



Mark Hassemer,
Executive Director

Dear Friends of ACT,

Last month I told you about the inequitable distribution of funds for people living in Individual Supported Living settings. I lamented our Governor's actions, withholding funds that would address at least part of the unfair system and give service providers a boost through rebasing and a cost of living adjustment.

We continue to work on these issues. Our focus: strategies that motivate the Governor to release the funds.

I don't want this tangled mess to cloud the view of one thing I didn't emphasize enough: Missouri's lawmakers appropriated funds to help fix the problem. They saw the need and took action.

I'm thankful for that.

And it's just one of the things for which I'm thankful. As Thanksgiving soon approaches, I'm even more thankful.

(I can't resist telling you about the joy and gratitude I feel at the announcement of my daughter's engagement!)

I also want to tell you about a young man in his late 20's who participates in ACT's day program. He faces some significant barriers. But his family has always remained near. He and his mom have likely never been apart.

Not long ago, he spent a week at Wonderland Camp down at the Lake. Funds donated to ACT through CoMoGives made it possible.

For him, it was a week of exceeding many of his expectations about life. His world grew.

For his mother, it was a week of joyful respite, an opportunity to reflect and consider.

We don't know yet the changes this significant week will bring about. But she experienced the important revelation that her son could be supported by someone else.

That's just one thing for which I'm thankful that has come about because of CoMoGives.

CoMoGives is a web-based campaign that brings awareness to local nonprofit organizations and provides an opportunity for those who care to make life-changing donations during the holiday season.

Last year more than 50 organizations participated. ACT received over \$13,000, far exceeding our expectations for our maiden year. And our supporters showed up in number. We ended up ranking 6th among our peers for funds raised.

Congratulations and thank you to our donors and well-wishers.

Perhaps as an offering of your thanksgiving, you'll consider donating this year.

Your gift will allow us to provide supports to people with disabilities that aren't covered by State and Federal programs or family resources.

The campaign begins December 1st. You can give thanks with me by donating on line at www.comogives.com/donate-now/.

Have a great Thanksgiving!
I'm still mad about it.

Until next month,

Mark

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Community Living Celebrates Halloween

Community Living’s (CL) annual Halloween party was yet again a huge success!

She knows the winning combination – food, music, and some friendly competition.

“Carrie did another great job this year. Everyone looks forward to this party...it has become tradition.” CL Director Don Lafferty says.

Nearly 100 ghosts, goblins, and princesses gathered for the event of the year!

Griffith started organizing the party for 14 years ago, one year after she came to ACT.

Partygoers enjoyed pizza and treats, danced to music provided by “DJ” Larry Barnette, CL Supervisor, and everyone awaited the renowned costume contest. Awards are given for scariest, funniest, most original, and best house theme.

“Many of the individuals supported in ACT’s CL program wanted to dress up and be a part of the holiday...having a costume party made sense,” says CL Program Manager Carrie Griffith.

This year’s winners for best house theme were dressed up as Disney princesses. These ladies have taken the prize, a decoration for their house, for the last three years!

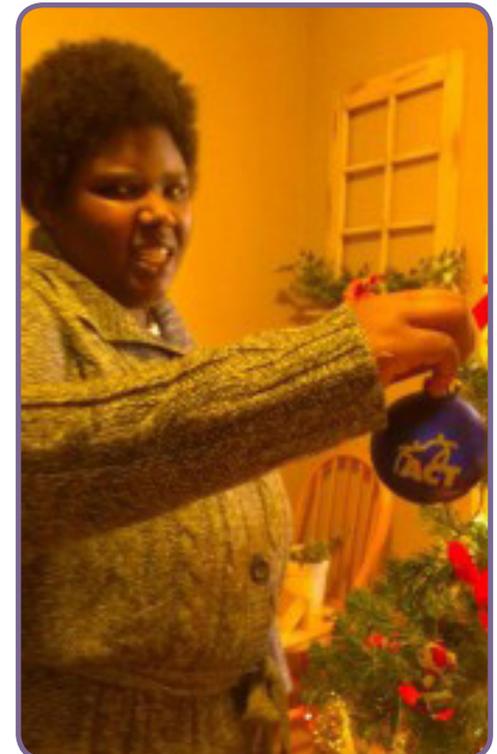
And the role of party planner has stuck with her through the years. If you’ve ever had the pleasure of attending THE Halloween bash, you would understand why.

It is no wonder this party is such a hit – a lot of hard work goes into it (thanks Carrie!) and gathering of great friends always equals a good time. •



Voluntary Action Center Offers Holiday Spirit to Many People at ACT

The Holidays are a time of family togetherness, cheer, and presents – whether giving or receiving.



For people that don’t have relatives near, this is not the case.

Voluntary Action Center (VAC) checks one of these items off the list.

Through its Holiday program, all of the individuals supported in ACT’s Community Living (CL) program, among many other people in the Columbia area, will wake up on Christmas morning to presents under the tree.

This means a lot to the individuals at ACT.

“The best thing about the VAC program is that those individuals who don’t have family to go to for the holidays will still have some wrapped gifts under the tree to open,” says CL Program Manager Carrie Griffith.

VAC is a non-profit that provides resources related



to health, employment, education, and housing to low-income families and individuals, getting them on their feet again.

The Holiday Program is VAC's single largest program. It provides families, the elderly, and people with disabilities with gifts and food for the holidays by matching them with organizations, offices, churches, schools, businesses, individuals, and families who wish to sponsor them for the holidays.

This program gives qualifying participants the opportunity to receive items that they may not have otherwise had.

Thank you VAC for ensuring a little holiday cheer is spread around to everyone in our community.

Griffith says, "The Holiday Program ensures that the individuals we serve don't miss out on participating in the traditions of the season."

If you would like to participate in VAC's Holiday Program:

www.vacmo.org
573-874-2273
sw3@vacmo.org

Or if you prefer, you can directly support an individual at ACT this holiday season.

Contact *Kalynn Ramsey* at:
kramsey@actservices.org
or
573-808-5057
•



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. •

Community Employment Services Year in Review

ACT Career Services (ACS) underwent many changes this year. We feel these transformations were positive and a step in the right direction for the services provided through this program.

Community Employment Services, under the ACS umbrella, had a great year. As the year comes to an end, we would like to highlight and share (again) some of the 2015 CES success stories.

"We are looking forward to serving individuals to accomplish their career goals into 2016 and beyond," says Fontella Jackmon-Jones, Manager of Community Employment Services. •

"A hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

— CHRISTOPHER REEVE

CoMoGives Funds are Opening Opportunity's Door for Many

Imagine a life without swimming or putt putt golf. No tree houses or vacations.

For many with disabilities this is a reality. Camp Wonderland allows them to experience all of this and more.

Thanks to the generosity of many ACT supporters through CoMoGives, an online fundraising campaign, Chelsea and Joe were both awarded scholarships to attend Camp Wonderland!

This camp is anything but ordinary.

The summertime retreat offers campers a weeklong full of activities, many of which are not possible for people with disabilities anywhere else.

Cabins, a tree house, swimming pool, boating, and a lodge for bingo, dances, karaoke, and video games... ALL of which are accessible!

The camp also offers a nursing staff for people that have medical needs.

Chelsea utilizes a wheelchair and is medically fragile, requiring a nurse around the clock. This keeps her budget tight so she has never been able her to go on vacation, let alone Camp Wonderland.

Joe also uses a wheelchair and has never been to Camp Wonderland. He does not have access to an accessible vehicle, making travel difficult.

We are so thrilled that Chelsea and Joe got a much needed first-time accessible vacation!

Several more individuals that receive services at ACT recently benefitted from the funds raised through the CoMoGives Campaign.

Two individuals supported in the Community Living program were able to buy some needed furniture. Bill purchased a lift chair that will enable him to get in and out of his recliner. Daniel bought a patio table for his beautiful backyard.

Several individuals in the Community Integration program will be prepared for colder weather this winter – they all received clothing such as coats and insulated boots.

Irea, who receives services through ACT's Personal Assistance program, will live out her dream to take dance classes.

Dennis and Tim are now able to sit at their dinner table on stable, hearty chairs thanks to CoMoGives funds.

Our CoMoGives Fund Committee is currently reviewing other scholarship applications. We will update you on the many more opportunities made possible through our participation in CoMoGives.

On behalf of everyone at ACT, thank you to everyone who participated in CoMoGives – regardless of which non-profit you chose to support.

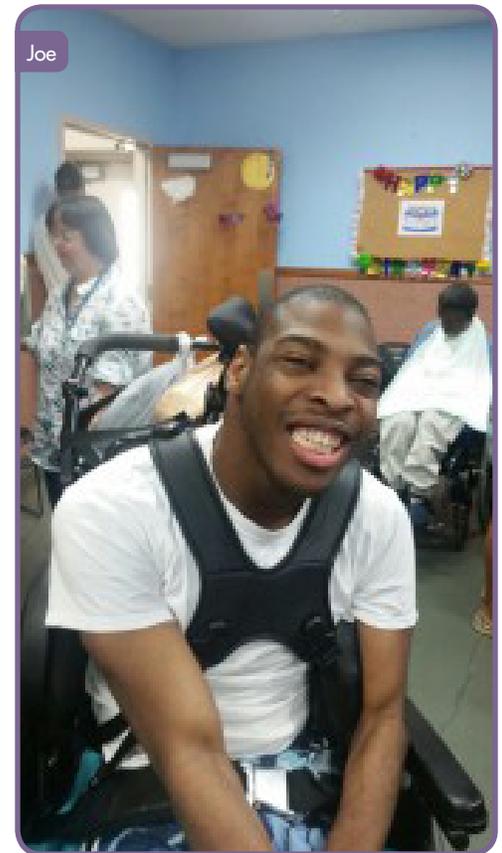
Every non-profit involved in CoMoGives now has their own Joe and Chelsea story. As a result, our community is a better place because of the graciousness of those that gave.

The CoMoGives campaign runs December 1st through December 31st. Last year ACT raised over \$13,000, the campaign as a whole raised \$263,929 and involved over 50 non-profits.

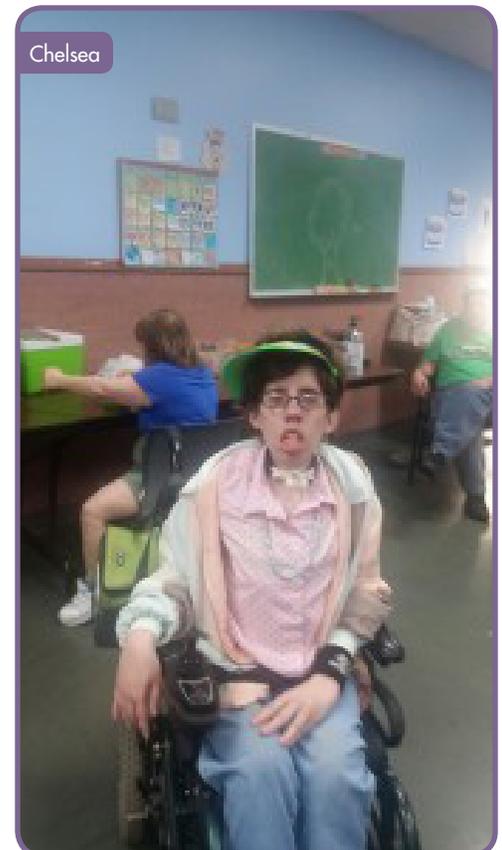
Copy of Support ACT Through CoMoGives flier 2015 copy This year we are once again having a CoMoGives launch party to kick-off the campaign at Joe Machens Toyota from 5p-8p.

Enhance the lives that ACT provides services to while enjoying Logboat Brewing Co. and light appetizers. We need your help to get us on the leaderboard right out of the gates!

If you can't make it, no worries – you can give to ACT online through CoMoGives anytime in the month of December.



Joe



Chelsea

Why choose ACT?

We follow the hopes and dreams of each person. We listen closely to each individual served, and develop a plan that thoughtfully pursues their interests and aspirations. ACT focuses on the gifts and strengths of each person.

Why we deserve your support:

Because 100 percent of the money we raise goes to the individuals served by ACT. We carefully select critical needs that otherwise would not be funded by other sources.

What we need:

Household items and furnishings, funding to participate in camps and other activities, appropriate clothing for work or every day use, rental subsidy, dental work, house repairs, and transportation costs.

What \$50 could buy:

- New household items
- A professional outfit for an interview for a first time job seeker
- Transportation to and from work

What \$100 could buy:

- A CPR mannequin to help maintain certification for 350 staff
- Much needed and long overdue dental work
- An individual to afford their rent increase
- An individual to put a down payment on a much needed bed mattress or furniture
- A broken window, or other necessary house repair
- An individual to travel to a town or city or outside of Columbia for the first time.
- Entrance into a sporting event that requires an admission fee



Irea performing in her dance recital.



Dennis posing in one of his new dining room chairs.



Support ACT through CoMoGives the month of December.

Join us at our kick-off party

Joe Machens Toyota Scion
Tuesday, December 1st
5pm - 8pm.

Help us surpass our goal of raising \$20,000. 100% of the money we raise goes to the individuals served by ACT.

Logboat Brewing Co and appetizers will be provided.

Upcoming Events

DATE	EVENT
Dec. 9	ACT Holiday Party
Dec. 24	ACT offices closed
Dec. 25	ACT offices closed
Dec. 31	ACT offices closed
Jan. 1	ACT offices closed

GET CONNECTED

Come follow us on social media:

-  www.actservices.org
-  fb.com/ACTofCoMo
-  pinterest.com/alternativecomm
-  [@ACTofCoMo](https://twitter.com/ACTofCoMo)
-  google.com/+ActservicesOrg
-  [Alternative Community Training](#)
-  pinterest.com/alternativecomm

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