



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

## GCD announces Poster Contest

by Claudia Browner

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**Calling all Missouri artists with disabilities! Share your talents and raise awareness about the importance of employment for people with disabilities.**

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is observed each year in October to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities and educate about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has initiated a poster contest to celebrate Disability Employment Awareness Month in Missouri. The posters are intended to spark a conversation about employment of people with disabilities. Artwork for the poster is selected by a submission and judging process and is open to Missouri artists (age categories: K-12 and Adults) with a disability.

The GCD will recognize outstanding Missouri artists with a disability. The winning artwork in each age category, along with a short bio about the artist, will be featured on a poster that will be promoted statewide during the month of October.

Deadline for submissions is August 1, 2019.

For more information and to enter the contest, please see the attached flyers and visit our website at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest>

## Celebrate the ADA

by Claudia Browner



**Celebrate the ADA**

Show your commitment to the ADA

**PLEDGE ON!**

July 26 marks the 29th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Here are some ideas of what you can do to celebrate the ADA and promote inclusion:

- Make sure your websites are accessible
- Provide accommodations for meetings and events
- Offer training on ADA issues on a regular basis
- Participate in online courses to learn about ADA regulations
- Exhibit works by artists with disabilities
- Demonstrate the use of assistive technology at community events

For additional ideas for Celebrating the ADA, please visit the ADA National Network's website at <https://www.adaanniversary.org/ideas-celebrate-ada>. You can also show your commitment to the ADA by signing the [ADA Pledge](#).

## 2019 Legislative Session Concluded

by Laura Mueth



The 2019 concluded on May 17. As is customary, there was a lot of activity in the last week of the session.

A few bills important to the disability community were Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed as individual bills. These include [Senate Bill 101](#) which creates a statewide hearing aid distribution program, [House Bill 547](#) which creates treatment court divisions, [Senate Bill 29](#) which extends the end date of certain reimbursement allowances, and [House Bill 138](#) which creates Simon's law.

Several bills were added to other bills and Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed in that form.

One of those bills was a bill to repeal the all-rider motorcycle helmet law that currently exists in Missouri. Some of the other items that may be of interest to members of the disability community that were passed this way include extending the Ticket to Work program, advanced practice nurses using telehealth, establishing a pilot program for structured family caregiving, and changing the payment calculation for sheltered workshops.

[House Bill 399](#) and [Senate Bill 230](#) that started as disability related bills were turned into omnibus bills. This means several bills that have related subjects were combined to get them passed. In addition to mandating health insurance coverage for children with physical disabilities, House Bill 399 includes personal care assistance vendor requirements, extension of financial assistance for Consumer Directed Services, creation of an assessment tool for home and community-based services, and offenders having MO HealthNet benefits suspended rather than terminated. Senate Bill 230 includes establishing proper venue in cases involving guardian or conservator appointment and ABLE Account assets not being part of a conservatorship estate unless they are in the charge and custody of a public administrator.

[Senate Bill 514](#) which began as a non-disability related bill ended up having several disability related bills added to it in omnibus form. Some are ones mentioned in the above paragraphs. Others are Medicaid per diem reimbursement rate recalculation, removing the dual eligible requirement for the MO RX Plan, extension of the consumer directed services program for those who are not eligible for MO HealthNet, and suicide prevention training for marital and family therapists.

The appropriations bills which fund state government departments and programs were also Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed before the constitutionally required deadline of May 10.

All of these bills are now in the Governor's Office awaiting Governor Parson's consideration and action. As a reminder, he can sign the bill, veto the bill, or take no action. He can also do a line item veto on appropriations bills. This means he can veto specific budget items/lines while the rest is signed. Bills he chooses to not act on still become law. They are just not endorsed by him.

### June Awareness Events

- [Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month](#)
- [Scoliosis Awareness Month](#)
- [National Cancer Survivors Day](#) (June 2)
- [World Sickle Cell Day](#) (June 19)
- [Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week](#) (June 22-29)

### July Awareness Events

- [Cord Blood Awareness Month](#)
- [Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month](#)
- [National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness/Prevention](#)
- [UV Safety Month](#)
- [World Hepatitis Day](#) (July 28)

## Meet Council Member Chuck Comstock

by Claudia Browner



Chuck Comstock has been an active member of the Governor's Council on Disability since 2010 and serves on the Advocacy and Programs Committee as well as the Transportation Subcommittee.

Chuck served in the U.S. Air Force and worked on his family's farm in Downing, Missouri. At the age of 20, he sustained a spinal cord injury. Using self-direction and self-determination, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Truman State University.

From 2008 until 2017, he worked at the Kirksville Regional Office as an Advocacy Specialist and coordinated the annual *disAbility Awareness Event* at Truman State University in Kirksville. In June of 2011, he married Melissa Comstock and they now have two beautiful, energetic daughters.

Chuck is now a stay at home dad and does a lot of chores around the house. Last winter, he got very creative when he mounted a blade to his motorized wheelchair and cleared his driveway from the snow. His invention worked so well that he decided to help out some of his neighbors by plowing their driveways. He also figured out a way to mow his lawn by attaching the lawnmower to his wheelchair. According to Chuck, "There are no limitations to what a person can do."

## MO-YLF features Mentor Event and Legislative Day

by Rachel Rackers and Laura Mueth

Thirty delegates and numerous staff are getting geared up for the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) to be held at the University of Missouri in Columbia, July 16-20. Throughout the week, delegates will be exposed to a variety of mentors. One unique event during the week is the mentor luncheon, where many successful individuals with disabilities from a variety of different career paths are invited. It is an opportunity for delegates to talk and learn first-hand that they can lead productive and full lives.



This has been an exciting year for MO-YLF. We received the second highest number of applications in the MO-YLF history. From the 54 applications received, we selected 30 delegates and placed 6 on a waiting list. There are also roughly 20 alumni returning in staff and mentor roles this year. It is such an exciting moment, when alumni can help guide delegates to reach their full potential.

One of the days of the MO-YLF is dedicated to legislative activities at the Capitol Building in Jefferson City. The activities include a mock House Hearing on a topic voted on by the delegates, a mock floor debate in the House of Representatives, a debate/discussion in the Senate Chamber, and a visit to the Governor's Office.

The Governor's Council on Disability invites legislators to participate in the mock hearing and debates, to serve as mentors as the delegates experience the various roles of a legislator as *their* bill makes its way through the steps of the legislative process. Having legislators involved serves multiple purposes for the delegates. First, it allows them to learn from people who actually do those jobs. Second, it allows them to realize legislators are not unapproachable. Third, it allows delegates to learn about the backgrounds of the legislators and that not all of them are attorneys and that they themselves could one day be a legislator.

From the perspective of the Governor's Council on Disability, legislator involvement gives the opportunity for legislators to interact with and thus gain a greater understanding of people with disabilities. This year's legislative day is Thursday, July 18.

## 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
- Christina Brazell,  
Administrative Office  
Support Assistant
- Laura Mueth,  
Disability Program  
Specialist
- Rachel Rackers,  
Disability Program  
Specialist

# Response to JC Tornado and Flooding

by Claudia Browner

The month of May has been a tough month for the State of Missouri between multiple tornadoes across the state, and flooding of many rivers including the Missouri and Mississippi.

Here in Jefferson City, disaster struck on May 22 on the eighth anniversary of the Joplin tornado when an EF3 tornado ripped a 3 mile path of destruction across the city, destroying several businesses, homes, and causing significant damage to some state office buildings and one school. A few days later, the Missouri river topped the levy in North Jefferson City causing significant flooding. With all the rain and storms that followed, the river has reached levels not far from the "Great Flood of 1993". The flooded streets downtown make it difficult to navigate the city. And the flooding is not over yet, with additional storms and rain in the forecast.



What's been uplifting and positive throughout these events is the quick action from emergency responders and emergency management agencies, volunteer organizations, as well as the overwhelming community outreach and support.

Multi-Agency Resource Centers were organized quickly to assist those affected by the disasters, and shelters opened up for those in need.

Jefferson City is showing its resilience as a strong community and is working hard to recover from these disasters along with the other communities throughout the state.

For individuals who still need to reach out for assistance or would like to volunteer, please visit United Way 2-1-1 at [www.211helps.org](http://www.211helps.org) or call 2-1-1.

## Upcoming Events

- June 16-19, 2019 [National ADA Symposium](#), Grapevine, Texas
- June 17 –20, 2019 [Transition Training Institute](#), Columbia
- June 18-20, 2019 [National APSE Employment Conference](#), St. Louis
- July 16-20, 2019 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#), MU Campus, Columbia
- Sept. 23-25, 2019 [National Head Injury Conference](#), Kansas City
- Oct. 25-28, 2019 [APRIL Conference](#), GrandRapids, Michigan