



# Dear Friends of ACT,

**C**ARF, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, is an independent nonprofit organization focused on advancing the quality of services we provide at ACT.

**CARF's mission:**  
The mission of CARF is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

Representatives from CARF will be visiting us again soon. The accreditation process involves comparing what we do against various standards for services and business practices. This is done during an onsite survey that is expected in April or May. ACT has earned the maximum three-year award from CARF after every survey since 1987.

Although there is a lot of preparation involved, I am confident in the outcome. We will once again demonstrate compliance with CARF standards by providing documentation that shows we adhere to each standard. Providing that documentation takes time.

One way we prepare is by taking stock of notable accomplishments that have occurred since the previous survey. Although we regularly celebrate successes, this is a particularly fun exercise. We attempt to compile a statement of all of our successes in a single document. It's usually an impressive list.

So far, we've got more than forty items on a page and a half. I'm sure there will be more. The list demonstrates that we haven't been sitting still.

Here are some of the things we've accomplished:

- Celebrated 40 years in business
- Enhanced community awareness through social media and other avenues
- Improved training opportunities for all staff
- Increased the starting wage of direct support professionals by \$1.00 per hour
- Implemented major organizational change with the closure of facility-based employment services
- Refocused employment services on the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the community
- Changed various programs to more effectively meet needs of individuals

- Enhanced resources through grants and CoMoGives involvement
- Increased staff involvement in Statewide associations
- Presented case studies and reports at local, State, and National venues
- Improved business practices with new fund accounting software

There's more. But this should show that we've been busy. And not just busy. We've produced results. We've changed for the better.

Many of these accomplishments are a direct result of us responding to feedback obtained in the review and accreditation process. It's difficult, but invaluable.

As the CARF manual says, we continually assess the environment, set strategy, gain input from individuals served and other stakeholders, implement the plan, review the results, and effect change. We do this in every area of our work. It's what good organizations do. The people we serve deserve the best ACT can be. CARF helps us keep moving toward that ideal.

Until next month,

**Mark**

## *In This Issue*

Day Program Expands Its Hours

A Night to Shine Lives Up to Its Name

Crushed Red is ACT's Newest Community Partner

March is DD Awareness Month



**Mark Hassemer**  
Executive Director

## DAY PROGRAM

# EXPANDS ITS HOURS

Since day one the Day Program has operated from 9 am to 3 pm Monday through Friday.

Now the program will be available starting at 8 am and run until 4pm for everyone in the program. Evening and weekend services will also be offered to people that attend Day Program and reside in their natural homes.

“We wanted to expand our services to people living in their natural homes in order to help them have a more well-rounded social life and have the opportunity to participate in activities they might otherwise not be able to participate in,” says Day Program Manager Michelle Bell.

Day Program Director Craig Valone adds, “The Day Program is looking for ways to meet the needs of the individual as well as the needs of the family. Extending Day Program hours allows for additional programming and flexibility for individuals to incorporate our program into their overall meaningful day.”

Currently they are using word of mouth and phone calls to spread the word about the activities. The plan for the future is to create a three-month calendar of community activities posted on the ACT website. Everyone will have access to sign up.

The group sizes are small (7-8 people supported) for now. They hope to increase this to 15-20,



or more, per outing, depending on the response from people served and staff recruitment.

So far, they have gone to the Night to Shine Tim Tebow prom and an ARC dance. A Light It Up Blue event, Earth Day celebration, Easter party, and Wii Night at Services for Independent Living are coming soon.

The new service has already made a positive impact on people in the program.

“Individuals we support got the opportunity to do things they have never been able to do! Family members are very happy, too. One mother had a chance to go

out for a few hours and enjoy some alone time, something she rarely gets to do,” Bell says.

And it doesn't hurt that they are having fun.

“The ARC dance was fun and the prom was fantastic!” Bell continues.

The service allows for transportation as well. Individuals don't have to worry about getting to and from the activity. All they need to do is sign up.

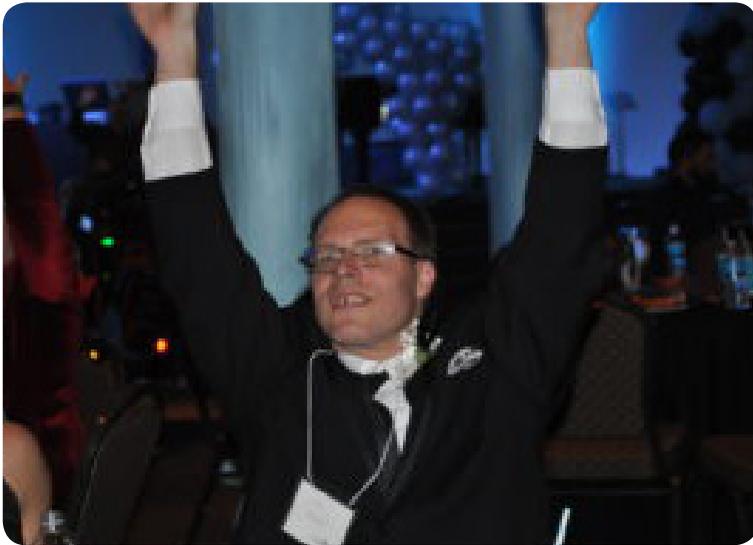
Bell says, “We are very excited to offer this service. We feel like it will make a real difference in peoples' lives.”

*Individuals we support got the opportunity to do things they have never been able to do.*



At a Night to Shine

## A NIGHT TO SHINE LIVES UP TO ITS NAME



**A** Night to Shine was just that for many people here in Columbia.

On February 10th, the Tim Tebow Foundation provided the ultimate prom experience for 75,000 people with disabilities at more than 375 churches around the world, including Columbia's Compass Evangelical Free Church. ([learn more here](#))

This wasn't just any ole party. It was and is THE party.

"It was awesome. Everyone is still talking about it!" Community Living (CL) Manager Brenda Wilson said.

For weeks, many in Community Living prepared for the big night by shopping for the perfect outfit and then anxiously awaiting the big night.

It definitely lived up to its name. Every detail was perfectly coordinated. Local volunteers worked countless

hours decorating and preparing for the event. By the end of the night, every single person felt like royalty.

"One can only imagine all the work that went behind this event to make it so perfect," says CL Manager Lynette Austin.

As they walked in, everyone was greeted by a red carpet, paparazzi snapping pictures, and an avalanche of blue and grey balloons.

Each partygoer was paired with a buddy, ready to dance the night away and be at his or her every beck and call.

Hair, makeup, and shoeshine stations were set up and ready to pamper.

There was also a corsage and boutonniere station, karaoke, a DJ, dancing, limo and trolley rides, a photo booth, and food galore.

"Chick-Fil-A sandwiches and salads, snack mixes, bagels, rolls, fruits, chocolate covered strawberries, gourmet candies, and a giant table display of every blue candy imaginable. If you left hungry, it was your own fault," Austin.

At the end of the night, everyone was crowned king or queen—a perfect ending to a perfect night.

"The Night to Shine was simply magical. It was better than any high school prom or college formal," says CL Manager Vicki Shulte.

Days later everyone who attended is still raving about the dance. They're already planning for the next year.

Heath, supported in ACT's Community Living and Day Program, said, "I danced with my buddy, ate great food, and rode in a limo... it was the best night of my life!"

*His enthusiasm  
for learning  
has not faded.  
He takes on  
extra training  
whenever he can.  
He is now MRI  
and Helicopter  
Pad Certified.*

# CRUSHED RED RESTAURANT ACT'S NEWEST COMMUNITY PARTNER

As Crushed Red, the “Artisan Fast” restaurant, was preparing to open, Career Specialist Amber Sartain swooped in to introduce them to ACT Career Services (ACS).

“I heard about how Crushed Red was having walk-in interviews. So I called and asked if I could come in for a different kind of interview. I briefly explained ACS and they put me on their schedule to come in,” Sartain explains.

Then two weeks after the restaurant opened an individual ACS supports got an interview with Rob Lukitsch, a minority owner. Now she has a job there and is thriving.

Crushed Red opened last September at 2540 Broadway Bluffs Drive in Columbia. It is a fast-casual dining experience featuring pizza and chopped salads.

“It has been great to work with ACT,” Likitsch says. “We believe in giving people a chance if they fit our system. She has proven herself to be a reliable asset to our team.”

ACS Job Coaches report that the Crushed Red managers are “very quick to respond to any needs from the employees and are very understanding.”

“Rob has been a great partner. The individual hired there really enjoys the environment and other employees,” Sartain says.

We think this can be attributed to the supportive and thorough management style.

Sartain adds, “Rob takes time to stop and see how things are going, as well.”

Employee success is almost guaranteed with this type of leadership.

Welcome to Columbia Crushed Red. Thank you for being a valuable community partner.



## 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!

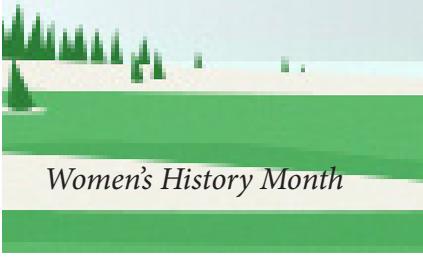
JustGive makes donating to charitable organizations easy. Go to their website and search Alternative Community Training to donate. You can even pick to give one time, monthly, or to put on a registry.

Thank you for supporting ACT!

## MARCH IS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES MONTH!



# MARCH



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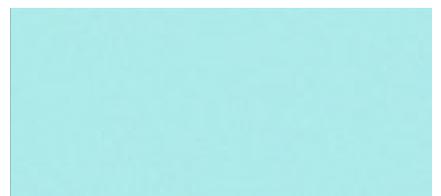
13 14 15 16 17 18 19

*Disability Rights  
Legislative Day  
State Capitol*

20 21 22 23 24 25 26

*First Day of  
Spring*

27 28 29 30 31



# APRIL



1 2

*Light It Up  
Blue  
1PM—3PM  
Faurot Field*

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Check our Twitter [@ACTofCoMo](#) and our Facebook [fb.com/ACTofCoMo](#) for more details

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## GETCONNECTED

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