



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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## GCD UPDATE

by Claudia Browner

During the month of July, the GCD Team has been busy recognizing and celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (see article on page 2), and the 31st Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26. Our team has had the opportunity to learn the latest information about the ADA and disability issues at the National ADA Symposium, before gearing up for National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in October.

## LAST CALL FOR NDEAM POSTER CONTEST ENTRIES

The Governor's Council on Disability is still accepting artwork entries for the annual [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\) Poster Contest](#) to raise awareness about the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce.

Don't miss the deadline—submit your entries by August 15 for your chance to have your artwork featured in this year's NDEAM poster, which will be distributed statewide and posted on our website, social media, in the October GCD Newsletter, in GCD's annual report and the month-long NDEAM Exhibit in October.

Detailed information about the contest and entry forms are available online at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest>



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL COMING SOON

by Laura Mueth

Each year, the Governor's Council on Disability conducts a Legislative Priorities Poll to find out, and inform legislators about the issues important to the disability community.

The 2021 Legislative Priorities Poll will be available for completion beginning on August 23 and closing on November 5 at 5:00 p.m. It will include a variety of questions. There will be opportunities for you to share with us in your own words issues you experience and changes you would like to see.

Keep your eye out for the Survey Monkey link to participate. It will be distributed via email and posted on GCD's [Facebook](#) page and [Poll](#) web page. PDF versions which can be completed and returned to our office will also be available through those avenues. If you have not received the Poll in the past and would like to receive it directly once it is ready, contact Laura Mueth at [Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov](mailto:Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov).



## MPACT—RESOURCES AND EDUCATION FOR PARENTS

by Brook Fuller, MPACT



MPACT is Missouri's one and only Parent Training and Information Center. We are funded in part by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—IDEA as well as a partnership with our state department of education (DESE). Here at MPACT we provide information, resources, and support through the special education process.

Our mission is to empower parents to be their child's best advocate. One way we do this is by offering free trainings both online and in-person such as our upcoming webinar series "Back to School IDEA Bootcamp". To view the calendar and register, visit our website at <https://www.missouriparentsact.org/upcoming-trainings-events/>

Currently, we are in the process of remodeling our entire website to make finding resources, our 100+ fact sheets, and our calendar of events more accessible, and to provide updated information. In addition to supporting parents, we also support our youth through events such as our upcoming Youth Transition Summit in Jefferson City on October 20th where we provide presentations and access to resources that will assist youth in their transition from high school to adult life.

All of our events can be found and registered for by going to our website at [www.missouriparentsact.org](http://www.missouriparentsact.org). You may also contact us at (800) 743-7634 or by emailing [info@missouriparentsact.org](mailto:info@missouriparentsact.org). Additional information and a video about MPACT can be found on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/sq2JOhb9no4>.

## MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM 20TH ANNIVERSARY

by Rachel Rackers

In July, the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF), our 5-day leadership and career development training for students with disabilities, celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

The Governor's Council on Disability is celebrating this important milestone with a series of videos looking back at each of the program years and culminating in a video montage of testimonials from MO-YLF alumni, staff, and supporters of the program.

If you have not had a chance to view the videos and hear about the impact the program has had on its participants, please check out our [MO-YLF Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/MOLeadershipForum/) at <https://www.facebook.com/MOLeadershipForum/>

For more information on the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) program and events, please visit our website at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>.



### COVID—19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

COVID-19 Vaccine Information—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov>

COVID-19 Vaccine Incentive—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/win/>

Disability Web Portal—COVID-19 Resources page—<https://disability.mo.gov/covid-19.htm>

## MO-YLF ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT ON JOSHUA TUCKER—REACHING MILESTONES ONE STEP AT A TIME

by Rachel Rackers



Meet Joshua Tucker from Alma, Missouri. Life changed in an instant for Joshua when he suffered a traumatic brain injury from an ATV accident in 2012, at age 12. Against all odds, Joshua survived and has since overcome many obstacles with the help of his doctors, nurses, therapists, teachers, and most of all family and friends.

Each step towards independence was celebrated along the way as he relearned to eat, speak, and walk, returned to school, started driving, and graduated from high school in 2019. In 2017, he first attended the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum as a delegate and he returned as a staff team member in 2018 and 2019. Joshua has learned a lot about leadership, self-determination and independent living at the MO-YLF, and with his great personality, he quickly made many friends.

In February 2021, he accomplished one of the biggest milestones yet by moving into his own house! He's learned to cook for himself, clean, take his meds, and budget his money. And just this May, he graduated from Lex La-Ray Technical Center with a degree in Building Trades. Joshua is currently working for his family's business, Tucker Carpentry.

In his free time, Joshua loves to spend time outdoors and with his dog, Sunny. He also enjoys grilling, traveling, working on projects, attending sporting events and monster jams, and hanging out with friends and family.

We are very proud of Joshua's accomplishments and so grateful to call him our friend!



## MEET COUNCIL MEMBER TRACI RITTER

by Claudia Browner



On March 15, 2021, Governor Parson appointed one of our newest members, Traci Ritter to the Governor's Council on Disability. Traci is excited to serve on the Governor's Council on Disability. She has been an advocate for people with disabilities since her daughter, Kaitlyn, was born in 1991. She and her daughter were instrumental in getting Kaitlyn's Law (Missouri HB236) passed in 2009.

Traci has served on several disability related boards locally, and was most recently appointed to the Cape Girardeau County SB40 Board.

Traci worked for Jackson R2 School District as a paraprofessional for the visually impaired for 6 years, and during that time, she started a parent partnership council to improve disability awareness in the local area. Traci regularly speaks at local university courses regarding parenting a child with a disability and advocacy.

Traci is a small business owner in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where she resides with her husband Kenny. She regularly supports entrepreneurs with disabilities by featuring their items for sale at the boutique she co-owns in Cape Girardeau. When Traci is not running her business and advocating for the rights of those with disabilities, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends.



## Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Ronald Hack, Interim Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Traci Ritter, Cape Girardeau
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

## Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Senior Program Specialist
- Jessica Zimmer, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

## ACCESSIBILITY IS COOL

by Claudia Browner

Do you want to learn about making your website and social media information accessible? Not sure where to start or need a refresher? Here are some resources to get you started.

Rooted in Rights, a project of Disability Rights Washington, has developed a series of short, easy to follow YouTube videos titled "[Accessibility is Cool](#)", covering four topics:

- Transcripts in a Snap
- Alt Text in 60 Seconds
- Audio Description in a Couple Minutes
- Captions in a Couple Minutes

For more in depth training on making web content and social media accessible, you can sign up for webinars hosted by [Missouri Assistive Technology](#), visit their Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility page at <https://at.mo.gov/it-access/> or visit their [YouTube Channel](#) to watch training videos.

## IN OTHER NEWS—TOKYO PARALYMPICS

by Claudia Browner

### Are you a sports fan getting ready to watch the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics?

Originally scheduled for the summer of 2020, the games had to be postponed due to the pandemic, but are now scheduled to take place from July 23, 2021 to August 8 (Olympics) and August 24 to September 5, 2021 (Paralympics).

We are excited to report that one of our very own Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) alumni will be participating in the Paralympic Games this year. Colleen Young, a 2014 MO-YLF alum, has previously competed in the 2012 London Paralympics and 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympics, where she won a bronze medal in the 100m breaststroke. Later this month, she will be competing in her third Paralympics in Tokyo in the 50m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 100m breaststroke, and 200m individual medley. Good luck, Colleen. We are proud of you for representing Team USA!!

Watch Colleen's Team USA introduction video here: <https://youtu.be/IqdaAIHWoxA>

To find out when and where you can watch coverage of the Paralympic Games, please read information provided by NBC at

<https://olympics.nbcsports.com/2021/02/24/nbc-tokyo-paralympics-coverage/>

