

interACTion

Alternative Community Training



March, 2015

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Dear Friends of ACT,

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This observation is intended to bring awareness to the fact that people with developmental disabilities can be productive, fully engaged, contributing members of society.

It began in 1987 with an executive action by President Ronald Reagan. His proclamation asked us as Americans to take steps to provide the “encouragement and opportunities” needed for people with developmental disabilities to reach their full potential.

Twenty-eight years have passed since the proclamation. Looking back now, all things considered, it seems to me that we’ve been long on encouragement and short on opportunity. It’s time to take more of our words and put them into action.

Many good things have been done. But barriers and stereotypes remain.

When I say barriers, I’m not just talking about doors, ramps, and railings. These barriers aren’t just architectural and environmental. They’re attitudinal and relational.

“Sometimes the barrier is as subtle as a nervous glance from an uninformed person in line with you at the market.” (from <http://blog.thearc.org/2014/02/28/march-29-day-awareness/>)

I’ll get to it: I like Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, but I’m hoping for the day when it’s not needed, when the stereotypes that bar people with developmental disabilities from the common experiences of ordinary daily life are a thing of the past.

What kinds of barriers persist in marginalizing people with developmental disabilities? Here are a few:

Some of the greatest successes we know of, people with disabilities who overcome adversity

and gain employment in the community, come back to us later worried that their financial success in the open marketplace might be a threat to the benefits they rely on to survive. If we don’t get this right, these successful individuals will return to an isolated life cut off from productive work because of fear that supports will be taken away.

TTY is not available in every place of business or public space. Websites are often not accessible. Technology makes a difference. But we’re not there yet.

If available (it’s not in a lot of rural areas), public transportation runs on specific routes at certain times of day. Also, schedules are often difficult to understand for someone with a developmental disability. Imagine how limited your life would be if you had to rely on someone else every time you wanted to go to the store to pick up a pound of hamburger for dinner.

Probably most importantly, we’ve not succeeded in breaking through relationship barriers. When we prepare sociograms for the individuals we support, it’s not uncommon to find that some have no intimate relationships. These are the people closest to us, to whom we pour out our hearts when we ache or share our most personal joys and aspirations.

Rather, we find that people with developmental disabilities have the greatest number of social contacts and interactions with those who are paid to interact with them: doctors, therapists, counselors, and direct care staff.

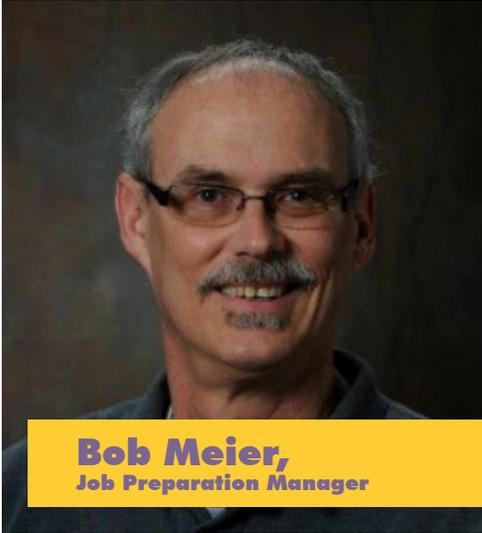
This is not rocket science. This is not hard.

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Mark Hassemer,
Executive Director



Bob Meier,
Job Preparation Manager

It's not a mystery. It's about entrenched preconceptions that can and must be shown to be wrong.

Don't give up.

Until next month,

Mark

Job Preparation Services Unveiled

A year ago, ACT learned of a change in the waiver definition under which ACT Works provided services. After a little fussing, we welcomed the change because it caused us to go back and take a close look at our mission and how our services really fulfilled that mission.

employability skills. Again, everyone's Job Preparation Service will differ, as every individual has varying skills needing development.

We accepted the challenge and proceeded thoughtfully to ensure our services changed in a way that would allow us to meet the needs of the individuals we support.

Further adjustments will allow all employment services offered under the ACT Career Services (ACS) umbrella (Job Preparation and Community Employment Services) to work more harmoniously together.

We made some immediate changes to the program. After further planning and evaluation, several additional changes are being made. ACT Works is now referred to as Job Preparation Services. The sole goal of the service is to assist individuals in their efforts to gain employment in the community.

Previously, they were separate services, due to the physical aspects of each. ACT Works



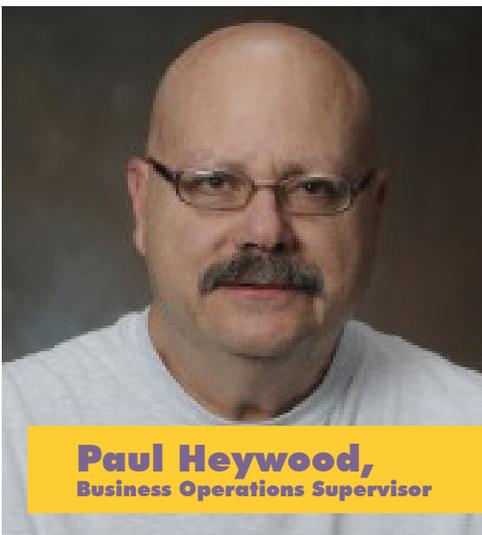
Kim Rodgers,
Job Preparation Supervisor

Job Preparation is individualized. We pinpoint skills each individual needs to develop to position them for success in community employment.

was physically located at ACT, while ACT's Community Employment Services are provided in the community.

In the past, ACT Works operated solely out of ACT's main building on the work floor. Individuals in the program worked on recycling media materials to attain professional development.

Though Job Preparation Services has been in existence since shortly after receiving the updated waiver, ACT has been working diligently to develop and implement the best services possible.



Paul Heywood,
Business Operations Supervisor

Now, an individual may receive Job Preparation Services in the community doing various activities entirely focused on the further development of general

“We are working closely with individuals and their teams to ensure we are providing the best service in the most effective manner. This will help individuals gain the skills necessary to reach their goal of employment in the community,” says Jessica Mahon, Director of ACS.

ACT is excited about the cohesive change. Even more so about how positively it will impact the individuals we support. ●

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”

— Helen Keller



Clarissa posing in front of the coffee station.

Who Needs Starbucks? Not us. We have Clarissa!

Like any workplace, ACT has many people who come through the doors each morning looking for a hot cup of coffee.

One of Clarissa English's work responsibilities is to greet those who are arriving to the Community Integration program and make sure they are accurately signed into services.

Between checking people in, and before the big rush occurs right at 9 o'clock, she gets coffee brewing for everyone.

Approximately 150 people arrive every weekday before 9 a.m. (plus visitors throughout the day). Many of them consider English their best friend because they find a fresh pot waiting at the coffee station.

One of the perks (pun intended) ACT provides for those who work or receive services here, is a ready cup of coffee, regular or decaf.

English's brewing skills have earned her a reputation as a really good barista. "I've been thanked several times for having the coffee made. People really do enjoy having it ready to go," English states.

English has worked at ACT for nearly five years. She sought employment in the CI program after her two sisters, who also work in the program, raved about their positions at ACT.

CI Program Manager Michelle Bell says, "Clarissa is a valuable employee to the CI

program. She has years of experience and is popular with the people she supports."

The feeling is mutual. "I think of the individuals I work with as my closest friends. I spend five days a week with them. We eat, laugh, and go on trips together. I love them!" English exclaims.

English's morning coffee duty for the avid coffee drinkers was suggested at a team meeting by her supervisor, Adam Hays. She volunteered and embraced the new responsibility wholeheartedly.

She even made a "Coffee Station" sign to spruce up the joint.

Ironically, Clarissa doesn't drink coffee! "I'm really more of a soda person," she says.

Well, she may never enjoy a cup of her own brew, but many others do. We thank you, Clarissa!

Fun Facts about Clarissa:

Favorite Color: black (and pink because I have two daughters)

Role Model: my mom. She has done an amazing job raising my sisters and me. I am trying to do the same for my girls.

Favorite part of her job: hanging out with the individuals I support

Hobbies: drawing, painting, writing, singing, dancing, and sleeping (when I can). I love to sleep because I love to dream.

Her Dream: travel the whole world! •

“Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.”

— *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed by former President George H.W. Bush*

Community Living Program Welcomes Andrew Jones

Andrew Jones began working in ACT's Community Living (CL) program last summer, after an internship in Behavior Development Services.

Jones graduated with a degree in Anthropology from the University of Missouri last May. This is the first step in his career following graduation.

Jones credits his mom for instilling in him a passion for people with disabilities. While he was growing up, his mom worked at an agency similar to ACT in Kirksville. "One day when I was in elementary school my mom took me to work with her. That planted a seed in me," Jones states.

When Jones was 20, the passion deepened. "I found myself homeless. So I applied to work at the same agency my mom worked for, the one I had visited as a young boy. They hired me and I got back on my feet," he says.

Since then, he has worked at several similar agencies.

At ACT, Jones is a Program Supervisor. He oversees one residential living house. "It is going great! I am really enjoying my job," Jones exclaims.

So far Jones has made great progress in his position. He has worked hard to get the house fully staffed and organized.

It is no surprise he has a knack for this work. "I enjoy people!" he says.

He even volunteers for the Special Olympics in his spare time, along with other "nerdy" things like archery and Dungeons and Dragons.

We at ACT think highly of Jones. He assures us the feeling is mutual. Jones says, "This is the best company I have ever worked for!" •



Andrew Jones,
Program Supervisor

Moser's is a Great Community Partner

Community Employment Services (CES) strives to identify great companies in the community with whom we can partner to help people with disabilities find employment and establish careers. That is just what ACS has found in Moser's Foods.

Since 2009, Moser's Foods has offered individuals in employment services the opportunity to participate in job shadowing assignments and informational interviews in several store departments.

This is part of a process CES refers to as Exploration and Discovery. It helps individuals learn their professional strengths and weaknesses.

Program Manager Fontella Jackmon-Jones says, "The employees at Moser's are helpful and willing to support individuals achieve their goals."

Brian Pettig became Store Manager at the Business Loop store two years ago. Since that

time he has wanted to help CES in any way possible.

He wishes he could take some credit. "I have a great group of employees! They act as a support system to help and guide the individual. They do all the work."

Pettig pairs individual job seekers with an appropriate staff person. They take it from there.

"Honestly this experience has been more meaningful for the Moser's employees." It opens their eyes to what people with

disabilities can offer in the workforce.

It's difficult to imagine the many possible positive outcomes that can be realized as more and more people have their minds changed about the tremendous contributions people with disabilities can make in the workplace.

Jackmon-Jones is grateful for this amazing community liaison. "We are glad that CES has this business contact. We look forward to many more years of partnership with Moser's," she says. •



Behavior Development Program Adds Jaclyn Neugebauer to the Team

Jaclyn Neugebauer loves what she does!

“My favorite thing in this field is hands down positive behavior changes/outcomes. Knowing that a strategy I have implemented helped to decrease a problematic behavior and increase a desirable one is invaluable. I love giving families the tools to track behaviors and the power to modify them,” says Neugebauer.

In February Neugebauer joined the Behavior Development program as a Behavior Consultant!

Neugebauer has worked as an Instructional Aide in Early Childhood Special Education for Columbia Public Schools, Support Coordinator at a SB40 Board, Special Instructor with MO First Steps, and most recently as an Autism Specialist for another non-profit organization here in Columbia.

She also has a brother on the autism spectrum. “This has provided me with valuable insight into the field and how to effectively approach each individual based on their unique skill sets and positive qualities,” Neugebauer says.

Her education includes a dual Bachelor’s degree in psychology and sociology from Columbia College and a Master’s in Special Education, with a focus in Autism Education, from the University of Missouri.

In addition, she received her Board Certified Behavior Analyst Respecialization

certificate through The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (a Board-approved course sequence in preparation for becoming a Behavior Analyst).

Neugebauer is from Columbia (a Hickman graduate) and currently lives in Jefferson City with her husband, Jeremy, daughters, Riley (7) and Harper (1), two cats and a dog.

“Life is full but busy at home!” Neugebauer exclaims.

ACT’s Behavior Development program was appealing to Neugebauer because it focuses on families of individual’s receiving services both in the community and at home.

“I’m very excited about this new venture!” Neugebauer says. “I hope to grow in this position, serve as many families as possible, and eventually become a Behavior Analyst.”

We are thrilled to have Neugebauer at ACT. She brings enthusiasm, passion, and experience to the Behavior Development program.

Interesting facts about Neugebauer:

Hobbies/interests/quirks: data collection techniques (nerd alert!). Personally, I love to read when I have the time, go on mini-vacations with my family, and to continue learning-always. I’m also a bit of an organizational nut – I love to keep tidy and neatly organize spaces. I’m almost always cleaning something at home (it’s a good thing!).

Favorite color: any shade of blue: sky blue,



ocean blue, I love blues.

Favorite thing about ACT so far: everyone has been so welcoming! I’m looking forward to meeting anyone that I haven’t met yet and helping in any way that I can!

Something interesting about you: I met my husband at Columbia College because I decided to take a class that I didn’t need and was his major. We love this story because we got married and both graduated from Columbia College, so it’s special to us. Something else semi-interesting is that I have always known this is what I wanted to do although I didn’t know how I was going to do it! After graduating with my BA, I applied to one program for graduate school and decided that if I wasn’t accepted, I would try and move on. I WAS accepted and graduated about a year and a half later with a 4.0. Even I was surprised! I worked really hard at school while also raising my (now oldest) Riley. ●

“Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.”

— *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),
signed by former President George H.W. Bush*

Direct Your Attention to the Board: Spotlight on Darren Hellwege

Darren Hellwege is a local celebrity in Columbia. If you can't recall who he is, you will know within moments of hearing him speak.

He is the man behind the famous voice on KBIA's morning show.

Hellwege was welcomed to ACT's Board of Directors in 2014. He brings an honest and experienced view to the panel. Often, he is the first to volunteer his time to committees involving fundraising and community events.

Hellwege lives in Columbia with his wife, Bonnie. He has a son name Kristian, an aspiring chef, and a daughter, Janie, a student at UMKC.

We sat down with Darren to learn more about the radio man/sports enthusiast/family man...



Hometown: Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Grew up Edmond, Oklahoma.

What is your position at KBIA?

Senior Media Producer – this includes being the Sports Director and coordinating interview programs (from big political leaders to local artists).

How did you get into radio?

I was initially interested in sports medicine, and much to my parents dismay, I took a year off of high school. A week into summer I broke my arm playing baseball. I called my mom from the hospital and she got me enrolled in college for summer school. She must have had the dean on speed dial. To this day I am not sure how she managed that.

Because my right hand was out of commission, I asked my advisor for an easy class. He told me about a course in radio. From then I knew that was what I was going to do! It wasn't long before I became music director. I even gave up playing sports to dedicate my time to my new found profession.

Favorite part of your job?

Our annual pledge drive. I love it when people call in to support the station. It is nice to hear the viewers tell me that they like what I do and even give the station more money so I can keep doing it.

What company do you respect the most?

Public schools. I like the inclusive aspect

of public schools – they accept everyone and do the best they can with each student.

I have had a lot of coaches and teachers that meant a lot to me growing up. Teaching takes a lot of dedication. I have much respect for teachers.

Who is your role model?

My dad, a retired professor of chemistry, who is now in his 70's. He still stays involved in his community, watches the news, and reads the paper every day.

I learned from both my parents to care for my community, be open-minded, and to be aware of what is going on around the world.

If you were a beverage, what would you be?

Dr. Pepper because I have consumed so much of it over the years.

Favorite color?

Orange! Not just because I grew up in a big Oklahoma State fan...maybe that has a little to do with it...

Favorite movie?

Hoosiers and secretly Bride of the Monster – I like old, scary movies.

Favorite Sport?

Whatever is coming up next. I am also a big fan of women's basketball.

Favorite Band?

Grateful Dead •

“It means people on crutches and in a wheelchair can do anything.”

— Hannah McFadden at the dedication of a statue showing President Franklin Roosevelt in the wheelchair he designed for himself

Upcoming Events

Date	Event
March	Developmental Disability Awareness Month
March 30th	Legacy Tour bus in Columbia
March 31st	Legacy Tour bus in Jefferson City
April	Autism Awareness Month
April 2nd	Light It Up Blue at MU's Student Center



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Simply pick ACT as your charitable contribution and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

Happy shopping!

Happy Birthday ACT

ACT turns 40 in September this year!

We are excited and already planning the festivities.

Stay connected with ACT to be a part of the celebration, see fun throwback photos, and more!

We will use the hashtag [#ACTTurns40](#).



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CONTACT US

ACT
2200 Burlington
Columbia, MO 65202

1-800-359-4607
1-573-474-9446