Dear Friends of ACT,

I want to bring your attention to a new addition to our web site and newsletter.

Thanks to Tara Shade, we’ll be offering a tip each month that we believe will help the people we serve, their families, and the whole community. This month “A Tip from Tara” is about using visual supports to improve understanding and communication. You can find it here. I hope you’ll read what she has to offer.

You can also find it on our blog at www.actservices.org/blog or in the newsletter mailed to your home.

Tara manages ACT’s In-Home Services. She and her team work to develop and implement proactive strategies, like the visual supports featured in this month’s tip; and provide training to individuals, their families and support staff on how to utilize these supports to develop daily living skills and overcome challenging behavior.

Not only do I want to thank Tara for her ongoing work and for offering these Tips, I want to brag on her, too. She, like many employees at ACT, possesses a very high level of skill and knowledge that grows out of education, experience, or a combination of the two.

She’s also passionate. Dedicated. Fully engaged. To borrow a phrase from the poker table, she’s all in.

Yes, ACT is a fee for service agency. We provide services under contract with funding sources. But we are more. We have an obligation to help people in our community in ways that extend beyond a list of deliverables in a business agreement.

That’s why I’m pleased to introduce you to “A Tip from Tara.” It gives me another chance to remind everyone, by example, that my colleagues here are a tremendous resource. They are delivering on their commitments at a level and pace that at times simply amazes me.

Until next month,

Mark Hassemer
Executive Director, ACT
Communication can at times be difficult for all people. Many people receiving services at ACT often have difficulty understanding spoken communication from others and frequently have problems knowing what is or is not happening during their day and why changes occur in their routine.

Some individuals may have difficulty switching from one activity to the next and understanding how to complete multiple-step tasks.

For some individuals even the simplest directions can come and go too quickly for them to process and understand. A visual support can help an individual understand the message and assist the individual in learning to be independent in completing tasks.

Many individuals with developmental disabilities have strong visual skills, and these strengths can be capitalized on with the use of visual supports.

Visual communication tools such as photographs, picture symbols, social stories, daily schedules and choice boards can provide the support necessary to greatly improve an individual's understanding and ability to communicate, helping individuals to be more active, independent and successful participants in their community.

The following websites have several great resources and “how-to” information on using visual supports:

- www.do2learn.com
- www.kidaccess.com/index.html
- http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits

A Tip from Tara: Visual Support

Example of a visual support

Materials you may need to make a visual support:

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  

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

— Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed by former President George H.W. Bush
Switch from State to Local Case Management Benefits Individuals in ACT’s Community Living Program

Starting October 1st, individuals served by ACT’s Community Living are benefiting from a big change in how their services are coordinated. This move shifts TCM (Targeted Case Management) away from the State agency and brings it home, right here to Boone County.

For many years, Boone County Family Resources (BCFR) provided case management only to persons who live in their natural home or in a residence managed by BCFR. Now, those who receive services from ACT’s Community Living will receive service coordination provided by BCFR, too.

This change is good.

Melissa Jones, Assistant Director at the Central Missouri Regional Office of the Department of Mental Health assured individuals, families, and guardians that the change would not affect the type, amount, or way they presently received services. Only the source of those services would change.

But we believe case management will not be the same. We think that because it is closer, it will be better.

Case managers help people with disabilities get access to services, a broad variety of services. ACT provides some of those services, and offers feedback and input. The more these two roles are in sync, the more effective the services and supports are to the individual who needs them.

With this new arrangement, individuals will have more frequent and close interaction with their support coordinators. And help can be even more customized, tailored more precisely to the very specific needs, desires, and preferences of each person.

We also expect to see approvals for new services occur more quickly. Moving swiftly in some situations helps everyone avoid circumstances that result in more complications, and ultimately, costs.

Again, this change is good. But it was not as easy to accomplish as simply flipping a switch.

BCFR had to reorganize to offer this expanded management function.

Continued on p. 4 . . .

“IT gives me a deep, comforting sense that things seen are temporal and things unseen are eternal.”

— Helen Keller
They added a new team of Support Coordinators and created a new position for Keeley Long, formerly a case manager, she will now serve as a Services Coordinator Supervisor. The Support Coordinators have also been working to get to know each individual in the Community Living program.

BCFR’s Community Living Support Coordinator Joanie Chenault says, “The collaboration with ACT has been very smooth so far. Clients are excited and staff are very accepting. Our Support Coordinators have been meeting individuals in their homes and introducing themselves.”

Long adds, “I am very excited about the new relationships we will build with individuals and staff!”

“There is a learning curve in getting to know the individuals and learning the additional supports they could use. Naturally, we want to get it all done at once...but it takes time. We feel a sense of urgency!” Chenault says.

“The best is yet to come!” offered Keeley Long. “ACT provides great support. Along with the great services BCFR provides, and the forward-thinking initiative of both of these agencies, a great pairing is made for the individuals receiving supports.”

We at ACT couldn’t be more enthusiastic about this new opportunity!

## Applebee’s Diverse Workforce

National Disability Employment Awareness Month was highlighted in our last newsletter. Executive Director Mark Hassemer expressed the tremendous value for businesses to tap into this cohort. It is so important to look beyond the disability to see the ability these individuals can bring to a workforce. Applebees in Columbia, Missouri is one business that can vouch to this.

Andrea Key started working at Applebees after receiving services from ACT Career Services. She has now worked there for 8 months filling vital roles. Her main duty is portioning items such as vegetables and pastas but she also cleans as needed.

General Manager Troy Wieberg says “[Andrea] fits really well into the system. The employees love having her here.” Wieberg describes her as one of those employees that is willing and happy to work a 10-hour day if she is needed.

Wieberg couldn’t stress enough the value of having someone there to keep things clean and to portion the food. When things get busy in the restaurant industry, these two things become vital and Andrea is on point.

Assistant General Manager Rhonda Burry exclaims, “Andrea’s doing very well and she brightens our day. She is punctual and ready to work!”

Andrea shares the same enthusiasm and satisfaction. “I really like working at Applebee’s and hope I get more hours some day,” she states. “I like all the people I work with at Applebee’s. They are all nice to me.”

Andrea is an employee that will go above and beyond to get the job done and is a joy to be around. Sounds like every manager’s dream!
Community Integration Promotes Fitness as Fun!

We all know the importance of physical activity. This is a priority in the Community Integration (CI) program where many individuals have personal goals for physical activity. Every week, the schedule of activities offered provides lots of opportunities for different types of exercise that can help reach these goals.

Each team has a physical activity as a choice on the daily schedule either in the morning or afternoon. Resources in the community are frequently used. In addition, each program area at the ACT headquarters has supplies available that provide options for movement and exercise for groups that are staying in.

A Richard Simmons workout video, stretching exercises, dance party CD, and games like Simon Says and foam balls are sure to get everybody moving. “It is important to make physical activity fun and I often find ways to disguise it,” says Sheila Robertson, Activities Coordinator. “These activities are a great way to start the day and help with the morning transition from home to ACT.”

In-house, dance parties are a huge hit! These are held often to meet the demand. So when there was a chance to have a certified Zumba fitness instructor come to ACT recently and lead a work-out, it was a no-brainer. Many enjoyed an afternoon of fun learning dance moves to energizing music.

For those that choose to get their exercise out in the community, there are more than enough options. Walking at parks and nature trails are almost always on the schedule during good weather. So are opportunities to play outdoor games like washers, t-ball, badminton, and basketball. When the weather doesn’t cooperate, many individuals enjoy walking at area malls.

In addition, ACT has a great relationship with the YMCA in Jefferson City. Groups enjoy swimming and walking on the track and treadmill at least 2 times a week. The Armory in Columbia provides a popular spot where basketball, volleyball, kickball, and open gym are scheduled 2 times a week as well.

Some of the seniors in CI participate at the senior center and find it to be a great place for them to get their heart rate up. A beginner aerobics class is not only fun, but a great way to make new friends.

Sheila says among all of the fitness options, basketball and swimming are the most requested. It goes to show that when movement for fitness reasons is enjoyed with friends and varied, it is fun!

Another key component to fitness, healthy eating, is also a common theme for CI activities. Watch for a future story about how the topic of good food choices and better nutrition is included in activity programming.

“Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn’t mean he lacks vision.”

— Stevie Wonder
Imagine as technology changes and the ‘latest thing’ is released, what happens to all of the old stuff? What do people do with their obsolete VHS tapes, DVDs, CDs, and their cases? Many send them to our ACT Works program where we break these items down and recycle certain reusable plastic parts. We receive single donations to truck loads from major US companies like American Airlines, HBO, Hewlett Packard, and university libraries.

Where do we store these items? We have had such success in receiving media materials that we have had to outsource the storage of these items. Rust & Martin, located just west of Columbia at Midway, once housed the nearly 600 gaylords of materials free of charge. When the company decided to sell this building, we had to find a new space.

It took several days, many employees, and semi-truck trailers from FedEx to complete the move to Colt Railroad and Transload, just down the road from ACT.

The value of having a storage space is tremendous. When shipments come in, they go straight to what we call “the warehouse”. Here our deliveries are managed, and if you can imagine how many shipments we receive, this is tremendous. Colt is also located right next to the railway. This opens up another avenue to receive shipments.

Trips are taken back and forth to the warehouse. Materials to be recycled are picked up and taken back to ACT to start the recycling process. Once finished, the final product is taken back to the warehouse to be stored.

The vast storage space and amount of materials housed here is overwhelming, but is job security for those that work in the ACT Works program. Those that send their materials to us are simply getting rid of these unused media items to make room for the new. To the individuals at ACT, it means a paycheck.

Have media materials you would like to send us? Here is what you do:
1. Donors pack their own box with VHS tapes, CDs, and/or DVDs (and their storage cases)
2. Donors ship their donations to us at 2200 Burlington, Columbia MO 65202. If the donation will be shipped by freight, please contact ACT at 800-359-4607.
3. Our workers inventory the donation and in about a month a receipt is sent to the donor.
4. Workers degauss and disassemble videotapes. They also sort and separate CDs, DVDs, and cases by their plastic type.
5. The plastic is then ground into little pieces.
6. The ground plastic is sold to manufacturers for use in making new products.
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.

Upcoming Events

November 9th Community Network Training at Boone County Family Resources
November 11th Veteran’s Day ACT is open
November 15th America Recycles Day
November 21st Great American Smokeout
November 28th-29th ACT’s facility based programs and corporate offices closed for Thanksgiving

For more events, please check out actservices.org/about-us/events
GET CONNECTED
Come follow us on social media:

http://www.actservices.org
ACTofCoMo
ACTofCoMo

CONTACT US
ACT
2200 Burlington
Columbia, MO 65202
1-800-359-4607
1-573-474-9446