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## Dear Friends of ACT,

“That’s what I want...no pity.”

If you’ve seen the movie “Intouchables,” which just finished its run at Ragtag Cinema in Columbia, you’ll recognize these as the words of Philippe, a wealthy business man, telling his friend why he hired Driss, a young black man from the housing projects, to be his personal assistant.

Philippe wanted what all of the individuals we support want, the support they need to live an active, engaged life in an accepting community, not hidden away or held back.

Philippe is nearly entirely immobile following a hang gliding accident resulting in a spinal cord injury.

I highly recommend this film. My wife and I saw it together.

This show takes you all over the emotional spectrum, including the highs and lows, the serious and hilarious.

One of the things you see is Philippe hang gliding again...with just the right amount of support.

Check out the trailer here. You’ll love this show, unless you just can’t get past the English sub-titles (the support that all of us who don’t speak French need).

All of us need the support of people around us to live our dreams and have what we want from our lives.

Speaking of dreams, I hope you saw Oscar Pistorius run in the Olympics.

Born without shin bones, he runs in the 400 meter race on a pair of blades called Cheetahs. Though he did not medal, his performance was inspiring.

His dream of competing at a world-class level was possible in part, I believe, because of how his family supported him from his birth, without pity, and integrated into daily life.

A New York Times Magazine story reported that his mom told him to put on his legs and go out and play just like she told his older brother Carl to put on his shoes.

I was enriched by these stories and by the courage they demonstrate. I hope each of us has the courage to continue to make our communities more inclusive and supportive.

Until next month,

Mark Hassemer  
Executive Director, ACT

[www.actservices.org](http://www.actservices.org)



## Dis-Assembler Eliminates Bottleneck and Creates Opportunities in ACT Works

A project that's been in the making for over 3 years has finally come to fruition. ACT Works now has the VHS tape dis-assembly machine on line and operating every working day.

The impact of bringing this industrial machinery on line in ACT's Recycling program is being felt in two significant ways.

The first is production throughput. What was once a tedious and laborious job, all done by hand, is now quickly done with the dis-assembler. Removing those five tiny screws from every VHS tape case was a bottleneck that was holding us back.

Now, thanks to this newly automated process, ACT Works can punch the screws out of VHS tapes at a rate of 700 per hour!

With our healthy backlog of stored tapes, and new contributions from generous donors, we're expecting to nearly double the amount of plastic material we sell.

Once the tape shells are opened, there's still work to be done sorting components and, ultimately, shredding the plastic. ACT sells the shredded plastic. It's recycled to make other plastic products. The revenues generated from these sales support jobs for ACT Works employees.



Which brings us to the second impact we're experiencing: enthusiasm. ACT Works employees want to work. They want to be trained on operations and safety practices so that they can put their capabilities to work and broaden their skills.

John Savage, Director of Employment Services, hears constantly from individuals, "When can I use the new machine?" "When will I be ready?" ACT Works employees are excited about this great opportunity.

The individuals we serve in ACT Works take pride in their jobs and in the work they do, the contributions they make. They're highly motivated to further develop their job experience. Being an

industrial machine operator is a transferable skill. It's quite valuable in the marketplace.

Every ACT Works employee—there are now five—who operates the dis-assembler is responsible for a \$50,000 machine. They've got to act accordingly.

"This work requires significant attention to detail," said Savage. He developed an Operator's Manual that is now used to train employees to operate and troubleshoot the new device.

Training continues. More individuals will be able to do the work they want to do, in the environment they prefer, because of the new opportunities afforded in ACT Works. ■

## A New Apartment Means New Opportunities for Amanda

We are so excited for Amanda.

Since April, she's been living in her own apartment! Her new apartment is a unit with other friends that receive around-the-clock supports when needed from ACT Community Living staff.



Amanda

That means she can be with her 10 year old son, who lives with her mom in Fayette, for overnight visits. This is a big step toward accomplishing so many of the things she wants.

Her new living arrangement also allows her to spend more time with her boyfriend. And, she's getting

ready to adopt a cat.

Since 2007, when Amanda first started receiving services from ACT's Community Living Program, she has worked to expand her skills and become more independent.

She's done things like make a budget and is successfully sticking to it; sets and keeps her doctors' appointments; and implemented a medication plan so that she takes her prescriptions without staff, requiring only limited supervision.

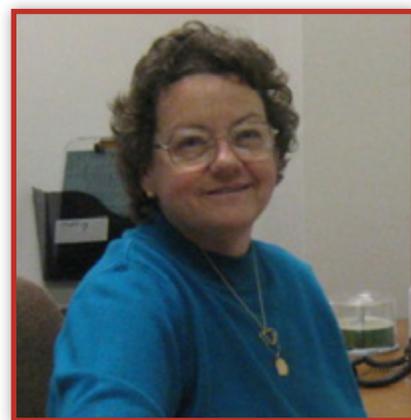
Amanda has also maintained her job at the greenhouse while keeping up with everyday chores such as cooking her own meals, doing her own laundry, and communicating with those around her with regular check-ins.

Amanda continues to grow as she goes after the goals she has identified for herself. This year she budgeted for and bought her son's new school clothes and school supplies. Her next plan is to join a gym with her boyfriend.

Congratulations, Amanda. We are happy to see you accomplish the things you really desire. ■

## ACT Community Integration Welcomes New Director Cindy Morris Pepmiller

A perfect marriage. That's how the new Director of ACT's Community Integration Program, Cindy Morris Pepmiller, describes the opportunity before her.



Taking over leadership of this 38-member team of dedicated employees is a challenge that suits her perfectly. The job requires a balance between administrative skills, passion for excellence, and vision for human services, all of which she's cultivated through professional training, education, and life experiences.

Cindy comes to ACT after having

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*"I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do something I can do."*

— Helen Keller

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worked as a special education teacher with Columbia Public Schools. Before that she had an 18-year career in human resources.

She has an M.S. degree in special education, an M.B.A. in administrative management, and an M.Ed. in counseling. She also brings the life experience of being the legal guardian of her adult brother, a man with significant developmental disabilities.

“My relationship with my brother gives me a degree of credibility with the families and guardians we work with,” says Cindy. “They know I personally walk in the same shoes as they do on behalf of a loved one. It’s not an abstract concept for me.”

Cindy is no stranger to Columbia. She’s lived here since 1969. And she’s no stranger to ACT. She’s been collaborating with the agency for the last few years regarding post-graduation transition for high school seniors. As a result, she sees many familiar faces here at ACT.

“I’m thrilled,” says Cindy about her new work with ACT.

We’re thrilled too. And we’re excited about even better services for the people we serve in the ACT Community Integration program.

Welcome! ■

## **ACT Career Services Staff Participate in 12th Annual Employment Summit**

APSE-MO held its 12th annual Employment Summit in Columbia, August 8-10. The theme for this year’s Summit was “Moving from Good to Great.”

We were fortunate that several of our staff were able to attend this event, which included several training opportunities. ACT staff members Deanie McLain, Joseph Felton, Paul Weatherford and Jessica McNally attended the Summit.

APSE, now known as the Association of Persons Supporting Employment 1st, was founded in 1988 and is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Some of our staff attended the first day’s training called “Employment University,” a beginning level training for those who are new to the field.

Staff also participated in training on social coaching and employer relations with James Emmet who is doing cutting edge work with larger corporations as well as individuals with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum.

Participants also received training on various other topics including:

career discovery and exploration, Motivational Interviewing, and assistive technology options.

ACT participation in the Summit is another example of how ACT Career Services is continuing to improve the effectiveness of our work in support of APSE-MO’s mission, which is to promote mutually beneficial relationships by supporting the employment of all persons with disabilities in jobs and careers of their choice.

The Summit was hosted by APSE-MO, the Missouri chapter of the national organizations.

We’re excited to announce that ACT Career Services’ Program Manager, Jessica McNally, will begin a two year term as President of APSE-MO on September 1st. Congratulations, Jessica. ACT Career Services Staff Participate in 12th Annual Employment Summit

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**— Helen Keller**

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

September 10 - New Hire Orientation at the Training Center.

September 10 - Therap/Documentation Training at the Training Center.

September 11 - Medication administration training at the Training Center.

September 12 - Abuse/Neglect Prevention training at the Training Center.

September 12 - Positive Behavior Support training at the Training Center.

September 13 - Medication administration training at the Training Center.

September 13 - Medication administration refresher training at the Training Center.

September 14 - CPR/First Aid at the Training Center.

For more events, please check out [actservices.org/about-us/events](http://actservices.org/about-us/events)

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 <http://www.actservices.org>

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