Dear Friends of ACT,

“You can't manage what you can't measure.” That saying is commonly attributed to one of the most well-known management gurus of our time, W. Edwards Deming.

His almost cult-like following in the U.S. at one time had his acolytes setting up systems for counting almost anything one can imagine, and I suppose, many we can't even begin to imagine.

I was thinking about this as Thanksgiving quickly approaches. I started counting some of the things I'm thankful for. (I can't resist. My brand new grand-daughter, Elsie, immediately comes to mind.)

It struck me that counting one's blessings, regularly creating a gratitude list, isn't a common, sustained practice for most of us. As a manager, working with other managers, it’s not uncommon for us to track, measure, and report on the flubs—mistakes and incidents we hope really never occur again. Errors must be looked at. It's the only way we can eliminate them in the future. But investing so much in them may tip the tone of our work in such a way that bad news begets more bad news.

At least for today, I'm going to reverse that and take an inventory of the things I'm thankful for:

- I am thankful for the privilege to work every day in this field of endeavor, taking action to assist people who are often marginalized in becoming fully integrated and contributing members of our community.
- I am thankful for each member of our volunteer Board of Directors. They make a tremendously valuable contribution in their efforts to guide us and shape the future of our work.
- I am thankful for the partner agencies with whom we work. These folks are professional, creative, caring, and effective. And they're working hard to advance the causes of the people we serve.
- I am thankful for employers in our community who hire individuals with disabilities. The positive impacts of their actions are real, but will probably never be fully understood.
- I am thankful for families. To observe first-hand such loving care and concern, such tenacity and persistence, is inspiring. It energizes me every day.
- I am thankful for the Columbia community (including the surrounding areas we serve). We are fortunate to have interwoven in the fabric of our community an ethic that causes people to take action in response to their convictions.
- I am thankful for the people we support. Each one is a valuable and remarkable person, deserving of my highest regard. Each one is a delight. I am privileged to know them and count them as friends.

When I read this list, I am reminded that my life is abundantly rich. I have much to celebrate and acknowledge when I sit down at my table for our Thanksgiving meal.

Don Lafferty, our Director of Community Living, reminded me yesterday of one thing that I know about. It’s always there. When I consider it, it makes me think of what W. Edwards Deming really said: Not everything that is important can be measured.

While most of us will be sitting at our tables Thursday surrounded by family and good cheer, many of our staff, out of their gratitude and sense of service, will be working. They'll be away from their families accompanying the people we serve.

They possess a quality that can't be summed up in a few sentences on an annual performance review.

I am thankful to work every day with our selfless staff who don't just talk. They walk the walk. They sacrifice to serve others. And it really matters.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Mark Hässemér
Executive Director, ACT
A Socialite in Community Living Makes Friends While Volunteering

Volunteering is one way of being a part of your community. It gives you purpose and a connection to the greater good. For Chris, an individual in ACT’s Community Living program, it is also a way to meet people and, as she says, “be nice”.

When Chris heard during Sunday service at Unity Church that they would be organizing a flea market to raise money, she wanted to help! On September 10th, Chris put on her favorite skirt and volunteered her time to sell snacks to shoppers.

“It was fun! I liked it!” Chris says of her 2-hour shift. Vicki Shulte, Community Living Supervisor, attended the flea market and says, “She did a great job! She loved offering snacks to people and making new friends.”

Once she got a taste of volunteering, she couldn’t stop! She noticed that some of her fellow churchgoers provide a snack for the congregation after services. She combined her love for baking yummy sweets, like her famous chocolate and carrot cakes, with her desire to volunteer.

On Sundays you can now find Chris standing by her home-baked goods at church offering one – or two – of the treats to the passersby. “I lust like it. I like to talk to people and make new friends,” Chris says of her work.

Vicki says, “She is a socialite. She loves people and loves being around people. She has a very compassionate heart and is a stranger to no one in this town.”

The volunteer bug has definitely caught on in Chris’s house. Her roommate, Barbie, devotes her time once a week at the Food Pantry bagging and labeling food. She also goes to Second Chance once a month to walk, brush, and pet dogs.

For Chris and Barbie, devoting time to these activities is a joy. They love doing it. Chris’s volunteer work allows her to turn acquaintances into friends. Barbie gets to spend time outdoors with animals.

Thank you Chris and Barbie for volunteering your time and service to these great causes!

Local Businesses Recognized for Improving Employment Opportunities

Three local businesses received awards on October 29th recognizing their efforts to improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Show-Me-Careers Columbia and People First of Boone County presented the awards as a part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Both President Barack Obama and Governor Jay Nixon proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year’s theme is “Because we are all EQUAL to the task.”

As the Missouri Department of Labor website notes, “The purpose of NDEA Month is to educate all people about disability employment issues and to celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. These employees are often highly-motivated individuals and generally have higher retention rates

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than workers without disabilities, which means reduced recruitment and training costs for employers.”

Both Kilgore’s Pharmacy and MBS Textbook Exchange have exhibited longstanding commitments to the hiring of people with disabilities; both have employees with disabilities who have worked for them for over a decade.

Moresource, Inc. has partnered with local service providers and Columbia Public Schools to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. Moresource is both a business member of the CPS Columbia Transition Team and the Show-Me-Careers initiative.

Show-Me-Careers Columbia is a group of organizations, businesses, and individuals collaborating to improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. People First of Boone County is an organization focused on advocacy for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life, including work.

These businesses have long recognized that individuals with disabilities are equal to their tasks. We are honored to acknowledge these businesses for their dedication to people with disabilities.

Service Learning Students Add Value to Community Integration Program

The University of Missouri coordinates a program called Service Learning. For non-profits in Columbia, it is a blessing! Students from the program, many of whom are in human services related fields, are given a list of partnered agencies that they can contact to arrange experiences as a volunteer or intern.

Participation gives students valuable experience in the career fields they are pursuing. Every semester, the Community Integration program welcomes 2 or 3 of these fabulous students. Currently, Shea, Cynde, and Emma spend several hours at ACT each week putting their efforts to good use.

Sheila Robertson, Activities Coordinator, loves having the students. “They help out a lot! Three brains working together are better than one!” She says. “Each student brings something new to the table.”

This semester, Sheila utilized their

Job Opportunities

ACT is seeking positive and enthusiastic employees to provide assistance and instruction to individuals with disabilities.

If you are interested in a career supporting individuals with disabilities, join us and help make a difference in someone’s life. You must be willing to embrace challenges and accept great rewards. We invite you to consider ACT when seeking employment and/or work experience in the human services field.

ACT is an equal opportunity employer.

Visit actservices.org/jobs to view a list of job opportunities.
assistance planning seasonal parties and offering appropriate activities. One of the students is working on sensory items to go in the sensory bins. The student researched different sensory objects to go in the bins and where to buy the items for the best deal. So far, 2 bins have been put together this semester.

One container features a Missouri Tigers, black and gold theme that fit perfectly with a tailgate party the program was having. It has tiger figurines, corn, black beans, little football beads, and black and gold tinsels. Each bin is paired with suggested activities to do with the items such as sorting, counting, and scooping activities.

Sheila put the other students on party planning duty! One worked on preparing for the tailgate party. The other planned a fall themed party. They researched and planned games, crafts, music, and prize giveaways, all related to the autumn season. Both students worked closely with Sheila to make sure everything was appropriate, and within budget.

“They met with me to brainstorm, get ideas, and discuss,” Sheila explained. “Then they were present at the parties so they could see their work in action.”

“Each student was given leadership roles with some guidance. This gives them a sense of ownership. I feel this takes their work and dedication to another level.”

In the past, students have also helped Sheila plan outings in the community. “I will have them research things to do in nearby cities. They will make phone calls to verify hours open, cost, etc. for us to visit,” she says.

Now the students are working on a Dr. Seuss party. They are developing activities, creating decorations, and will of course be at the party. “They love it!” Sheila says. “When they get to see how their hard, and sometimes tedious, work and planning putting smiles on peoples’ faces, it is really fulfilling.”

The individuals in the program also love having the fresh faces around. Sheila says, “I get asked every day, ‘when is so and so coming in to volunteer?’ Everyone really enjoys having them here!”

Shea Scholl, a current intern, says, “I love coming to volunteer at ACT. Everyone is so nice and everyone is excited to see me. I plan on becoming an Occupational Therapy major here at Mizzou, and I always thought I wanted to work with children, but volunteering at ACT has definitely changed my interests to include working with adults as well.”

We are so thankful for Shea, Cynde, Emma, and the other MU Service Learning volunteers that have dedicated their time at ACT!

In recent years, discussion about the use of computers and iPads as a source of education and training for individuals with developmental disabilities has been a hot topic in this field. It has been my experience that computers and iPads can be useful to facilitate communication and aid in learning.

I do recommend that too much “screen time” that is not structured and purposeful can lead to individuals spending too much time on electronics and less time out in the community and interacting with peers. It is important to find a balance.

In my opinion the iPad or other electronic tablets are ideal over computers because they bring the flexibility and portability that seem to be more helpful for calming and focusing for individuals who are on the go. Tablets are also easier to navigate and accessible for individuals with coordination or learning difficulties.

The iPad can also be used as a communication board or augmentative communication device for individuals who have difficulty with communication and language. The other advantage I see is that in today’s world iPads and other tablets are seen by many as “cool and fun” and don’t immediately mark an individual as different.

For many individuals who already have a love for electronics or gadgets, the tablet alone provides motivation to master

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new skills more quickly particularly when motivation to learn new skills is a struggle.

I do believe that families need to be cautious in thinking that a tablet will immediately teach all skills and be the piece of the puzzle that will make significant changes right away.

The best way to explore the possibility of how effective technology can be, particularly if the goal is to use the iPad as a communication device, is to work with a Speech and Language Pathologist by requesting an Assistive Technology evaluation. Locally, I would highly recommend contacting the Assistive Technology Evaluation Center Columbia, MO, (573) 882-9111

There are many useful apps available and literally hundreds available on iTunes. It is difficult to navigate what apps might best meet the needs of the skill you want to work on. I believe the following links provide good information about various apps that are available:


http://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-apps

http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/

ACT has recently endorsed a declaration that technology and information access be inclusive to ALL people; this after the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) and other disability organizations met at the Coleman Institute National Conference on Cognitive Disability and Technology in Broomfield, Colorado on October, 2nd

At the conference, participants formally announced the equal rights of those with disabilities, titled The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access.

The use and widespread expectation of availability of technology is making it a necessity to thrive and participate fully in everyday life. Those without are being left behind. “Access to technology and information access is essential for community and social participation, employment, education, health, and general communication,” says David Braddock professor and Executive Director of the Coleman Institute.

So, what is the significance of a formal declaration?

It can be used by advocates of people with disabilities to raise awareness to this issue and to the possibilities available through technology to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Sadly, most people with disabilities do not have access to comprehensive information and usable communications technologies.

“The price of inequality for people with cognitive disabilities without ready access to technology and information is enormous, and further compromises the integrity of an inclusive global community,” states Renee Pietrangelo, CEO of ANCOR.

This declaration is simply a statement of principles. It is a pronouncement and affirmation that ALL people have the right to inclusion and choice in relation to technology and information access, ANCOR stated. (See http://www.ancor.org/newsroom/news/rights-people-cognitive-disabilities-technology-and-information-access)

You or your organization can endorse the declaration, as ACT has, by visiting the Coleman Institute website, www.colemaninstitute.org/declaration.
New Ad Tells the ACT Story, Raises Brand Awareness

When ACT needed marketing materials developed, Scott was our first choice!

First Scott developed our visual communications package, which included a brochure and display board.

Then he went above and beyond our expectations. “I tried to take the brand to the next level of professional appearance and genuinely reflect the mission of ACT. Tara is always talking about ‘why we do what we do...’ So I’m striving to tell the ACT story, yet keep the core focus on serving individuals and providing opportunities for people.”

His work was a big hit...out of the park.

Recently Hassemer was fortunate to win a 15-second television spot from KMOS at a local Chamber of Commerce event. ACT was so pleased with the fruits of Scott’s creative genius, he was asked to step back up to the plate.

“It’s basically an animated version of the static graphics and visual communications I developed for ACT,” Scott says of the commercial. “I provided KMOS a script, a storyboard, visuals to utilize, and an overall creative direction for the spot I had in mind for the agency.

“KMOS did a great job taking our storyboard and bringing it to life. The music and voice over are great. The animation is nice. This ad will serve ACT as one more tactic in a growing arsenal of communication, brand awareness and story-telling.” Scott continues.

This commercial will run on KMOS for the next several months. Don’t miss it.

Thanks, Scott. And thanks to KMOS for helping us spread the good word.

ReachOut Program

With ReachOut, ACT has a charitable giving program to serve individuals in significant ways. With ACT’s budget heavily reliant on public funding, it is important to build cash reserves in the event of cutbacks.

ReachOut contributions are typically tax-exempt, and used to improve the care and conditions for individuals receiving services form ACT.

To be part of ReachOut, a gift can be given for any reason, or to recognize a special event such as a birthday, anniversary, or memorial given in memory of a relative or friend.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible end of year contribution, you may do so by using your credit card at this PayPal link or mail your check to:

ACT
2200 Burlington
Columbia, MO 65202

Please mention if your gift is a memorial or honorarium, or if you’d like your donation to be used for a specific purpose.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in the work we do.

Happy Holidays!
Upcoming Events

November 28-29: ACT offices closed for Thanksgiving
December 19: ACT Holiday Party
December 24-25: ACT offices closed for Christmas
December 31 & January 1: ACT offices closed for New Year’s

For more events, please check out actservices.org/about-us/events

“If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain as he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought and could be.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
GET CONNECTED

Come follow us on social media:

http://www.actservices.org

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