

# interACTION

Alternative Community Training

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## Dear Friends of ACT,

[www.actservices.org](http://www.actservices.org)



Acknowledged, appreciated, and accepted--three words that mean a lot to everyone.

I was in elementary school many years ago. But I remember some things like they were yesterday.

Do you remember raising your hand (along with everyone else) in elementary school, stretching up and out of your seat to get the teacher's attention? "I know, I know." To get called on from time to time was the best feeling. It was great to be acknowledged.

Then, we would be called on to write something on the board or do something in front of all our classmates--maybe spell a word, read a passage from a book, or complete an equation. If we got it right the teacher would say something like, "Yes, that's correct. Great job!" Do you remember the proud feeling of being appreciated?

My favorite activity back then was recess (no surprise there!). Do you remember picking teams? I could get into a completely separate discussion about the order of selection, but my point here is that when you were picked to join a group of your peers, you were often thrilled with being selected. You were included, or accepted.

Individuals with disabilities want these things too. But we haven't always done a good job of acknowledging, appreciating, or accepting everyone. In fact, we've purposely excluded people, from living and working in the community, and enjoying many things we take for granted.

We all have differences and idiosyncrasies that make us unique. It's time to not only accept people for who they are and the contributions they make, but also to celebrate the uniqueness of each one of us.

Acknowledged, appreciated, and accepted. It's for everyone.

Until next month,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Mark".

Mark Hassemer  
Executive Director, ACT

## ACT Community Integration Welcomes Two To New Positions

“The rewards are tremendous. To be a part of bringing happiness and laughter to the individuals we serve...it’s the greatest,” says Tom Dresner. He’s one of two who have recently moved into new staff positions in Community Integration (CI).

Tom is now a Program Supervisor, heading up the eight staff that comprise the Purple Team since last November.



Tom Dresner & Pam

“Tom brings a wealth of management and supervision

experience to his new role. We’re very fortunate to have such a natural leader,” said CI Program Manager, Michelle Bell.

Tom is a long-time resident of Columbia. He worked at ACT for 8 months as a Training Specialist on



Sheila Robertson

the Red Team after retiring from his previous career.

CI is also happy to welcome Sheila Robertson, the new Activities Coordinator. She began at ACT in

November.

Sheila has undertaken the complex task of setting up and coordinating the activities schedule for the individuals we serve in CI.

Her recent focus has been on sensory activities and in-house opportunities such as crafts, special parties.

“Many individuals have fitness goals. So I try to make sure that what we do is fun, interactive and involves movement,” said Sheila.

Sheila lives in Ashland. She brings a strong background in volunteering as a Girl Scout leader, Younglife leader and Special Events childcare coordinator at her church. She has a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Congratulations, Tom and Sheila, on your new jobs. ■

## ACT Kicks Off Three Year Youth Initiative to Improve Transition From School to Work

Nationwide, data show that 19% of people with developmental disabilities work in a community setting, at or above minimum wage. Missouri, according to the 2011 ICI State Report, lags behind the national average at only 7 percent.

This statistic represents people, individuals who aren’t working, but could.

ACT, through a State grant, and in partnership with Boone County Family Services, Columbia Public Schools, Moresource, Services for Independent Living, State Vocational Rehabilitation, self-advocates, and family members of individuals with disabilities, has launched a 3-year effort to increase community employment for one

key cohort, youth and young adults, ages 16 through 30.

Recent high school graduates and other young people with developmental and intellectual disabilities have the same hopes and dreams held by their peers without disabilities. Many want

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to find a path leading to a career they enjoy that supports them financially and unites them with



Kat Cunningham

their home community.

The Show-Me Columbia consortium will be working over the next three years to:

- increase local business involvement in efforts to improve job opportunities for individuals with disabilities,
- reach out to under- and unemployed individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to provide support, coaching, skills training, and assistance, and
- improve coordination between existing local service providers.

Initial efforts will focus on reaching local businesses and encouraging them with the message that it makes good business sense

to integrate individuals with disabilities into their work force.

Local business leader Kat Cunningham, founder and President of Moresource, will be championing this early effort through contacts, workshops, and other outreach aimed at getting local businesses involved.

In the end, everyone wants to see results. The team wants to observe and document an increase in the number of youth in Columbia working in the community.

Show-Me Careers is funding the project. To learn more, visit [www.showmecareers.org](http://www.showmecareers.org). ■

## ACT Career Services Job Seeker Profile: Garret

In the past it's not been uncommon for us to feature the companies we work with that provide employment opportunities, our community partners. We've also featured ACT Career Specialists who work in the Career Services Program. But we've never highlighted a job seeker. Until now. We'd like to introduce you to Garret. Garret is an experienced and educated worker. He's actively seeking employment.

Garret has lived in the Columbia area for three years. He moved here from Troy, Missouri.

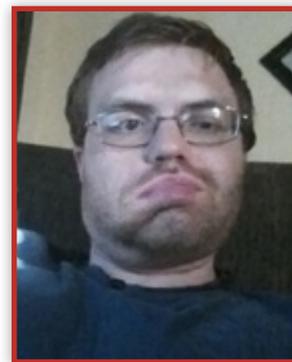
He has two Associates degrees from St. Charles Community College.

One is in networking and the other is in telecommunications.

He is currently completing course work toward his Bachelor's degree in Information Technology (IT). His expected graduation date is May, 2013.

Garret is seeking employment in the IT field. Specifically, he has a strong interest in doing computer repair. He's been working with Career Specialist Paul Weatherford since November of last year.

Although Garret is currently unemployed while he finishes his degree work, he has strong work experience. He worked in retail at Walmart on Broadway for 3 years.



Before that, he worked at Walmart in Lake St. Louis.

He has experience as a substitute

math teacher. And he worked for 6 years as a billing assistant at a hospital in Troy.

If your business or someone you know has employment needs in IT, please contact ACT at 573 474-9446. We'd love to learn about your needs and help you make a match that just might include Garret. ■

## Holiday Highlights from the ACT Community Living Houses and Apartments

People make the holidays special by what they do and how they do it.

We take time to be close in a special way to family and dear friends. We participate in the spirit of giving and generosity by contributing in some way to others. And everyone loves to celebrate with special food, festivity, gifts, decorations and our favorite family traditions.

Residents in ACT Community Living houses and apartments made the holidays special as well.

Ron cooked a special holiday meal in his apartment and invited his family from Mexico to join him for dinner.

Ricky and Patrick rang bells and collected donations for the Salvation Army outside of Gerbes. And they arranged for an evening of caroling with a group of individuals in the other ACT Houses. They sang at many homes around the neighborhood and enjoyed being together and sharing the gift of song.



*Brandi and Blake*

Jim traveled to St. Louis to spend special time with his sister, Betty.

Katie played an organ concert featuring holiday music for her roommate and staff.

Some residents baked holiday cupcakes. Others made the trek to Moberly to see Christmas lights. A party at Unity Church was a holiday highlight for one individual.

We've also heard that the place to be on New Year's Eve was Casey and Blake's house where residents

from other houses, staff and friends attended their party. Fourteen partygoers put on party hats, munched on snacks (junk food, which they hardly ever eat), and best of all, they stayed up late celebrating. They counted down the end of 2012 as they watched the ball drop on TV. Then they toasted the New Year with cheer and sparkling grape juice in champagne glasses. After wishing everyone a Happy New Year they called it a night and everyone headed home.

What a great holiday celebration!



## Thank You 2012 ReachOut Donors

Many of you responded to our reminder in last month's newsletter about the opportunity for end of year giving through the ReachOut fund.

Thank you, 2012 Donors; your generosity is greatly appreciated:

Robert Conway, M.D.

Chris Cottone

Patrick & Mary Del Eng

Sandra Graham

Lisa Hogan

Steve & Susie Lee

(in memory of Betty Lee-McCune)

David & Marcia Machens

John J & Jacqueline L Pascucci  
Charitable Trust

Norma Sedlock

Jean Smith

Joan Watson

## UPCOMING EVENTS

February 8 - Medication administration refresher training at the Training Center.

February 11 - New Hire Orientation at the Training Center.

February 11 - Therap/Documentation Training at the Training Center.

February 13 - Abuse/Neglect Prevention training at the Training Center.

February 13 - Positive Behavior Support training at the Training Center.

February 15 - CPR/First Aid at the Training Center.

February 19 - ACT Part-time Job Fair 2:00 pm-6:00 pm at 2111 Burlington, Columbia. We are seeking job applicants who want part-time employment (mornings, evenings,

weekends and overnights).

February 19-22 - Medication administration training at the Training Center

For more events, please check out [actservices.org/about-us/events](http://actservices.org/about-us/events)

*Reminder about Inclement Weather: On heavy snow or ice days ACT will contact families regarding transportation. Even if transportation is not provided by ACT, facility-based programs will be open.*

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“Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.”

— *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed by former President George H.W. Bush*

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 <http://www.actservices.org>

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## CONTACT US

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