staff provided a breakout session about the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum as well as an exhibit booth to share information about the MO-YLF and other GCD services and programs.



Nearly 300 individuals attended the event to learn about youth leadership development, housing, employment services, assistive technology, independent living and self-determination.

We Need Your Help to Recognize Leaders

by Christina Brazell

The Governor's Council on Disability is searching for the best of the best! There are so many individuals and organizations out there supporting the Disability Community, and we need to know who they are! The GCD only gives out these awards ONCE a year, please don't let those exceptional individuals go unnoticed. Help us find our Winners!

It takes only a few minutes to complete the nomination form and give the gift of recognition to those who truly deserve it.

The following awards are open for nominations:

- The [Inclusion Award](#) recognizes and honors individuals or organizations that have demonstrated the best practices in inclusion of people with disabilities.
- The [Youth Leadership Award](#) recognizes emerging young leaders (age 16-26) in the disability community.
- The [Website/IT Award](#) honors a Missouri non-profit organization, business or local government that offers accessible and user-friendly websites.

A panel of judges selects the winners for each award category and the winners receive their awards at the Power Up Assistive Technology conference.

If you know of any individuals or organizations who deserve to be recognized for their accomplishments, 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/files/2018-GCD-Awards-announcement.pdf>



Meet Council member Susan Orton

by Claudia Browner



Susan Orton is a long-time, devoted member of the Council. She is a resident of St. Louis who grew up in New Jersey and Maryland. Susan has been married many years to her husband, George, and has three children, Karen, Kevin, and Kristen, 2 fantastic grandchildren and a spoiled dog, named Jac. For the past 9 years, Susan has been a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Gundaker.

Here's what Susan shared about her life:

"In 1988 our family was changed forever. Karen was severely injured in a car crash. Her fiancé was killed and Karen sustained a traumatic brain injury plus multiple broken bones. Miraculously, she survived, but deficits remained. Karen was fortunate to experience several years of rehab that allowed her to recover as best as she could. Her determination was the guiding factor.

Because Karen received excellent care and recovered sufficiently to live on her own (with supports, of course), I made it my goal to help others less fortunate. A social worker at the hospital where Karen was initially taken said, "Karen can't advocate for herself, so you will have to do it." That has been my motto all these years.

To that end, I served on the state and local Board of the Missouri Head Injury Association (now the Brain Injury Association of MO) and was a member and Chair of the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council (Brain Injury Advisory Council). Currently, I serve on the St. Louis County Commission on Disabilities, Governor's Council on Disability, and as a liaison to St. Louis County Older Adult Commission & St. Louis Realtors Inclusion Advisory Group.

As the years have gone by, I discovered housing and transportation were areas to focus my efforts. I am a huge supporter of Universal Design and recently facilitated the inclusion of UD criteria in the multiple listing service (MLS) all Realtors in the area utilize. I do not see a slowing down of my efforts as there is so much to be done."

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

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

Take Your Legislator To Work

By Claudia Browner

Each October during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the [Missouri DD Council](#) encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in the "Invite Your Legislator to Work" initiative to promote positive employment outcomes and recognize the value and talent people with disabilities bring to the workplace.



Legislators spend part of the day with the individual at their place of employment to learn about the importance of employment and the contributions the individuals bring to their workplace, community and the economy.

To learn more about this initiative, click [here](#) to see a video narrated by Missouri Representative Kip Kendrick or visit the DD Council's [website](#) at MODDCouncil.org

Your Opinion Matters

By Laura Mueth

The [2018 Legislative Priorities Poll](#) was released in late August.

The GCD staff and council members encourage every Missouri citizen impacted by disability to complete it. 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. Poll results will be shared with legislators and on our website.



The poll can be completed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7PD9WZ3>. It is also available in PDF format which can be filled out electronically or printed and completed by hand. This can be accessed at http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm or by contacting the GCD office at 800-877-8249.

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 also available by contacting the GCD office.

The deadline for participation is Friday, November 9, 2018 at 5:00 pm.

If you have already completed the poll, thank you and please keep spreading the word with your contacts.

Upcoming Events

- October 16 [Community Engagement Conference](#), Truman State University, Kirksville
- October 17 [MO Interagency Transition Team \(MITT\) Retreat](#), Jefferson City
- October 18-19 [MACDDS Conference](#), Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia
- November 4-5 [Missouri School Counselors Association conference](#), Tan-Tar-A, Lake Ozark
- November 16 GCD Quarterly Council Meeting, Runge Nature Center, Jefferson City
- November 29-30 [First Responder training](#), Jefferson City