Dear Friends of ACT,

The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) categorizes some services for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) into four quadrants:

Facility based work,
Facility based non-work,
Community based work, and
Community based non-work.

National disability policy makers have been shifting greater emphasis to community based employment, away from facility based work. We’ve been on that path with them. Last spring, ACT closed its recycling program, a facility based work program. The time was right. And the results show it. Job seekers here are now on one track. Their employment option is moving toward community based work.

Community based work is now well understood and well defined. Competitive integrated employment is “full time or part time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with coworkers without disabilities.”

As these employment approaches mature, we’re seeing a similar evolution in non-work programs and projects. Community based non-work (CBNW) services (not at a facility) are on the grow and receiving more attention, support, and publicity.

CBNW is maturing, too. Along with others in our field we’re seeing and acting on a need to move beyond simply taking people with IDDs into the community. The Director of our Day Program, Craig Valone, made a striking remark about this just last week. He said, “If we are taking groups of 4 or 5 individuals out in the community but not truly interacting, then we are merely tourists in a land that isn’t our own.”

This new depth and breadth of non-work involvement in the community has been tagged Community Life Engagement (CLE).

CLE is about supporting people with IDDs while they access and participate in their communities outside of employment as part of a meaningful day.

Meaningful day means just what it says. Peoples’ days are not occupied just with work, though work is fulfilling and affords us many freedoms and choices.

CLE also includes volunteer work; postsecondary, adult, or continuing education; accessing community facilities like a local library, gym, or recreation center; participation in retirement or senior activities; and anything else people with and without disabilities do in their off time.

Our day program at ACT does a lot of this already. But we can do more. Here’s what’s new, really new. We’re starting to throw off the baggage of organizational silos and program history. We’re starting to understand that any one of the persons to whom we provide services can move beyond the false dichotomy that says you must choose one or the other. He or she can have both.

One can be active in the community and be employed. Our services, our plans, our approaches, our person-centered focus needs to include this new dimension that goes beyond program definitions.

Jessica Mahon, Director of Employment Services, said, “Moving in this direction gives us the opportunity to be even more individualized and allow people to have multiple service needs met in a more flexible and seamless manner.”

Before, we would typically design a person’s day around participation in either the day program or a work program. On occasion, we got creative and someone would participate in both a day and work program. But sadly, it was an exception.

It’s time to look at things differently. Participation in a work service, such as career development, should not preclude one from also participating in a day program that emphasizes community life engagement. Let’s take...
on a blended approach and create that meaningful day that everyone wants, regardless of disability status.

So what’s next?

States are beginning to emphasize community life engagement activities. But we lack an accepted definition of CLE (like the competitive integrated employment definition above) that will help us design and implement services. Information on structure, activities, and successful outcomes of CLE services is still needed. We don’t yet have metrics or other measures of quality. We lack a complete understanding of ideal staffing ratios. We need to get a handle on group size and the proportion of time spent in the community.

It’s easier to define acceptable outcomes for employment. But our field is behind on defining non-work outcomes.

So now it’s time to press forward with these ideals in mind. We’ll learn as we go, as we confer and collaborate, and as we keep in mind what’s best for the people we serve.

Until next month,

Mark

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**WAREHOUSE YOGA**

Bring your yoga mat to ACT at 2200 Burlington in Columbia for an hour-long session with Katie Wear on Saturday, December 3rd at 9:00am.

The former work floor provides a wide open space perfect for a peaceful flow.

To reserve a spot, donate to ACT at CoMoGives.com Registration begins on December 1st at 12:00am. Space is limited.

See our event on Facebook as well.

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ACT Career Services (ACS) has a new employee. Amber Sartain joined the team as a Career Specialist in July. She loves her new gig.

Sartain is a student at Central Methodist University in Fayette. She recently changed her major from nursing to psychology. She is also working toward a minor in Applied Behavior Analysis.

She plans to get her Masters degree in the near future and become a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

She was introduced to ACS employees at her former job. She quickly gained an appreciation for what Career Specialists did for the people she worked alongside.

Sartain says, “I planned to apply after I graduated, but decided not to wait.”

In her role with ACS she enjoys the challenge of making connections with businesses. She is also enjoying her coworkers. “These people are wonderful!” she exclaims.

Her favorite part of the job is seeing individuals in, what she describes as, the palm sweaty moment, when they decide for sure what their career goals are.

“It is so great to be a part of helping them figure that out,” she says.

From Boonville, she is one of nine children. And, she has a little girl who is two-and-a-half and “full of energy”.

“I have a large and diverse family. Maybe that is why studying behavior interests me,” Sartain says.

In her free time, her main hobby is homework. But she also makes sure to take time for her little one. She has also been teaching herself how to play guitar and hopes to get lessons soon.

Welcome to ACT, Amber! We are thrilled to have you on the ACS team.

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“**I planned to apply after I graduated, but I decided not to wait.**”
PHOTO ALBUMS INSPIRE DREAMS TO COME TRUE

In 2014, we told you about special photo albums Community Living (CL) Assistant Director Carrie Griffith creates for each house in the program. These books capture and highlight the year’s accomplishments in each house by portraying their trips, firsts, and celebrations. They have now spurred a little competition; each house wants their book to be better than the others.


Barbi, who loves trains, planned two train escapades this year. She has taken three total now. Her first one this year was to Saint Louis in May, after which she started planning her next ride, a trip to Kansas City to take in Barbi’s favorite store, the Crown Center Crayola Store.

In October, Barbi and CL Manager Vicki Schulte headed west on the River Runner Route train #316. A must on the ride: a meal as American as a train, a good ol’ American hot dog.

“The trip was great!” Schulte says. “Barbi was all smiles.” Once they arrived, they checked into a hotel on Main Street. Barbi watched passersby on the streets below dressed in their Halloween costumes.

Then they hit the town. The duo headed to the Country Club Plaza to shop for what else but a book about trains. They ended the night by treating themselves to a meal at Tomfooleries.

The grand finale came the next day at the Crayola Store, where Barbi went on a little shopping spree. Then they boarded the #311 back home.

Barbi has already started saving money for her next train adventure to Chicago.

Drew was accompanied by DSP, Stepheney Brackett. They had a great time.

They went for dinner before the show. “Drew got to pick the restaurant. So I urged him to pick something he had never tried before. He picked sushi,” Brackett says. “He loved it! I was happy I got to be with Drew while he experienced something new.”

At the show, they got the crowd warmed up with Price is Right Trivia. Drew’s knowledge really shone through. He knew all of the answers, even the ones about the host when the show first aired, before Bob Barker.

Though this show’s host is not Barker or the new star Drew Carey, the crowd knew the drill and got lively. Drew was no exception. He yelled out "higher" and "lower" and dollar amount bid suggestions for contestants. He didn’t get called on stage. But that didn’t discourage him.

“He had a blast,” said Brackett, "and he said so about 20 times!”

Seth has a love for medical equipment, especially otoscopes, a device used to examine ears. Brackett, who works with both Seth and Drew, thinks this interest stems from his relationship with his mom, who is a nurse.

Several months ago he heard there was huge medical equipment store in Minnesota. He’s been planning a trip north since.

“It is all he’s been talking about,” says Brackett who accompanied Seth, along with Seth’s favorite DSP, Lolita Johnson.

Drew has a love for Bob Barker and the game show that made him famous. He has even read Bob Barker’s autobiography several times.

“Drew’s second time seeing the travelling version of the show. It was at Jesse Auditorium on the University of Missouri campus.

“He had a blast,” said Brackett, "and he said so about 20 times!”

Drew knows EVERYTHING about them. He has even read Bob Barker’s autobiography several times.

He has collected five of these instruments. He checks friends’ ears often. He has been known to disassemble and reassemble his doctor’s at every visit.

“His Ear, Nose, and Throat doctor says he knows more about otoscopes than she does,” Brackett says.

At the Mall of America, Seth got his fill of shopping. And he traveled across the United States in a flight simulator. They also visited Paisley Park, the home of the late music legend, Prince. Seth enjoyed the hot tub and king size bed.

Seth tends to be a creature of habit. But this trip, it was all about trying new things. He even rode a camel!

“He was the most excited about the new medical equipment, and spending three whole days with Lolita,” Brackett says.

The three had better start preparing for the next trip. Seth got a tip from a medical store employee that their supplier is in Canada.

“I guess he needs a passport,” Brackett said.

Brackett said, "Our photo albums will not be boring this year. We are looking forward to a great, and cute, book!"
To everyone that participated in CoMoGives, THANK YOU!!

100% of the money raised in this campaign goes to the individuals ACT serves.

In 2016, a family can now afford to buy a new kitchen appliance; Robbie could pay for crucial dental work; Abraham and his family got a family pass to Columbia Parks & Rec pools; and more!

Also in this newsletter, read about Jayden - a six-year-old boy recently diagnosed with an inoperable brain cancer. Jayden's family of four is struggling but CoMoGives funding afforded them some relief...a brand new washer and dryer!

Now Jayden's single mom, Karla, can take care of laundry at home instead of hauling the whole family to the laundry mat.

Keep in touch for more heart warming stories like these brought to you by the CoMoGives.

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Each year, the Day Program throws a Halloween party. This year they got help, which made the occasion bigger and better!

Women from the University of Missouri Gamma Phi Beta sorority came to ACT in two shifts to lend a hand in all the activities.

The Activities Coordinator, staff, and mentors are usually scrambling to coordinate the games. This year they were able to enjoy the activities along with individuals in the program.

Day Program Mentor Danica Duensing helped coordinate the students coming to ACT to volunteer. She is the Alumnae Chapter President and Ritual Advisor for the sorority.

Community involvement for sorority members means points. And points mean room at their sorority house. That's a big deal when you live with hundreds of other people.

One group of ladies came in the morning from 9:30 to 11:00 am. A second group came from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm.

The women got right into the action and engaged with everyone. They were dancing, running different activities set up throughout the program areas, and having a great time!

The favorite games of the day were bingo, cake walk, bean bag toss, face painting, the craft table, pin the eyes on the pumpkin, and adapted musical chairs, which just turned in to a big dance party, said one of the sorority members.

"It was so fun!" said a sorority member. "In high school, I did similar volunteer work. It made me happy to do it again now," said another.

The extra hands were a huge help, much welcomed by everyone in the Day Program.

Thank you, Gamma Phi Beta ladies, for making this party a truly spooktacular event.

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THE HALLOWEEN PARTY WAS SPOOKTACULAR

THANKS TO GAMMA PHI BETA
“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.”
— Christopher Reeve

“Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.”
— Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed by former President George H. W. Bush

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

“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

December 1
Flipping ACT: CoMoGives Launch Party at ACT 4p-7p

December 3
Warehouse Yoga: Yoga Benefitting ACT

December 1-31
Support ACT through the CoMoGives Campaign

December 23 & 26
ACT Facility Based Offices Closed

December 30 & January 2
ACT Facility Based Offices Closed