

# interACTION



Alternative Community Training

October 2012

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## Dear Friends of ACT,

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

Last month I discussed looking forward to October, in which we celebrate Disability Awareness month. I mentioned the challenge issued by the U.S. Department of Labor and their theme for the month, "A strong workforce is an inclusive workforce: What can YOU do?"

Here's one thing that we're doing..

STEP - Seamless Transition through Enhanced Partnership is the name of a new venture in which ACT is a proud member.

STEP is designed to provide students with disabilities who are at risk of unemployment or underemployment following high school graduation with career exploration, job skills and training, volunteer opportunities, and employment placement opportunities through the contributions of the local partners.

The partners include ACT, Boone County Family Resources, Columbia Public Schools, the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the host site Boone Hospital Center.

In this inaugural year six student interns began their school year not at one of our public schools, but rather at Boone Hospital Center. A classroom teacher and aide from the School District are assigned to the program. Personnel from ACT and Boone County Family Resources provide additional support.

During the first few weeks of the program the interns visited various departments throughout the hospital. They became familiar with the layout, learning where to eat lunch and access other places important to fit in the routine of the hospital. The interns applied for internship positions, were interviewed, and finally selected for a work experience.

The interns will begin and end their day in a "transition center" at the hospital where they will discuss their experiences and learn other related skills necessary for their success.

Although we've just started this exciting venture, we're encouraged by the early experiences and remain optimistic about future success. The interns will be totally immersed in the work experience provided by the hospital, gaining valuable and marketable skills throughout the year-long internship. The goal will be integrated, competitive employment at, or before, the conclusion of the internship.

It is our intent to expand this program by seeking other host businesses in future years. For now, this is a good first STEP!

Until next month,

Mark Hassemer  
Executive Director, ACT



## Skillful Action by Community Integration Groups Leads to Duck Rescue

What would you do in the event of an injury you didn't know how to fix?

- Use what you have to stabilize the injured one.
- Prevent further harm.
- Call for help from trained professionals.

That's exactly what two Community Integration groups did recently. They were planning to watch the geese at Stephens Lake Park, but their visit was interrupted by a rapidly approaching duck.

Surprisingly, the duck's leg, which had been tangled in fishing line, fell off right in front of them!

Individuals and staff acted quickly to safely retrieve the



duck so it could be treated. They recovered the leg using a rubber glove and called the Conservation Department to report the incident and seek help.

Conservation officials had received several reports about the duck

with the entangled leg. But no one had been able to lure the duck in for treatment like the group of 13 individuals and staff from ACT.

Led by Lynna Jones along with Ron and Tasha, everyone stayed calm and acted on their concern for the injured animal.

The outcome of the Conservation Department's actions is still not known. But we do know that the duck is alive and well.

Everyone involved had an amazing and unusual experience—and they got an unforgettable lesson in the importance of first aid, contacting the proper authorities and always remaining aware of your whereabouts and the circumstances surrounding you. ■

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“A person who is severely impaired never knows his hidden sources of strength until he is treated like a normal human being and encouraged in his own life.”

— *Helen Keller*

## ACT Community Living Welcomes Nicole Thomason, Behavior Consultant



Nicole Thomason

“He has no limitations. He can do what he wants.” That’s what one mom said about her son who, once unable to write, is now writing his name, writing phrases, and expressing an emerging artistic talent through his drawings.

Nicole Thomason, ACT Community Living’s newest Behavior Consultant, says this is one of the most gratifying examples of how the work she does really benefits individuals.

She had been working with this child and his family for a couple years when a job change interrupted their work together, but when she started working at ACT, they were reunited. It was at this time she was able to see that during the year she had not seen him the foundation work she had begun was now producing results, the type of results she wants to see in the individuals she now supports at ACT.

Though not limited to this age range, she currently works with children, most of whom are experiencing general compliance issues. When parents ask them to do something, Nicole works with them so they can follow through and comply.

She works weekly with most of the children, typically in their homes, developing and implementing strategies for accomplishing their behavior goals. This often includes training parents about what to do and how to do it. Family-based reward systems are a frequently-used tool, customized to the needs of each individual.

Nicole is particularly excited about her new role at ACT because it allows her to develop the protocols for the individuals she supports, not just implement them.

Nicole has a degree in child development and education from Mizzou. In the past, she has worked at Boone County Family Services and the Thompson Center. She comes to ACT most recently from Head Start in Columbia.

Nicole completed her training in June and started work at ACT in July. She also supports individuals as a Personal Assistant through ACT’s Personal Assistant Program.

We’re excited to have her on our team at ACT Community Living. ■

## How to Donate Recyclable Media to ACT

It seems like everyone wants to know, “How do I donate my media to ACT?”

Here’s how:

Check your media. We recycle CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, and the storage cases for these disks and tapes.

(Contrary to some mis-information out there, we cannot accept food containers. Please don’t ship them to us. Thank you!)



Packaging ground plastic for shipping

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Pack & ship. Put your recyclable material in a box and ship it to us at:

ACT Recycles  
2200 Burlington  
Columbia, MO 65202

We ask that you pay all shipping costs.

We do not have any satellite shipping locations in other parts of the U.S.

Call to coordinate. If the material you're sending will be shipped in a load that's larger than four (4) pallets, please call us toll free to coordinate delivery.

The toll-free number is: (800) 359-4607

Return information. If you include your name and address in the package you send, we'll send you an acknowledgement of your donation.

Make a claim. You can deduct the reasonable market value of your donation from your taxes.

Keep your receipt for shipping and other expenses you incurred to make the donation. These are tax-deductible, too.

No fees. If you've ever tried to recycle VHS tapes you know that the dis-assembly process is labor-intensive.

As a result, almost every recycling service charges a processing fee.

We don't. If you send us VHS tapes, we'll dis-assemble them at no charge, recover the recyclable materials, and provide paid employment for individuals with disabilities.

Your donation counts. So please donate and help spread the word that ACT Recycles!

We don't do any advertising. But we've been fortunate to get coverage of our recycling work from Woman's Day magazine, Hints from Heloise, and O, the Oprah magazine.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, we receive donations from all 48 of the contiguous United States. Occasionally, we get a donation from Alaska.

People call us from all over the world. We get calls from England, and one especially memorable call from Moosejaw, Saskatchewan.

Over the years we've received many donations from organizations like American Airlines, HBO, University of Virginia Library Systems, UPS, and the St. Louis library.

Thank you to all of our donors, large and small. Your donations make a difference. ■

## Join ACT in Observing National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Workplaces that welcome the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, are a critical part of efforts to build an inclusive community and strong economy. In this spirit, ACT is recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month throughout October to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of individuals with disabilities.

Held annually, National Disability Employment Awareness Month is led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

We encourage employers of all sizes and in all industries to participate in NDEAM.

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first

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week in October each year “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1962, the word “physically” was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

“Employers who ensure that inclusive

workplace policies and practices are woven into the fabric and culture of the organization create an environment that encourages all workers — including those of us with disabilities — to work to their full capacity and contribute fully to the organization’s success,” said Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy when announcing this year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month theme, which is “A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?”

Watch Secretary Martinez’ inspiring message about NDEAM and the measurable effects of inclusive employment here. She affirms that “we all have a role to play and a benefit to gain from increasing employment opportunities of people

with disabilities.”

For specific ideas about how you can support National Disability Employment Awareness Month, visit the ODEP website at [www.dol.gov/odep/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/). You’ll see suggestions that range from simple, such as putting up a poster (shown above), to comprehensive, such as implementing a disability education program. Regardless, all play an important part in fostering a more inclusive workforce, one where every person is recognized for his or her abilities — every day of every month.

If you missed it last month, please go back and read here Executive Director Mark Hassemers’ summary of the Walgreen’s Distribution Center study that demonstrates a strong business case for including individuals with disabilities in the workforce. ■

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 12 - New Hire Orientation at the Training Center.

November 12 - Therap/Documentation Training at the Training Center.

November 13 - Medication administration training at the Training Center.

November 14 - Positive Behavior Support training at the Training Center.

November 15 - Medication administration training at the Training Center.

November 15 - Medication administration refresher training at the Training Center.

November 16 - CPR/First Aid at the Training Center.

November 29 - “Evening of the Arts”, 2200 Burlington, Columbia, MO in the Kitchen Area.

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

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