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# interACTion

Spring 2002

## Alternative Community Training

Need quality custodial services? Consider . . .

# ACT'S MOBILE CLEANING CREW

ACT's mobile cleaning crew is one of the best kept secrets in town. The seven-member crew offers some of the best custodial care in the area, yet not many businesses know about the service.

The mobile cleaning crew works every day providing complete cleaning service to the ACT facility and two other Columbia locations.

"They put in hard work," says Grace Ricciotti, employee training specialist and cleaning crew supervisor. "They work twice as hard as many workers."

The crew does extensive cleaning for its clients. A few of the services include cleaning bathrooms, washing windows, complete cleaning of kitchen and dining areas, dusting vents, shining chrome and sweeping. "Whatever they ask for, we'll try to do it," says Ricciotti.

Right now the crew is looking for additional jobs. "We could always work more hours." The crew is made up of "very hard workers," she adds. "They're very observant and take pride in what they do." One client served is Broadway Physical Therapy—a location that demands the highest quality cleaning, Ricciotti adds. "They're down on their knees doing very deep cleaning."

Ray Handy, supported employment director, organized the mobile crew in 1995 by bringing together several workers doing custodial work independently. Many of today's crew have been custodians for up to 12 years. By concentrating all the custodians into one crew, a business could get the highest quality service at a very competitive contract rate, he says.

In addition to providing each custodian money, self-satisfaction and direct access to the community are key benefits to each crew member.

"It's been very good for ACT and the individuals that we support on the crew. It gives them the support they need and allows them to work in a community setting."

For contracted locations there are numerous benefits to hiring the



**SERVICE RULES.** *'Whatever they ask for, we'll try to do it,' says Mobile Cleaning Crew supervisor Grace Ricciotti, front row middle, about the crew.*

mobile crew, says Handy. Each cleaning job gets a thorough inspection by a job coach and supervisor Ricciotti. The businesses also know they'll get a quality job because there is little or no turnover among crew members.

"You definitely get higher quality" than many competing commercial firms, says Ricciotti. Hiring the crew "is an opportunity to feel good about your work environment and yourself."

To learn know more about the services of the mobile cleaning crew contact Ray Handy at 474-9446.

## Duplicating lines now running 16 hours a day

There's no slowdown of work in ACT's Affirmative Industry Program.

A recent large project involves the processing and sale of 150,000 new diskettes purchased by ACT. A buyer has been found for the new diskettes as well as an additional 250,000 new diskettes.

The affirmative industries program has

been busy processing the new diskettes for several weeks. In addition to processing the diskettes, several jobs have been created because the new diskettes come fully packaged and must be opened by hand.

The new work involves processing 10,000 disks a day on the duplicating machines. ACT's largest diskette client—GreenDisk—

requires 5,000 disks be processed a day, or 110,000 diskettes a month. With the new work and GreenDisk's order combined, two lines now run 16 hours a day.

"It's the first time in over a year that we've run 16 hours a day," says Don Lafferty, affirmative industry program director. "These are good jobs for adults with disabilities."

# DAY TRIPPIN'

## Day program clients travel the state

Activities are on a roll at ACT. In recent months day program participants have traveled from one Missouri border to the other learning history, music, art and much more.

In February, ACT clients celebrated Black History month by visiting sites from Scott Joplin's home in St. Louis to the Kansas City's Negro League Museum.

Two groups of 10 follow different travel agendas. The ACT City Travelers visit sites that might require a full 8-hour day. The ACT Explorers travel to sites and activities closer to Columbia and require no more than about six hours of time.

Since the first of the year the City Travelers have visited:

- The City Museum in St. Louis
- The Harry S Truman Museum and Library, Independence
- Kansas City's Negro League Museum and the American Jazz Museum
- The Missouri Historical Museum exhibit, Legacy of Miles Davis, in St. Louis
- The Scott Joplin House, St. Louis

The ACT Explorers visited the Missouri Riverfront at Jefferson City and the St. Patrick's Day parade at Laurie, MO.

Both groups also take part in numerous activities in Columbia. They routinely bowl, exercise, take part in art activities and eat lunch out. With warmer weather, they'll soon be fishing on a regular basis.

Next on the agenda will be an Amtrak train ride from Jefferson City to St. Louis and back, a Kansas City Royals baseball game, and visits to the Missouri Botanical Gardens and Cahokia Mounds.



*The Missouri riverfront at Jefferson City was a great trip for the ACT Explorers.*



*Neil does a little etching at the City Museum, St. Louis.*



*Larry tries out a player piano at the Scott Joplin house, St. Louis.*



*With the statue of Harry S Truman at the Truman Memorial and Library, Independence.*



*Enjoying the food at Fuddrucker's is always a hit during any trip.*

# VISION, MISSION, VALUES DRIVE ACT

Did you know a one-page document drives every activity at ACT? Rather than being lofty or dry, three succinct statements “drive virtually all that we do and decisions that we make,” says Executive Director Mark Hassemer.

## The Vision, Mission and Value statements are:

- Introduced to all new employees and board members
- Used to develop goals and action plans

At ACT’s fall planning retreat, more than 40 staff members reviewed the statements and refined the language slightly.

“These are words that are meaningful,” says Hassemer. “They are words that are in our minds in everything we do and across all programs.

“It’s valuable when all employees have a say in the organization,” he adds. “We’re able to work toward our goals because everyone buys into our vision and mission.”

## The Vision, Mission and Value statements are:

**Vision statement:** ACT’s vision is a community where everyone belongs, is included, participates, and is accepted.

**Mission statement:** ACT provides personalized support to individuals with disabilities as they become full and valued members of the community by accessing opportunities available to all citizens.

**Value statement:** ACT eagerly and enthusiastically accomplishes its goals through the following areas:

- Assure a competent, well trained, caring, compassionate staff
- Provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to make informed choices and exercise their right to self determination
- Support individuals with disabilities to participate in the community
- Encourage and facilitate the involvement of family members and friends in the lives of people supported by ACT
- Respect and advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities
- Encourage innovation and creativity in administrating and providing supports to people with disabilities
- Provide supports in a safe, healthy and happy environment
- Administer a well managed and cost efficient business oriented organization
- Embrace diversity within the organization

# SPOTLIGHT Jonnette Whittler

## Q. Tell us about your work here at ACT.

A. I’ve been here two years. I began working in the homes as part of the supported living program. Now I’m a staff member of the day program.

## Q. What’s the favorite part of your job?

A. Just getting the guys out and seeing their expressions. It’s great to take them places they’ve never been—things they’ve never seen. They’re excited. They ask me ‘What are we going to do next?’

## Q. You’re always on the go with ACT clients, what motivates you?

A. It’s just me—my personality. Some people say I’m wired. It’s how I am.

## Q. Tell us a little about yourself.

A. I’m from Holts Summit and I went to Jefferson City High School. I attended one year at Central Missouri State University. I worked at Restwell Lodge which was for individuals with mental illness. I really loved that place. Then I started working at Woodhaven and still work there on weekends.

## Q. What do you do with the spare time?

A. I do a lot of things with my daughter Marie Asoline — she’s three and a half. We go to the library and movies and go to the park. Soon we’ll go to St. Louis and go to a lot of the places we’ve gone to with ACT.

## Q. What can you say about ACT?

A. I think ACT is a great place. They’re so willing to always help you take our clients on trips and do things.

# DONOR HIGHLIGHT

## Industrial Recyclers of Wisconsin

The generosity of Industrial Recyclers of Wisconsin has helped keep 30 ACT clients work steadily processing videotapes.

Recent videotape donations helped provide two weeks of employment for 30 ACT clients.

In recent months the firm has donated 84,606 videotapes to ACT. The tapes are brand new and still packaged in shrink wrap. The tapes also are 120 minutes in length, a variety that rarely is donated.

Recent shipments over the past several

months “came at the perfect time when work was getting low,” says Don Lafferty, affirmative industry program director. “It’s a great donation. It’s much better for the organization to get a tape in its original packaging because it provides more jobs for our adults.

“We’re fortunate to have a donor like Industrial Recyclers,” he says.

“Without donations like theirs we wouldn’t have the number of jobs available for our adults with disabilities.”

# NEWSbriefs

**Calendar.** ACT’s offices and facility-based programs will be closed for the following holidays:

**May 27**—Memorial Day

**July 4**—Fourth of July

**September 2**—Labor Day

## ACT receives generous donations.

ACT’s new ReachOut contribution program has helped increase donations in recent months. The following memorials, honorariums and general donations have been received.

### Honorariums

- Dana Corporation in honor of Charlie Giehlauf

### Memorials

- Gerald and Barbara Braznell in honor of Delmar Hassemer
- Gerald and Barbara Braznell in honor of Edward R. Spence
- David and Marcia Machens in honor of Delmar Hassemer

- Mrs. Edward R. Spence in honor of Edward R. Spence

### General donations

- Mr. and Mrs. George Boyle
- Doug and Linda Clemons
- Gary and Patti Freeman
- Anna and David Hargis
- John and Jacqueline Pascucci
- Rotary Club of Columbia-Northwest

ReachOut is a special giving program designed to increase outside financial resources to ACT. Through the program you can designate your contribution to any specific area or individual served by ACT.

Contributions can be made in honor of special events or birthdays or as memorials.

To learn more about ReachOut or to make a contribution contact Mark Hassemer, executive director at 573-474-9446 or e-mail: mhassemer@socketis.net

## THE BEAT GOES ON FOR EXERCISE CLASS

Exercise isn't work for seven ACT clients. It's fun!

For five weeks MU senior Ranata Rucker has led a lively half hour of exercise instruction for seven supported living program participants.

Rucker, an ACT intern, made exercise fun by teaching energetic dance moves such as the electric slide, grapevine and the Chicago cha-cha. Three days a week the group met for a half hour in the lobby of Rucker's MU dormitory, Lathrop Hall.

With a steady boom-box beat, the seven dip, jump, sway and clap energetically.

The benefits are many for every participant, she says. The most important is to plant

the seeds to begin a regular exercise program. "This helps them to get a routine besides going to work and coming home."

She started the class to see if class members' self-esteem might increase, although "this group has good self-esteem to start with.

"They enjoy it. And I hope this helps them be proactive and assertive and do it regularly."

As part of a research project, Rucker gave an activity test to each participant. Statistics, too, are being compiled such as weight change during the class.

Rucker also is leaving behind a manual and video should future exercise classes be launched by ACT.



**DOIN' THE CHA-CHA.** Ranata Rucker, left, kicks off an exercise session for ACT clients with the Chicago cha-cha.

While the class ended in early March, Rucker says "if I had time and a facility close to ACT, I'd like to continue the class for the rest of the year.

"I enjoy it. My only regret is that it's ending."

## JOBS—the goal for new business council

Columbia's business community is joining ACT to find employment for individuals with disabilities.

Recently a group of business owners and leaders became part of ACT's business advisory council.

The group brings together 12 individuals to explore where and how more ACT clients may find work in the Columbia community.

"It's very self satisfying for council members," says Ray Handy, ACT director of supported employment. "Everyone on the council is committed to finding work for individuals with disabilities."

To help the group, ACT now has individual profiles available electronically. A council member can check the profile by computer to see if an open position may match an ACT client.

In addition to helping individuals land

jobs, Handy hopes the group can broaden ACT's employer network. One goal is to have council members refer other business contacts for potential job placements.

The council is not new to ACT. It existed many years ago but was re-established because of current hiring conditions. "With the economy the way it is," says Handy, "we're finding that jobs aren't as easily or as readily available especially for somebody who's going to have some specific needs and accommodations that may need to be made."

Good business contacts also are needed because today many ACT clients have career goals that are more skilled than more traditional positions for individuals with disabilities.

Clerical positions, particularly are needed, says Nick Barnett, an ACT job developer. Barnett would like to see a larger council that might include employers familiar with cleri-

cal, hospitality and custodial employment.

For donating their time, the business leaders receive the "self satisfaction knowing they are helping individuals with disabilities find employment in our community," adds Handy. "Employers benefit by expanding their work force and there also are tax incentives."

The group meets every other month and is led by ACT board member Jim Williams. Other members are Jerome Raider, MBS Textbook Exchange, Inc.; David Brown, MBS Textbook Exchange, Inc.; Kat Cunningham, Moresource, Inc.; Ed Erdman, Stephens College; Julie Murphy Kalaitzandonakes; Shelley Morse, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; and Tim Schaumburg, Signs Now. Representing ACT are Mark Hassemer, executive director; Don Lafferty, director of facility based operations; Barnett and Handy.

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