



INSIDE:

- Board gets parent's perspective
- Apartment program grows
- Fundraising effort launched

inter **ACT** ion

Winter 2004

Alternative Community Training

RECYCLING CREW *popular on campus*

ACT's relationship with the University of Missouri-Columbia is getting better and better thanks to the work of an ACT recycling crew.

This past March through May ACT sent a recycling crew to pick up bottles, cans, and paper in three dormitories.

That work led to interest by the College of Education which has allocated \$16,800 for contracted work with the ACT recycling and cleaning crew.

"That's a big chunk of money," says Jim Williams, director of facility-based services. Moreover ACT received \$6,800 from the A.P. Green Foundation to help the recycling program. "It's money to help it grow," says Williams. Money can go for many items—from advertising and T-shirts, to paying the salary of a crew supervisor. "It's another project that we hope will make the program grow."

The College of Education now has the crew gather recyclables and do cleaning in Townsend Hall and two other locations.

"Because it was a nice, remodeled building they wanted to do things the normal house-keeping crew wasn't attending to." As a result, ACT's crew now cleans blackboards and does other detail cleaning in eight classrooms. The crew also changes out artwork in 75 paintings by school-age children.

Now Chris, Billy and Charles recycle and clean College of Education buildings on Tuesday and Friday every week.

"It's going very well," says Chris Mick, job coach who directs the cleaning crew. "These guys are so good at their job. They do it so quick."

Mick says there are many positive aspects to doing the campus cleaning. "It's great to be on campus," he says. The location provides a lot of interaction between the crew members

and faculty members and students in the buildings they clean. Charles, in particular, benefits because previously he worked on a crew that cleaned after hours. Now "Charles can see people and talk to them."

ACT also may provide shredding services to the College. More work, too, is in the future when a group of college employees moves to the College's Hill Hall.

In addition to the College of Education work, Williams hopes to get more recycling work from the university's dormitories.

There's potential "to have a crew there every day working three to four hours a day."

There's also potential from other colleges and departments. "The College of Education has told others what we're doing in their buildings and other departments have said maybe we'll have them come over here."

The recycling and cleaning project "has potential," adds Williams. "Hopefully if it goes well enough we'll have three or four crews over there every day." If so the help is ready, says Mick. "There's a lot of work to be done and we've got the guys to do it."

'Tis the season to help Santa.



The holiday season brings to light needs for many ACT participants. A few no longer receive family support.

This year, consider contributing to ReachOut, the special giving program that will directly help ACT clients.

ReachOut was established a couple of years ago to help ACT participants or programs. This time of year, you're contributions can help Santa.

Contributions can be designated for:

- Holiday gifts
- A Christmas tree
- ACT's annual holiday party

With your contributions you'll be Santa to many. Consider making your ReachOut contribution today. Just use the enclosed envelope and designate how you'd like to see your gift used.



PUZZLE WHIZ. Dennis, who is part of the Community Integration program, works intensely on a complex puzzle. He's in the new facility for the day program, located directly across the street from the ACT facility. The new space was necessitated by significant growth in the day program.

New board member brings

PARENT PERSPECTIVE

It's difficult for Susanne Carter to raise her 22-year-old son Darwin. Severely disabled, Darwin's needs are many. But that doesn't stop Carter from loving and raising Darwin.

The reality of raising children with disabilities is one point of view that Carter will bring to ACT as the newest member of the board of directors.

Carter is a grant writer in the College of Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She has spent more than 25 years teaching and working in the field of education. In addition to being a freelance writer, she also serves as a consultant to the Western Regional Resource Center and the Consortium for Alternative Dispute Resolution in Special Education.

She has published several essays in *The Exceptional Parent* and other journals about the experiences of raising a severely disabled son. She was active in the Delmar Cobble State School PTO during Darwin's nine years at the school.

As a regular lecturer to students, she presents the "real view" of what it's like to raise a child like Darwin, she says. She brings "the family perspective. What it's like to have someone like Darwin who will never grow up and be dependent in one way or another for life. It's a reality check."

That same reality check is what she hopes to contribute to the board of directors. Her input will be straightforward and honest, she adds. "I don't hesitate to tell it like it really is. I'm pretty honest about Darwin. When people



QUIET MOMENT. New board member Susanne Carter enjoys a restful moment with her son Darwin who is part of the Community Integration Program.

start using euphemisms that bothers me. You know a spade's a spade. Darwin's a "terrible two" forever; let's just face it."

Carter says she'll be an advocate for ACT's clients and families. "I think I can be a tactful advocate," she says. "I think I have kind of a balanced view—Darwin's needs and what the needs are for everybody else."

Darwin is part of ACT's Community Integration Program two days per week. He was introduced to ACT just before he graduated from Delmar Cobble State School.

The key to Darwin's successful transition to ACT has been Charlie Burge, program manager, Carter explains. "Charlie is key. He's just

a good guy.

He's got a big heart. I just can't say enough good about Charlie."

The staff at ACT, "are very loving and supportive," she adds. "They've always worked with us and listened to us."

For other ACT clients and families, the staff is "very responsive," says Carter. "It's really a nurturing, caring environment."

Her positive experiences with ACT for the past year led her to want to return something to the organization. "I'm so grateful that I feel I should give something back. Darwin is part of the ACT family and I'd like to feel part of the family too."

BUSINESS PROFILE BG Service Solutions

For more than a decade, BG Service Solutions has been a partner with ACT. The cleaning firm has hired many ACT clients through the Community Employment Program.

"It's beneficial for both parties," says Gus Craig, manager of the Columbia operation. "And it's not a minimum wage situation either."

He adds that "we try to help folks get in and they grow like our regular folks do. In fact, unless you tell some of our regular folks they

WIN-WIN SOLUTION.

"It's beneficial for both parties," says Gus Craig, manager of BG Service Solutions about his firm's employment of ACT clients over the past 10 years.



don't know these are ACT clients and that's good. That's our goal—to incorporate them in our family and to our business."

Currently BG Service Solutions has three ACT clients. One client—Barb—has been with BG 10 years. Barb works the day shift at the University of Missouri-Columbia Quarterdeck office building. It's Barb's job to touch up bathrooms, help clean up after lunch and make sure things are stocked. "That way people can concentrate on what they do best," says Craig.

The University of Missouri-Columbia is also the work site for Carlos and Bobby who also participates in the Community Employment program.

In addition to employing three individuals, BG Service Solutions also helps in the job assessment phase of the employment program. The work sites that BG Service Solutions contracts with cooperate with ACT to allow assessments to occur. "Even if we don't get the employees, that location is there to assess the client's skills and determine if they're ready to be placed or need additional training."

Craig's firm looks forward to working with others in the future. "Anybody can do any task if they have the proper frame of mind and that's what we've found," says Craig. "The folks are very willing to work and want to work. Given the right circumstances and surroundings they'll do great."

New community employment manager named

Trina Almond doesn't think small. The new Community Employment manager has two "big ideas" in the works after only a short time on the job.

"I'm really excited about the potential of this program," the Blackwater, MO native says. "Hopefully there are tools I can bring to it that will help it grow and become the premier program in the region."

One top goal of hers is to develop a marketing plan for the program. "We've got some great opportunities to grow our caseload significantly. Right now our program is not very well known. It's a matter of marketing ourselves to the right audience. She plans to develop consumer-driven, funder-driven, and employer-driven marketing strategies. Initially, she plans to develop a communications strategy among staff and then get it out into the community.

"It's such a great program. The community just needs to know it."

A second big idea of Almond's is to develop a job coach training program. Over the next month she plans to accompany job coaches to

learn what good job training requires.

Almond came to ACT from Nashville, TN, where she was a compliance specialist for Dreams Come True, Inc. Before that she worked for the Tennessee Microboards Association as an intern and statewide field organizer. She provided technical assistance to families and individuals with disabilities in founding and operating a non-profit provider agency of supported living, supported employment, and personal assistance programs.

She says she is glad to be working in Missouri because of the state's philosophy of support to those with disabilities. "Being in a state like Missouri where they empower people is a big advantage. It's very good to be here and have this type of atmosphere."

She adds that she also appreciates being a part of ACT. "My very first impression was just the way they do business. It's individualized and they care about the people here."

Almond earned a B.S. in Psychology and Therapeutic Recreation from Missouri Western State College. She earned an M.Ed. in Hu-



NEW TO THE TEAM. Joining ACT's management team is Trina Almond, manager of the Community Employment Program. One top goal of hers is to develop a marketing plan for the program.

man, Organizational & Community Development from Vanderbilt University. She and her husband Aron are the parents of a 16-month-old son, Jaron.

Day of Caring brightens two homes

Sixteen caring people helped brighten the homes and lives of several ACT clients this fall. The 16 volunteers were part of the United Way Day of Caring.

The work crew, all from the Harry S Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital, worked from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. one fall afternoon.

"They did a lot and they made me tired just watching them," says Amanda Harms, program manager in the Community Living Program. The workers put in a flower bed and cleaned out an entire fence row at the Community Living home on Pecos.

When it began to rain, the crew packed up, split into two groups and moved to homes on Briarcrest Ct. and Thurman St. There they painted four rooms.

The work helps ACT clients many ways, says Harms. Many of the homes' residents were able to help the volunteers. "Having the people improve how the house looks does a lot for the residents," she says. "It increases the amount of confidence the clients have and helps them be proud of their home."

By interacting with the clients the volunteers also benefit, she adds. "It's a two-way street. The clients "got to make their homes a better place and the volunteers got to see who they were helping. They feel like their work was appreciated and it certainly was."

New fundraising effort launched

ACT has begun a new way to help serve its clients—fundraising. Chris Edwards, an ACT employee with 18 years of experience in development, is heading up the effort.

While Edwards' primary duties are supervising three homes in the Community Living Program, he's also getting the development effort off the ground.

"I'm very excited about it," he says. "I'm very excited about getting the program up and going. I've got 18 years of experience so I can put this together the way I'm accustomed."

The effort is from ground zero because ACT has not had a formal development program. "This is the first time we've really made a commitment to fundraising," he says. "It's a major change for us."

He adds that "we're the new kid on the block even though we've been here 30 years. It's certainly not anything we can't overcome but it's a new direction for us."

Edwards approach is "work very smart and systematically. We're working from the inside out." The initial audience includes current and past board members, client family members and vendors.

Already three goals have been established and are to be met by the end of the year. The goals are to:

- Submit a proposal to a foundation for \$28,500 to purchase a barcode system to be used in ACT's new fulfillment service.
- Send out a year-end mailing before Thanksgiving
- Make a \$45,000 request to a foundation to purchase a van that is adapted with a lift.

The purpose of all efforts is to benefit ACT's clients, Edwards reminds. "This allows our clients to do things they otherwise couldn't do. The more income we have the more we can give back to our clients."

More resources also can result in hiring more individuals to ACT's Affirmative Industry Program.

"I'm extremely excited about it," Edwards says. "It's really an honor for me to give it a shot."

Four new clients in Community Living Program

Welcome Jonathan, Clarence, Katie and Brad to ACT. Each receives services through the Community Living Program.

Jonathan, who is known as Jon by his friends, has joined a roommate at the program's home on Pecos Ct..

"He's done a good job fitting into the Pecos house," says Amanda Harms, program manager for the Community Living Program. Jon currently attends Delmar Cobble State School.

"The staff and the other clients seem to get along with him," she adds.

"He likes them too. It's been a good fit."

Jon shares many interests, such as cars, with his roommate. "He's pretty excited and enthusiastic to try most things. He's always on the go."

Clarence "is very motivated and ambitious," says Chris Edwards, program manager. "He loves to work and he loves to work for money." Clarence resides at an ACT-managed home on Thurman St. He also participates in the Community Integration Program and the Affirmative Industry Program. His goal now is to work in the community through the Community Employment Program.

There's a good chance Clarence might end up

COSTUME CAPERS. Many ACT clients got into the spirit of Halloween during the annual Halloween party. Above, Clarence gets all wrapped up in becoming a mummy with a little help from Jodie. Right, Jonathan mugs the camera with Peggy.



with a cleaning job, says Edwards. "He loves housekeeping."

He also loves increased independence. "He wants to demonstrate that he's capable of being independent," says Edwards. "I see good things for him."

Joining ACT's apartment program are Katie and Brad. Katie began living on her own in August. She came from a supported living situation with roommates. However, "everyone felt it would be good for her to live more independently with staff support," says Sue Anderson, program manager for the apartment program.

According to Anderson, Katie "is the success story. She's just blossomed." Katie receives 10 hours per week of staff support, but other than that she's on her own. "She's really grown and loves it. She loves being



independent."

Brad also is in the apartment program having come to ACT from a Kirksville. Brad works at in the Affirmative Industry program. His goal is to work in the community through the Community Employment Program.

"He's learning that we're there to help him—help him pay his bills, help with medications," says Anderson. "He's doing well."

Bartelt named board president

ACT's board of directors has selected a new president and other officers.

Now serving as officers are: Rick Bartelt, of QuesTec, president; Bob Scribner, of Executive Advantage, vice president; and Susan Hart, of Huebert Builders, secretary/treasurer.

Bartelt replaces Jerry Braznell who has served on the board twice. In addition to his most recent service he joined the organization's first board in 1975. Scribner replaces Anna Hargis, director of advertising at Shelter Insurance Cos. She completed her second term on the board, having served from 1998 to 2004.

In addition to the new officers, Susanne Carter has joined the board for a three-year term. Carter is a grant writer for the College of Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She also is the parent of Darwin who participates in ACT's Community Integration Program.

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