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inter **ACT** ion

Winter 2005

Alternative Community Training

3 million tapes and CDs come to ACT

What do you do with a mountain of VHS tapes and DVDs? Just ask Jim Williams, Director of Operations and Community Employment.

Miraculously, ACT has found a user of 3 million VHS tapes and DVDs.

Williams said he was offered the huge quantity of tapes and DVDs on a Friday and had a user by Saturday.

Funimation, which has already sent ACT 600,000 tapes and DVDs, offered an additional 3 million items. "He said they had some more things they wanted to ship us and do we want more of their products? And I said 'sure.' And he said, 'well, we've got 3 million pieces to send you.' So I said 'wow.'" "Then I wondered what I was going to do with all of these tapes and DVDs."

Williams adds that "it so happened that the recycler Green Vanderbilt called on Saturday and agreed to take all of the Funimation materials.

The VHS tapes alone would fill 16-20 semi-trailer loads. The volume equals about 416 pallets of tapes.

"By Saturday we had it resolved and we might even make money on it. That'll be a big plus," says Williams.

The tapes eventually will be shipped to China where the tapes will be ground for recycling. ACT received three cents a pound for the tapes which "is a good thing for us," says Williams. "Some things do work out."

In other news about tape and DVD recycling, ACT has begun promoting personalized DVD cases that can be used to hold photo CDs.

Carrie Griffith, Program Manager for the Community Living Program, decorated cases for specific themes or events: baby pictures, halloween pictures, Christmas pictures, wedding pictures and camping pictures.

The decorating involves using scrapbooking materials. "Our hope is that we can somehow tie into the scrapbook world and get all the scrapbook businesses in the country to buy DVD cases so they can motivate their customers to decorate them and fix them up," says Williams.

"Hopefully we'll create some enthusiasm with the scrapbook world.—It's a pretty big group of people who do scrapbooking. We hope to generate some excitement by having a fun place to store their family pictures on CDs."



The holiday season brings to light needs for many ACT consumers. A few no longer receive family support. Only a generous holiday spirit can provide what many of us take for granted.

This year, consider contributing to ReachOut, the special giving program that will directly help ACT consumers. ReachOut was established to help ACT consumers or programs. This time of year your contributions can be designated for:

- Holiday gifts
- A Christmas tree
- ACT's annual holiday party

With your contributions you'll be Santa to many individuals. Consider making your ReachOut contribution today. Just use the enclosed envelope and designate how you'd like to see your gift used.

Mail your gift to:

ACT
2200 Burlington
Columbia, MO 65202



HEADED TO CHINA. Large pallets of plastic videotapes are headed to a shipping container with the help of Jim Williams, right, Director of Operations and Community Employment.

ACT RECEIVES THREE-YEAR ACCREDITATION

ACT has received the maximum accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities or CARF. It is the seventh time that ACT has received the three-year accreditation, having received the first in 1987.

“Accreditation makes us look at how we operate,” says Mark Hassemer, Executive Director of ACT. “We look at everything from our management information systems to our outcomes management system to different processes we have in place. They look closely at health and safety issues—a variety of very important issues for any company, certainly an organization like ACT.”

Hassemer adds that “we have to make sure we’re meeting or exceeding CARF standards to receive accreditation. That’s good. It keeps you sharp. It makes you attentive to your operations and ultimately lead to better and more quality services to the people. That’s really in the long run why we’re here.”

According to CARF’s Web site the international organization has rigorous standards “so those services that meet them are among the best available.”

The review is done by a team of surveyors who examine facilities. “Traditionally surveyors are not from your state so they don’t come with any preconceived notion about your organization,” says Hassemer.

In its final report to ACT, CARF cited many strengths. The report states that ACT has strengths in many areas.

THE REPORT CITES MANY EXAMPLES OF QUALITY INCLUDING:

- An atmosphere of respectful listening permeates the organization, ensuring that persons served have the maximum input into their lives.
- A dedicated and talented group of direct-service staff members who understand the needs of the persons served and treat them with dignity and respect.
- An outstanding job recruiting middle and top management staff.
- High standards of ethics and quality throughout its operations. Its business practices, from human resources to planning to financial management, are of the highest quality.
- The satisfaction of all stakeholders is consistently high, and the family members, community members, consultants, funders, and personnel express trust and pride in the high quality of services.
- The persons of ACT—both those served and those paid to provide services—are highly involved in the community of Columbia.

Currently more than 38,000 programs and service providers have earned CARF accreditation globally.

NEW EMPLOYEE FOCUSES ON JOB SUCCESS

Bret Glass, new to ACT, plays a vital role in placing clients in the workplace. As a Job Development Coordinator he’s the link between assessing an individual’s skills and starting a new job.

Glass is part of the Community Employment Program, a program which has seen significant growth during the past few months.

Glass has helped with many recent successful placements that have contributed to this growth. After a potential worker tries several different jobs during an assessment period, Glass smoothes the way for entry into the workplace by assisting people with their job search.

He puts together a resume and employment history as well as a job development interview form to get some basic information about the person’s interests and preferences—whether they want to work days or nights, full-time or part-time. He then weighs in information about the consumer’s benefits to ensure that the level of benefits remains once work begins. At that point the consumer gets as involved as possible.

“We try to make the consumer as active a participant in the process as possible,” he says. “This is their life. This is their job. It needs to be an opportunity that they’re comfortable with so that they can be successful.”

Currently 90 individuals are finding success

on the job. In every new situation, Glass applies his work experience and education.

“This is probably an ideal employment opportunity for me because any job there is, I probably worked in it at one time or another,” he says. “It helps me in determining whether it’s a good match for individuals.”

In high school and college he held many jobs. “I’ve worked with a variety of populations and I, myself, in my undergrad work and high school, had various jobs. I think it’s been really helpful because it provides me with the ability to deal with diversity and also respect and honor the unique differences that people have.”

To add to his experience, Glass is completing a master’s degree in educational counseling psychology and rehabilitation from the University of Missouri-Columbia this December.

In addition to working with potential workers, Glass communicates with employers and agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, New Horizons and Boone County Family Resources.

At each facet of his job he’s mindful of the words he uses. “I try to be really conscious about using empowering words to help people and not discourage them from their dreams and what they think their capabilities are. I think it’s important that regardless, it’s their path and they have to figure out whether it works or whether it doesn’t. They will determine



JOB FINDER. Bret Glass, new to ACT, helps find jobs for participants in the Community Employment Program.

what’s realistic for them. There have been people who have done what some people consider impossible.”

Such an upbeat attitude can also be seen in Glass’s relationships with other ACT employees. ACT is “more of a community where everybody is on the same playing field so we can work together as a team,” he says. “I think people can really thrive in that kind of environment and services can become better and better.”

FALL TRAVELERS *hit the road*



LEARNING AS WE GO. ACT consumers learn a lot as they travel throughout the state. At left enjoying the Renaissance Festival in the Kansas City area are, left, Jessica and Abby. Right, Susan and Lindsey study a green-tailed friend at the St. Louis Zoo.



ACT consumers took advantage of warm sunny days to visit many unique places in Missouri this fall. Sedalia welcomed consumers in the Community Integration Program to the Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, the Maple Leaf Room, and the Katy Depot. Heading east, the travelers visited the Hermann riverfront and the St. Louis Zoo. A group also visited the corn maze located east of Columbia. A visit also was made to The Cabin in New Florence. The location is famous for its giant rocking chair. Cooler weather is not slowing down the group. They

plan to go fishing and eat at a catfish restaurant in honor of November which is designated Cold Weather Fishing Month. Museums, too, will be visited with trips planned for the Centralia Historical Museum and the Missouri Historical Museum located at the Missouri School for the deaf in Fulton. A Lunch 'n Learn activity will also host Ed Ricciotti, an ACT employee in the Community Integration Program. He will share his personal observations of Florida, Cuba, Cozumel and Tampa Bay.

SPOTLIGHT Michelle Saunders

Michelle Saunders recently joined ACT as Program Manager for the Community Integration Program.

Q. Tell us a little about yourself.

A. I'm a native of Pennsylvania and am married to Chris, who is a professor of mathematics at Westminster College in Fulton. We have two children, Brooke, 6 and Bailey, 2. I have 10 years of experience in the area of serving individuals with disabilities. Most recently I was a program manager of five homes for a large agency in State College, Pennsylvania. The agency served 1,300 individuals.

Q. What first impressions do you have of ACT?

A. I think it's well run. There are several employees, not just in the Day Program, who have been long-term employees. ACT is retaining staff so that's telling me they're doing something right. I think the staff are very dedicated. They care about the people they're supporting. It's not always the easiest job. When you see someone working here 10 years you know they're dedicated.

Q. What ideas have you developed since studying the Community Integration Program?

A. I'm researching the College of Direct Support which is an online training for direct-care staff. It's being utilized in states all over the United States. We're always looking for new, up-to-date information for direct-care staff. I also hope to help improve communication within the agency but as well with other agencies that we work with that have participants that come here. The more we work on communication the better the continuity of care is for the people that we support.

Q. Are you developing other ideas?

A. Yes. We want to make an expanded list of activities that can be done in house as well as activities in the community — listing places that are handicap accessible, then filtering all that information to the staff. We want people to be as involved as possible. We want them to have the highest quality of life while they're here at the Day Program.



InterAction. Community Integration Program Manager Michelle Saunders, right, enjoys interacting with Michael, left, and all program participants.

Q. Any other ideas?

A. We're looking at implementing some sort of schedule — some sort of routine so the participants know what to expect each day. When you come in maybe there's 15 minutes of stretching or some kind of exercises. We would have those kind of standard things. We're also looking into age-appropriate activities so that we make sure the folks who are here are doing as much as they can do.

Q. What has your experience been like working with ACT?

A. It's great here. I've been very, very impressed with everything I've seen. Hopefully I can make some positive changes where they need to be changed or help with those things. It's very proactive of ACT to have someone like me come in and look at the program to try to improve it. I've enjoyed meeting all of the consumers. I think they're a lot of fun. I really enjoy working with people with disabilities.

boom!



Halloween is a favorite holiday for ACT consumers and staff. This year's Halloween party brought a host of trick-or-treaters including, left, staff members Karthryn Gunn and Zack Reeves. At right are consumer Kelly, staff member Rhodi Schnetzger, consumers Chris and Roy, and staff member Charley Dill. Below left, consumer Jim is a very large lobster and right, Minna and Chris display their royal attire at the party.

NEWSbriefs

KC RECYCLING BEGINS. Kansas City residents soon will have a way to donate items for ACT to recycle. Bridging the Gap, a business in Kansas City, will place special collection boxes throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area for items such as VHS tapes and DVDs. The firm will ship the items to ACT which will sort and recycle. "There could be a lot of material coming out of Kansas City," says Jim Williams, Director of Operations and Community Employment.

GAMES, CRAFT ITEMS NEEDED. ACT's Community Integration Program could use donations of items used every day by more than 70 consumers. Donations could include: craft items, board games, rhythm instruments, bingo prizes, painting supplies, and educational activities. To donate the items contact Michelle Saunders at 573-474-9446.



ACT OFFICERS ELECTED

The Board of Directors has elected new officers for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

President is Robert Scribner, owner of Executive Advantage. Serving as vice president is Susan Hart, vice president of Huebert Builders, Inc. And elected secretary/treasurer is Kat Cunningham, owner of Moresource, Inc.

In addition to new officers, the board recently added three new members. Joining the board are Cathy Atkins, sales/management trainer for Awareness Management Systems; Joel Jeffries, M.D., a physician and consultant; and Trent Stober, president of MEC Water Resources.

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