

interACTION



Alternative Community Training

JULY 2015

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Dear Friends of ACT,

ACT is 40 years old. Let that sink in. We've been doing this good work in our community for four decades, a significant milestone.

So, we're celebrating with what we're sure will be an unusual and unforgettable event. You are invited. Everyone's invited! Literally, everyone.

"Everyone" is not a euphemism. It's not code. It is a true expression of who we are. ACT is an organization that has inclusion woven in to its fabric. It's so deeply ingrained in our essence we simply wouldn't be ACT without it. Inclusion is in our DNA.

Our vision statement says:
ACT's vision is an inclusive community where everyone belongs, participates and is accepted.

We hold a vision for our community being one that embraces, welcomes, and includes any person, regardless of his or her skin color, religious beliefs, culture, gender, income, orientation, lifestyle, or disability.

No one should be marginalized, left out, restricted, secluded, held back, sequestered, barred, or impeded. Everyone is all in.

This vision permeates everything we do, how we work, who we hire, and who we serve.

It's like the air we breathe. This idea, this commitment, is so much a part of us at times we don't even notice it.

But others do. We forget that it stands out.

I wasn't around 40 years ago when ACT got its start. I came along two years later in 1977. But I know those who were, those who played a key role in conceiving of and then making ACT a reality.

Joe Machens is one of those originators of ACT. He was a founding member of our Board of Directors. His sons Dave Machens and Joe Machens, Jr. continue to be involved in and support ACT.

When I called Dave Machens about our 40th anniversary event, he said he would gladly participate and offer some remarks. Joe, Jr. had already agreed.

Then he added at the end of the call that he really likes, and has always liked, the way ACT includes everyone in celebrations, events, and everything we do. This inclusion, he observed, distinguishes ACT.

"Why wouldn't we?" I responded. Then it struck me. Not everyone has this vision. It's so thoroughly a part of ACT we tend to overlook it. Except at times like this when it's called to mind and celebrated.

Come one, come all. Please celebrate with us. Let's reflect on the past. Let's honor those who ignited this flame and have kept it burning. And let's have fun doing it.

The celebration is August 8th at Father Tolton Catholic High School, 3351 E. Gans Road, Columbia, MO. Doors open 4:30 pm.

This is no golf outing or 5K run. No wing-ding. No white napkin banquet with after-dinner speeches. It's a full-tilt interactive party on wheels with CoMo's own Derby Dames. This skater-owned, skater-run alternative sports team is committed to the evolution of roller derby. We think you'll leave this event fired up about them and us.



Mark Hassemer,
Executive Director

Please RSVP. You can register now at www.actservices.org/the-big-40.

We've already heard from more than 200 people. You won't want to miss out on this celebration.

Lastly, I want to bring to your attention another major milestone. On July 26th we, along with thousands of other Americans, will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) becoming law. This law, not unlike major civil rights legislation, represents us as a society turning the corner on the way we treat marginalized people with disabilities.

We have a sad personal and societal history of suppressing and hiding people who seem different. With this law we said "that won't be tolerated anymore."

Orange is the New Team



ACT's Community Integration (CI) program added a new team, the Orange Team!

CI has grown 14% in the last year and it was time to make some changes to relieve overcrowding in programming areas, vehicles, and scheduling.

The Orange Team will be trailblazers for the program! They are headquartered in the Blue Building, a space ACT rents from the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC).

It is located across the street from ACT's main building and has been used in the past for ACT parties, BBQs, and other meetings.

The supervisors' caseloads were overflowing and becoming hard to manage. By adding a fifth team,

The law changes neither individual sentiments nor attitudes. But it has facilitated major strides toward inclusion. It deserves our recognition and honor.

Join our local celebration at Orr Street Studios, Sunday, July 26th, from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm. Call Services for Independent Living or visit their website at www.silcolumbia.org/ada for more information. I hope I see you there, too. •

**Until next month,
Mark**

all teams are now a better size to give more personal attention to each individual.

"Supervising the Orange Team is going really well," says Orange Team Supervisor, Adam Hays. "There was a lot of preparation and planning that went into building the new team. We owe our start-up success to that."

Hays supervised the CI Red Team for three years. Prior to that, he was a Direct Support Professional (DSP) in the Community Living program.

For Hays, the Red Team will always hold a special place in his heart. But he wanted a role in growing the program.

"I knew adding a new team would be a challenge and require a lot of work to make it successful," Hays says. "It was a big step in evolving our program for the better. I am really excited to be a part of it."

It doesn't hurt that Hays is fond of the bright hue. "Orange is the happiest color," he says.

It may not seem like a huge undertaking, but preparing for this addition started months in advance.

Each individual's needs had to be considered. Were

ADA Celebrates 25 Years

The Americans with Disabilities ACT celebrates its 25th anniversary this year!

Area agencies have come together for this important milestone to provide informative and fun events throughout the year.

A fun, community event will be held in Columbia, MO on Sunday, July 26th at Orr Street Studios starting at 11:00am.

More details are soon to come in our newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ pages.

If you value inclusion and equal rights, join us in commemorating the ADA. •

there amenities in the main building necessary to their care? Would the daily walk across the street be possible?

"Making this change a success for individuals was priority number one," Hays says. "Once we had that piece of the puzzle as our foundation, we built everything around that."

Prior to adding the Orange Team, CI was comprised of four teams: red, blue, purple, and green. Viewing the CI program schedule and activity options can be overwhelming until you learn how to read it. The daily rainbow of colors is needed to manage the logistical challenge of scheduling who is doing what with whom, where they are, and if a vehicle is required.

Color-coding the schedule provides a visual cue for staff and individuals to identify where they are on the schedule. (To learn more about the program's activity schedule, click here <http://www.actservices.org/?p=3520>).

The Orange Team now has 6 DSPs with 22 individuals receiving support.

Hays says, "I really believe in what we do in the CI program. To see it growing and thriving really makes me proud to be a part of it." •

Hannah Prince Takes New CL Supervisor Slot



Hannah and Abby on Light It Up Blue day.

Takes charge. Leads. Is likable. Listens very well. Assesses before acting. Remains positive. Keeps commitments.

These are must-have qualities for a supervisor. They also happen to be traits that describe Hannah Prince, ACT's newly promoted Community Living (CL) Program Supervisor.

Prince was a Team Support Specialist (TSS) in CL for nearly a year before moving into her new role. A TSS is a Direct Support Professional (DSP) who is

trained to work in multiple homes.

During her time as a TSS, she was getting attention from supervisors, managers, and families of individuals served for being a stellar employee.

Most importantly, she was providing excellent care to the individuals with whom she worked. And... they liked her a lot.

"Hannah has natural leadership qualities she has shown over the course of her tenure," Vicki Schulte, CL Program Supervisor (Prince's former boss), says of Prince. "I believe she will be an even bigger asset to the ACT family as a Program Supervisor."

Prince has proven how dependable she is in her time at ACT. She's been flexible when rapidly changing schedules required a last-minute staffing substitution.

"Hannah was my go-to person when I needed something done. She would come in to work at the last minute to cover shifts, if need be," Schulte says.

On June 1st, Prince officially stepped into the new

role and has been doing a fabulous job.

"I am excited to be able to work with the ladies in a more involved way," Prince says. "I love coming to work and knowing that I am making a difference, even if it's just by showing up and giving a hug."

Congratulations, Hannah Prince! It is gratifying to see such a devoted employee receive the recognition she deserves. •



Hannah and Abby, individual in CL, goofing off for the camera while shopping.

Schuetz and Murray Accept New Positions in ACT's Community Employment Services



SUZAN SCHUETZ
ACT's Community Employment Services (CES) recently brought in a fresh face and promoted an experienced one.

Suzan Schuetz was hired as Program Supervisor for Retention and Transition in CES.

Before ACT, she was a Staff Psychologist at the University of Central Missouri. When she returned to Columbia recently, her prior experience working with people with developmental disabilities and her passion for human services brought her to ACT.

"I believe the services ACT provides are invaluable to the field, the community, and the individuals served," Schuetz says. "There is an added benefit to

those who provide the services—it is rewarding!"

Schuetz isn't one to lounge around. She is active and currently training for a triathlon. "I would rather be in the woods (hiking an extreme trail) than just about anywhere else!" Schuetz states.

Her seven year old son likes to keep busy as well, playing baseball, riding bikes, and dominating the video games he plays with his mom.

When she does stop moving, you might find her making goat's milk soap or taking in live music.

In her first weeks, Schuetz has been busy training and preparing for the position from behind her desk. She is definitely eager to get out in the field.

"I am excited to be supervising a stellar group of humans," she says. "I am also eager to get to know

the individuals served by Community Employment Services at ACT."



DUSTIN MURRAY
Dustin Murray began working at ACT in '92, while he was in college. He left for other employment, but returned as a Career Specialist in 2013.

The return paid off! He was recently promoted to Program Supervisor in ACT's Community Employment Services (CES) program.

In his new role, Murray will listen to the needs of the job seekers who come to CES, as well as staff. As before, he will be helping people with disabilities find and keep long-term employment in the community.

Schuetz and Murray Accept New Positions in ACT's Community Employment Service, CONT

"I will be a positive leader for the employees who work in CES," Murrays says.

Murray is a self-proclaimed player's coach—he gets right in and works with all of his employees.

"One of my strengths is being a great listener," Murray says. "I bring out the best in others to help them reach their goals."

CES Manager Fontella Jackmon-Jones says of Schuetz and Murray, "Both will benefit CES. I am looking forward to working with them to assist individuals served with their career goals and develop ACT Career Services into a cohesive team." •

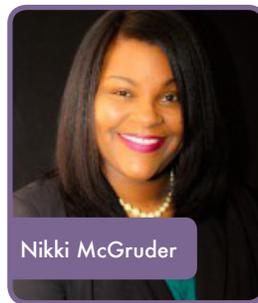
ACT Welcomes Diversity Awareness Partnership (DAP) to Columbia



If you hear the sounds of a party coming from what we at ACT call the blue buiversity Awareness Partnership (DAP), a 501(c)(3) has expanded out of St. Louis into Columbia with Nikki McGruder as Columbia's Regional Manager.

DAP is dedicated to promoting diversity through youth programs, diversity training, community forums and diversity publications.

DAP – Columbia will focus on the community's needs on diversity. This involves issues of race and ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability.



Nikki McGruder

McGruder is thrilled at the opportunity to be a part of the expansion into Columbia. "This job was meant for me! It speaks to everything that is Nikki." McGruder says.

McGruder, a Columbia resident, joins DAP with a diverse background in training and facilitation.

In these crucial beginning stages of development, McGruder is working on gaining sponsors and support in order to implement programming. As of now sponsors include Veterans United Home Loans, Commerce Bank, and Shelter Insurance.

To learn more about DAP visit their website, <http://dapstl.org/columbia/>. From here, you can register to attend DAP's upcoming breakfast mixer on July 23rd at Shelter Insurance from 7:30am-9am.

Welcome to Columbia, DAP! •

Happy Birthday ACT

ACT turns 40 this year! The big event will be SATURDAY, AUGUST 8TH at Tolton High School!

We are pleased to announce we will be partnering with the CoMo Derby Dames for a unique, fun, and interactive event.

We cannot wait to CELEBRATE with Columbia!

Stay connected with ACT to be a part of the celebration, see fun throwback photos, and more! We will use the hashtag **#ACTTurns40**. •



Support ACT by shopping Gerbes, Schnucks, and Amazon

You can now donate to ACT by shopping at Gerbes, Schnucks, and AmazonSmile!

For Gerbes and Schnucks, simply apply for their community/rewards program, pick ACT as your designated charity, and shop away!

For AmazonSmile, create an account, pick ACT as your charity, and again, shop away! •

July 2015 Tip from Tara: Sink or Swim

tran-si-tion
noun

1. the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another.

synonyms: *change, passage, move, transformation, conversion, metamorphosis, alteration, handover, changeover;*

Lately I feel like transition and change are all around me.

Here at ACT we are going through changes in various programs, particularly our Job Preparation services, which Mark has outlined in detail in recent newsletters.

I'm extremely excited about these changes. It's a big change, but it's a change that is positive and will result in many new opportunities for individuals as participating members of our community.

Personally, I am in a period of transition as a parent. If you've read my Tip in previous newsletters you are aware that I have two wonderful children and that my oldest son Rye is on the autism spectrum. Rye is transitioning to middle school. It is what feels like our first of many transitions that will shape the rest of his life.

It's SCARY! Terrifying might be a more appropriate word. To be totally honest I have been living in denial for the past year secretly wishing and pretending that I could freeze time and not be forced to move forward.

In the back of my mind I've always known this day was coming but sometimes it's just easier to live in denial. This level of fear and denial can be a dark and lonely place.

A few months ago I was sitting in our annual IEP meeting trying to focus on the 7 million things I wanted to remember to talk about and my mind kept going to of all things, Bob Dylan.

All of my thoughts were playing in my mind like I was a record player stuck on repeat. Bob Dylan was singing over and over in my head "the times they are a changin".

Every pause in the meeting felt like the initial silence before a song you are listening to starts playing; a few seconds to think about something else right before the song starts playing again stealing your attention away.

Don't get me wrong I love Bob Dylan; but when you are sitting in the middle

of an IEP with what feels like the weight of the rest of your son's life on your shoulders, Bob Dylan on repeat is not necessarily the most comforting situation.

A few weeks later while walking into the "get acquainted" night at Rye's new school, there he is again in my head, Bob Dylan.

*Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.*

There I was walking into middle school feeling like I was sinking like a stone with no plan. So rather than sinking I've decided to take the advice given to me by of all people, Bob Dylan. I have to start swimming because no matter how far I sink into denial, the times they are a changing.

Our children grow up. We all have to do what we can to swim. We all have to do whatever it takes to teach

our kids to swim. I feel like given my professional experience working with young adults, I've had opportunities to see that we have to set the bar higher.

We can no longer be okay and happy about individuals just learning to tread water during times of transition. We have to set our sights on individuals moving far beyond learning to tread, but instead understanding that they can win the race.

Our children can win if we are willing to embrace these difficult transitions and step outside of the comforts of denial. Our children deserve services and opportunities that might not be there now but that doesn't mean they can't be.

Here at ACT we understand and embrace that all people can contribute to our community. We aren't going to tread water hoping not to sink. We want to win the race. We aren't sinking. We just keep swimming.



Upcoming Events

DATE	TIME	EVENT
July 3		ACT's facility-based programs will be closed
July 16	11:30a-1p	ACT Gold Sponsor of Women's Network Luncheon, Peachtree Catering & Banquet Center
July 26		ADA 25th anniversary event at Orr St. Studios
August 8		ACT 40th event with the CoMo Derby Dames at Tolton High School
August 25	12:00-1p	Etiquette, Sensitivity, and People First Language lunch & learn, Boone Electric Cooperative

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CONTACTUS

 ACT
2200 Burlington
Columbia, MO 65202

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