

Dear Friends of ACT,

Okay everyone. We can all breathe a collective sigh of relief.

CARF was here last week, and now they're gone.

CARF International (www.CARF.org) is an independent, nonprofit accreditation organization focused on advancing the quality of services ACT and other agencies provide to meet the needs of persons served. Three surveyors visited us for three days to evaluate our operations against their accreditation standards.

It went well. It went very well. That's a reflection on the fact that we are not new to this process. That was evident in the opening session at which we, managers and administrators, introduced ourselves and said how long we've worked at ACT or been in this business.

It was also evident at the exit conference when a surveyor acknowledged our veteran team, noting that some staff have been at ACT for many, many, many years. (Was she looking at me, or someone sitting behind me?)

The CARF review is a peer review process. The surveyors are like us, people who work in this field at organizations like

ACT. CARF provides training for reviewers and then contracts with them to do surveys.

Our surveyors, Anita, Mike, and Denise, didn't tell us the outcome of their review. They can't. They submit a report to CARF. Then CARF makes the decision. We'll know in a few weeks.

There are three possible outcomes: a three-year accreditation, a one-year accreditation, or non-accreditation.

We expect three years. I don't say this out of arrogance. I'm just confident in my colleagues who worked so hard to prepare for this accreditation visit. They prepared nearly thirty thousand files, saved in electronic format (thank goodness), for the review.

In addition to the file review the surveyors talked to stakeholders, including our Board President and people from funding and referral agencies. They visited with individuals served, their families, and guardians. They went to employment sites and homes where we provide services. It was a busy three days. They had to be efficient.

This was my, and ACT's, eleventh survey. The first was back in 1987. We received a three-year accreditation award then and we've never gotten anything else since.

During the first, and perhaps other early surveys, the ink was still wet on some policies and procedures we put in place. We were finding our way. That's not the case anymore.

ACT has used CARF standards to improve the services we provide by incorporating them into our everyday systems and processes.

The standards alone can't guarantee an organization won't have challenges. But they provide a strong framework for effectively dealing with the many issues we face.

So now what? How about Food Truck Friday?

It was definitely time for a celebration. Last Friday we arranged to have one of the area food trucks park in our lot and serve lunch to employees, individuals we support, and anyone who ventured by for some good food.

One of our values is celebrating successes. So we did it...with food and laughter. It was great fun.

Until next month,



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Shop and Donate



Mark Hassemer
Executive Director

COLUMBIA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT'S FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MAKES ARC MORE AFFORDABLE

Individuals served in ACT's Day Program love going to the Activities and Recreation Center (ARC) in Columbia. The facility offers a swimming pool, basketball gym, weight lifting equipment, walking track, and more.

But using the facility is not free. If a group of five or 10 people from the Day Program go to ARC all at once, costs get steep.

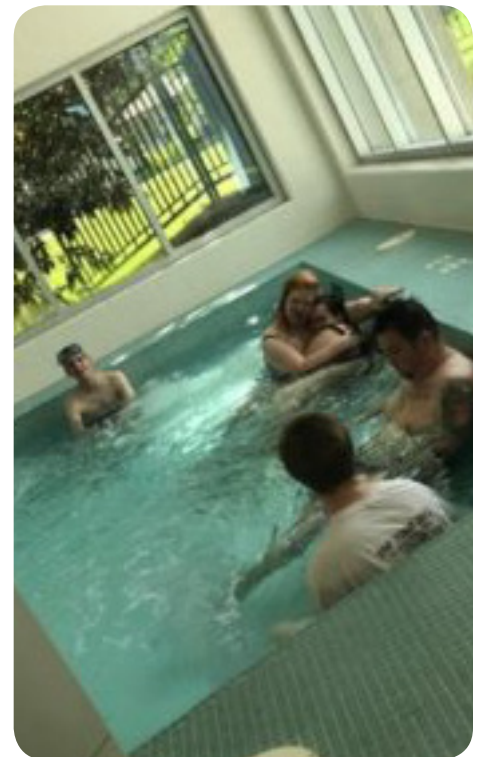
Activities Supervisor Rachael Jackson reached out to ARC management to see what might be done to make this activity more affordable.

The process was easy. Jackson simply contacted Parks and Recreation about getting an application. They sent it her way. She had it done in a couple of minutes. She sent it back with required documentation and was approved within two weeks!

"I was directed by them to contact Columbia Parks and Recreation to apply for a group financial assistance program. We were granted \$500 in financial assistance!"

Using these funds, Jackson can purchase several ARC passes for people in the program.

Jackson says, "This allows individuals to swim and exercise locally without cutting into our budget or taking away other fun and exciting activities our individuals love to do. It will also help individuals meet exercise goals and allow for more community integration."



STEIP GRADUATED FIFTH CLASS

“This is absolutely the best partnership we have,”

Boone Hospital Center President Jim Sinek said of Seamless Transition through Enhanced Partnership (STEP) while addressing the graduation crowd. “We get some of the best people through this program.”

The collaboration involving ACT, Boone County Family Resources, Boone Hospital Center, Central Missouri Regional Office, Columbia Public schools (CPS), and Vocational Rehabilitation, has seen many successes. This year, the accomplishments of a fifth graduating class were added to the program’s record.

“You have gained marketable skills, problem solving strategies, and initiative. You’ve learned how to accept directives and guidance. And you’ve successfully completed occupational projects through STEP,” CPS Transition Coordinator Carol Smarr said to the graduating students.

“These are five awesome interns. It has been exciting to watch them grow and bring joy to everyone in this hospital,” said STEP Instructor Jacquie Bowles.

The five students comprising the graduating class gained valuable work experience by completing an internship at Boone Hospital. (Click here to learn more about these students and the STEP program)

Nick worked in Distribution restocking closets throughout the hospital.

“Nick never had a bad day. He’s funny and gives the best compliments,” Bowles said.

His dream job is being a manager for the University of Missouri Men’s Basketball team. He would settle for a job stocking groceries or working in Central Services at the hospital.

Russell was responsible for taking surgical carts to and from the operating room and packaging sterilized equipment.

Bowles says, “He was bound and determined to accomplish everything in his department.”

He would like to work with computers, his true passion, or in sterile processing at the hospital.

Shekila cleaned equipment and stocked pantries, among many other things, in the Rehabilitation area and South Tower. Shekila would like to work in a preschool or stock linens in a retirement center.

“Shekila made a lot of friends and overcame her fear of talking while at Boone,” Bowles says.

Louis worked all over the hospital as a House Orderly. He moved equipment, stocked wheelchairs and oxygen tanks, and transported patients.

“He was not a fan of talking in the beginning of the school year, but now he’s the mayor of the hospital,” Bowles jokes.

Louis would like to work in a grocery store or work in a kitchen washing dishes. He really wants to live on his own and have a car.

The fifth intern The 5th intern had a successful STEP experience and is now successfully employed.

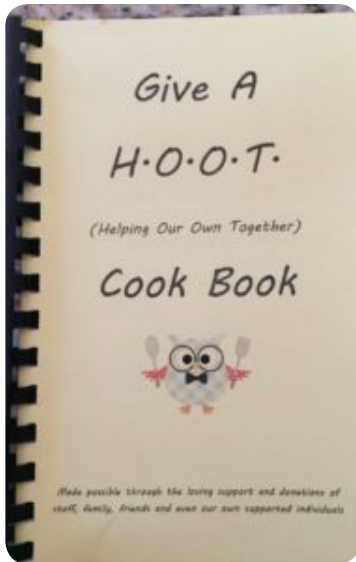
“These timid interns grew to be adults looking for employment,” ACT STEP Career Specialist Barb Wright says. “Their compassion for others will carry them far.”

Congratulations graduates!



GIVE A H.O.O.T GIVES

ACT employees joined together to raise funds for people supported in ACT's Community Living (CL) Program. (Read more here: <http://www.actservices.org/give-a-h-o-o-t-provides-growing-support-beyond-the-basics>)



Give A H.O.O.T. (Helping Our Own Together) was very successful, raising just under \$1,000 in a brief time.

CL Manager Lynette Austin took the lead organizing the Give A H.O.O.T. effort.

Austin created and sold a cookbook filled with ACT employees' favorite recipes. She also organized a bake sale for the campaign.

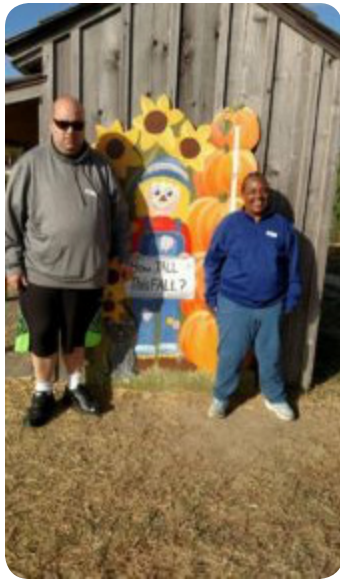
The money from the campaign was very well spent.

Allan got some much-needed dental care; Ae'Shionne went on a softball trip with his team; Patrick took a well-deserved (and fun!) trip to Six Flags; Abby traveled to the Botanical Gardens in St. Louis to see the Christmas lights; Dawn got to enjoy

a nice meal out on the town; and Josh and Chris headed down to the Pumpkin Fest for some fall fun.

Many people might take for granted things like a day trip to St. Louis or a dinner out on the town. But these are rare treats for a lot of the people supported in CL. Their budgets are tight and disposable income for a fun activity is almost completely unheard of.

H.O.O.T. funds are a great way for individuals to get a chance to enjoy their community and achieve personal goals.



JOSH AND CHRIS AT THE PUMPKIN FEST.

SHOP AND DONATE

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

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


When shopping at AmazonSmile, create an account, pick ACT as your charity, and again, shop away!


JustGive makes donating to charitable organizations easy. Go to their website and search Alternative Community Training to donate. You can even pick to give one time, monthly, or to put on a registry.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING ACT!



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