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# inter **ACT** ion

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Alternative Community Training .....

## Success Story **Kandace Roddy**

*“It’s the job I always wanted. There are a lot of rewards with the job including spending playground time with the two- and three-year-olds. This is great. I get to play all the time.—Kandace Roddy”*

Kandace Roddy has the job she’s always wanted. She’s a teacher’s aide at the Child Development and Learning Center.

At the school’s playground, two- and three-year-olds give her “high fives” and big hugs.

“I love my job,” she says. “I always wanted to work in day care.” Because Kandace’s mother operated a day care center, “I grew up in day care,” she explains.

Even with that background, she needed a little assistance from ACT to find and then thrive in her job.

In January, ACT’s Community Employment Program performed a job assessment for Kandace, determining her job strengths. Kandace found a temporary job on her own and ACT assisted by providing job coaching services. As a result of Kandace’s exemplary work and the relationship ACT established with the employer, Kandace was offered a permanent position. Kara Albert, an ACT JobCoach, initially helped Kandace three times a week. Eventually that was reduced to two, then one time per week as Kandace learned ways to work with the children. With the job coaching behind her, Kandace no longer relies upon ACT.

“I got a lot of help from ACT,” she says. Now, in addition to working with the two- and three-year-olds, she also works with infants.

“It’s the job I always wanted,” she adds. There



**ON THE JOB.** Kandace Roddy got her dream job at a day care center after a little help from ACT’s Community Employment Program

are a lot of rewards with the job including spending playground time with the two- and three-year-olds. “This is great,” she says. “I get to play all the time.”

As for her employer, the match has been a

success, adds Trina Almond, Program Manager of the Community Employment Program. “The employer really appreciates her,” she says. “I look forward to her working there for a very long time.”

# NEW PROGRAM MANAGERS *have their hearts in their work*

Two new Community Living Program Managers have many years of experience in the human service field.

Amy Lawrence has six years of experience and Cindy Kent served as a staff member at an ACT residence.

“My philosophy is that if you love your job you’ll never work a day in your life and I’ve always loved this kind of work,” says Lawrence. “I keep coming back to it.”

Lawrence, who has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Northeast Missouri State University, has extensive experience working in agencies like ACT. She has worked in residential programs, supported employment and a day program.

What she likes the most is seeing progress of the persons she oversees. She supervises two homes with of six individuals. “I enjoy being around the people and helping them improve their lives and making their lives happy. I like to help them do what they want to do.”

One goal she has is to increase community involvement for her consumers. She’s hoping to promote “more person-centered outings like getting them involved in an activity they enjoy.”

An activity like a bowling team “broadens their horizons,” she says. “It gives them somebody to hang out with other than staff or other consumers.” Such an activity “gives them the same kind of life and activities that we take for granted. They’re able to grow as persons and learn more social skills.”

Lawrence says she joined ACT because of the person-centered focus of the organization. “ACT treats consumers very respectfully,” she says. “The attention is very individualized and people are not categorized.”

She credits ACT program managers with

being personally involved in creating a person’s Individual Plan. “Here it’s specifically tailored for each person and what they want to learn to do.”

Helping ACT continue its philosophy of caring is Cindy Kent, a new Program Manager for the Community Living program.

“My heart’s here,” she says. “My heart was always with this population of people.” Kent has been an in-home staff member for one and one-half years. That experience motivated Kent to seek her bachelor’s of social work degree four and one-half years ago from Columbia College. She also is completing an internship with ACT. She’ll graduate in December.

As a single mother of three, she’s worked hard to earn her current position. “I’m excited,” she says. “I worked hard for this. I went from being on welfare and food stamps.” She joined ACT, began her college career and now “I’m proud of where I’m at. I’ve worked hard.” The payoff has been a job that is a perfect fit. “It was totally worth it. I love what I do. I love my job here.”

She says she “chose ACT because the organization is so person-centered. They truly care about the consumer.”

She oversees two homes and six persons. She says she “loves seeing the accomplishments” of each individual. “Accomplishments are celebrated. When people make even little accomplishments, it’s just huge. It may be something we take for granted but when they achieve it, it’s just awesome.”

She says she’s constantly asking many questions of her consumers such as “are they where they want to be? Do they want to work? Are they happy with what they’re doing? Do they know about their options? That’s real important to make them the best they can be.”



## CARING MANAGERS.

Two new Community Living Program Managers have big hearts for the consumers they serve. New to ACT are, above, Amy Lawrence and, below, Cindy Kent.



# TWO MOVE TO HOMES IN THE COMMUNITY

Two active young ladies— receiving support through ACT’s Community Living Program— recently moved to homes in south Columbia.

Beth and Miranda are now enjoying the rewards of living in homes in the community. Beth makes a perfect housemate with Abby and Mila, particularly Abby who likes to be involved in the community as much as possible.

“I know that she likes to be on the go,” says Amy Lawrence, Program Manager for the house. “I really hope to see her and Abby being taken out in the community. I can see them going out and doing things together with activities like going to the movies or bowling.”

Beth, too, has many friends in the Community Integration program. “She’s like everybody’s favorite,” says Lawrence. “She’s real talkative.”

Miranda, too, has many friends at ACT, particularly in the onsite employment program. While now residing in a community home, Miranda’s goal is to be a part of ACT’s apartment program. “She’s looking forward to getting into the apartment program,” says Alanta Free, Program Manager for the Community Living Program. Free adds Miranda manages all of her medication, handles her own banking and “is a really good cook.”

Miranda also is very friendly with her new housemates, Jodie and Brandi. “She’s friendly and very helpful around the house,” says Free. “She blended into the house really well.”

With both working and living skills, Miranda is headed toward reaching her goal of having her own apartment. “As far as everything looks, she’s going to make that,” says Free.

It's the lunch rush at the Main Street Cafe and Beth, ACT Community Employment consumer, whirls about bussing and wiping down customer tables.

"She's pretty amazing," says Ron Hausheer who oversees the cafe as Assistant Manager of retail sales for the University of Missouri Hospital and Clinic's Department of Nutrition and Food Service. Beth "has a level of energy and a sense of urgency that I wish we could instill in all staff."

The cafe does a brisk business every day around noon keeping Beth in motion nonstop during her shift.

"When she gets rolling she's like a little steam roller," Hausheer says. "It's hard to stop her. She works hard, oh my gosh she works hard. Beth is very valuable."

And when the rush subsides and she is through bussing tables, she vacuums and cleans the restaurant which is tucked in a corner of the University of Missouri Hospital and Clinics.

Beth has been a valuable employee for more than five years. Her successful career is the result of a solid relationship between the University Hospital and Clinics and ACT.

"There's been a very good relationship over the years," says Hausheer. "I've seen a lot of ACT participants over the years and there's obviously been many successful relationships. The relationship has been very solid particularly here at the hospital with Main Street Cafe."

Working in the dishwashing area at the cafe is Kyle, also an ACT consumer. Kyle, says Hausheer, "has got this smile on his face all the time."

And for him, his job has been a dream come true. Recalls Hausheer: "I remember the day he was doing an assessment or having a tour and he said, 'I always dreamed of working at Main Street.' I said, Kyle, sometimes dreams come true."



**VALUED PARTNER.** ACT's relationship with the Main Street Cafe has been valued for many years says Ron Hausheer, Assistant Manager of retail sales at the University of Missouri Hospital and Clinics.

The relationship the cafe employees have with Beth and Kyle is a key factor in the partnership. "Everyone loves Beth. Everyone knows Beth. She's almost a celebrity with her involvement in Special Olympics. The staff is very good with Beth. It's touching sometimes. There's a definite relationship between the staff and Beth and Beth and the staff—a definite relationship as well as 98 percent of our customers that know Beth—especially the hospital staff, they all know Beth. They all compliment her."

Success stories like Beth's and Kyle's encourage Hausheer to consider the prospect of hiring additional ACT consumers. "ACT is able to help us and we're able to help them," he says. "There are always a lot of development opportunities for more ACTpeople."

## VENTURE BOOSTS RECYCLED VIDEOTAPE SALES

ACT is learning nickels add up. That's the price per pound of more than 270,000 pounds of plastic VHS tapes ACT has been paid by Green Vanderbilt, a New York recycling company.

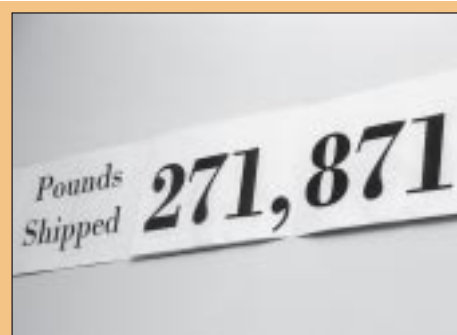
In August alone ACT has shipped three plastics-filled cargo containers to the West Coast for transit to Hong Kong. The shipments brought in from \$1,000 to \$1,600 each.

"We stuff them from floor to ceiling with as much as possible," says Jim Williams, Director of Operations and Community Employment.

Williams has worked on finding a recycler to work with over the past six months. Pressure to find new sources of revenue has increased because of the declining sales of computer diskettes and videotapes now replaced by CDs and DVDs.

Pressure also is on ACT to find a user of 600,000 warehoused videotapes, donated by FunIMATION, a firm that distributes Japanese video cartoons. The quantity is equivalent to 34 semitrailers, Williams explains.

While problematic, the tapes create work for many ACT workers. "We're always looking



**RECYCLING SUCCESS.** More than 270,000 pounds of plastic VHS tapes have been processed for recycling by ACT.

for ways to put more people to work," says Williams. "That's why we're here."

To handle the volume of tapes, ACT is outsourcing tapes to several sheltered workshops. Helping ACT take the tapes out of their packaging are workshops in Sedalia, Boonville and Fulton.

Also, ACT is looking into having a machine built that would separate the plastics, metal and media contained in videotapes.

Separating the plastics would bring in significantly more income, Williams explains. While tapes now bring five cents a pound as one piece, the black plastic casing would bring about 30 cents per pound and the white hub about 45 cents per pound.

Getting the machine made "will be a big project," Williams says, and ACT is currently pursuing a grant through the Missouri Market Development program.

ACT is also establishing relationships with others collecting recyclable materials to increase shipments to the West Coast. ACT is working with Civic Recycling, of Columbia, to share a load of recycled material. The City of Columbia also may help fill one-half of a cargo container, thus allowing ACT to ship plastics one or two times per week.

Williams expects to continue to find creative ways to sell plastic materials. "Earning revenue from plastics is very important to ACT," he says. "Fortunately increasing oil prices are helping this business. As the price of plastic keeps going up, more people are getting into the recycling business."

# Summer travels



Participants in the Community Integration Program took in all the sights and sounds of summer. Above, Michael tries out an old phone at the Telephone Museum in Blackwater. Above (right), from left, Larry, Wesley, Martha, and Chris show their approval of the Missouri State Fair. At right, Lindsey points to old photographs at the Pony Express History Museum in Lexington. Recent trips also included touring the Missouri Nature Center at Blue Springs, visiting the Maple Leaf Room in Sedalia to learn more about ragtime composer Scott Joplin, checking out contemporary art at the Daum Museum in Sedalia, touring the old Cooper County Jail, sheriff's home and hanging barn, and discovering the life of Walt Disney in his hometown of Marceline. Fall also meant kicking off the hiking club, visiting the St. Louis Zoo and the James Pecan Farm in Brunswick.



## NEW VANS INCREASE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ACT has leased three new Toyota Sienna vans. The vans are used extensively by the Community Integration Program taking participants to numerous sites during each week. Two of the vans replace vans and one additional van is now available due to the increase of participants in the Community Integration program. ACT received very favorable leasing terms on the vans according to Jim Williams, Director of Operations and Community Employment.

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