The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council recently partnered with The Greater Kansas City Business Leadership Network (GKCBLN) on an initiative to support more individuals with disabilities to be hired in Missouri.

Inclusion has always been a complicated, sensitive issue for businesses and hiring professionals. In 2014, the Department of Labor passed a new law requiring that 7% of federal contractors’ workforce must be people with disabilities. Businesses needed an easier solution for inclusion.

After interviewing and surveying over 30 HR professionals from varying sized businesses, Trozzolo Communications Group discovered the solution was an online ‘job board’ – SHiFT – that goes beyond traditional job boards. It pre-qualifies candidates for jobs by matching candidates' capabilities with the job requirements. It hosts the entire hiring process, allowing businesses to track and report their inclusive efforts to the Department of Labor.

SHiFT officially launched for job seekers on November 29, and is expected to launch for businesses on January 4, 2017.

We are so excited to share this with everyone! If you have any questions, please contact us at 800-500-7878.

Please check out the website at http://shift.gkcbln.org/
Grassroots Advocacy News with Katheryne Staeger-Wilson

The Grassroots Advocacy Committee has kicked off their new five year strategic plan with a sincere focus to examine our targeted disparities and reduce racial inequity in our work.

The MODDC hired Katheryne Staeger-Wilson earlier in the year to focus on diversity outreach. Since her starting this newly developed position she has graduated from Georgetown University's Leadership Academy on Cultural Diversity and Linguistic Competence. She will continue to be mentored by a faculty member from the program for another year to reinforce her leadership knowledge and skills to advance the Council’s vision for cultural diversity and linguistic competence for our future work in Missouri. In addition, Staeger-Wilson has been invited to join the NACDD/ITACC Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural and Linguistic Competence Workgroup to support technical assistance activities for all Councils. Staeger-Wilson is excited about these opportunities to grow and learn from others and then infuse this knowledge into our endeavors in Missouri.

The Grassroots Advocacy Committee has been meeting with diverse community leaders throughout Missouri to learn about the cultural barriers people with disabilities experience. The Committee plans to assess these barriers and consider possible collaborations with diverse communities to reduce cultural barriers and create systems change.

In November, select MODDC members met with representatives from the Ferguson Commission for the first time to discuss the intersection of disability and racial inequities. Common interests and possible collaborations to create change were identified for future consideration. The Council is enthusiastic about the possibility of incorporating these new ideas to create change for Missouri.

The Grassroots Advocacy Committee will be kicking off a new demonstration project in January through the collaboration of our Missouri, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). The Missouri Youth Engagement Demonstration Project will engage youth with disabilities in leadership development and civic engagement experiences. In this inclusive opportunity, youth will afford the opportunity to gain an understanding and develop leadership skills that support them to take their place as active citizens in their communities.

Through participatory action research, youth both with and without disabilities will have a learning experience that teaches them skills on how to research and define a community based concern, design a project to address the concern, develop community support for the project, implement the project, and finally, evaluate the results of the project. Through participating in this learning experience, youth will gain knowledge and skills on how to:

* Collaborate with others and work as a team
* Conduct research
* Use research findings to identify a community concern
* Design a community action project
* Secure resources and develop community support
* Implement a community action project

We believe this 18 month project will provide youth an inclusive leadership experience; working with other youth and community leaders/partners to give back to their community while learning important skills they will utilize in their future employment and educational experiences. Through this demonstration project we hope we can build social capital by partnering with outside community organizations. We hope we can make these demonstration projects sustainable in the two diverse communities we select but we also hope to provide a foundational experience so that other communities will develop similar inclusive programming for youth throughout the state.
Financial exploitation of the elderly and disabled is a crime. It costs millions of dollars nationwide and destroys thousands of Missouri lives. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has launched a program called MOSAFE--Missourians Stopping Adult Financial Exploitation--to combat it. Financial exploitation occurs when someone illegally uses another person’s money or property for profit or gain.

MOSAFE educates financial institutions and you, as a consumer, on how to stop attempted or ongoing financial exploitation before a senior or disabled adult’s funds are depleted.

Emmy Award-winning actress Doris Roberts, best known for her role as nosy Marie Barone in TV’s Everybody Loves Raymond, narrates a video about how to stop this fast-growing crime. The video, consumer brochure and informative slide show will help consumers, the general public, and other professionals learn how to recognize and report financial exploitation. The materials can be viewed and/or downloaded from their site.

MOSAFE also provides a training kit to financial institutions and their employees on how to recognize and report this crime. The kit includes a video, brochure, PowerPoint presentation, resource manual and eight articles, which can also be viewed and/or downloaded from this site. A copy of the MOSAFE consumer or financial institution training kit may be obtained by completing this order form. If you suspect an elderly or disabled Missourian is being exploited financially, call our toll-free Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-0210.

For more information on MOSAFE, please contact the Department of Health and Senior Services via email at info@health.mo.gov or by phone at 573-526-4542.

Article courtesy of Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

http://health.mo.gov/seniors/mosafe/
Two State Representatives Support National Disability Employment Awareness Month

CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO (KFVS) - October had been designated as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Sad truth, but many people with disabilities have a hard time finding employment.

That's why the theme of this years NDEA Month is "Inclusion Works." There are many places of business that understand the talents people with disabilities have to offer to their workplaces. They believe including people with disabilities is a critical part of our nation's efforts to have inclusive communities and a strong economy.

In this spirit, Missouri State Rep. Kathy Swan and Missouri State Rep. Donna Lichtenegger have accepted the invitation of Kaitlyn Thompson to participate in National "Take your Legislator to Work Day." Monday, October 24, both state representatives will work with Kaitlyn from 10 a.m. to noon.

This is an initiative recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month by raising awareness about disability employment issues and celebrating the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities.

By attending work with Kaitlyn at her place of employment, Canine Clipz, and listening and learning about why having a job in her community is important to Kaitlyn and so many other Missourians, Representative Swan and Representative Lichtenegger are reinforcing the value and talent people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities and affirming the state of Missouri's commitment to an inclusive community. Kaitlyn has always wanted to work with animals and started working at Canine Clipz because of that.

Written by Jeff Cunningham, Anchor, KFVS News, Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Photos courtesy of Canine Clipz of Jackson, Missouri and Kaitlyn's mom, Traci Ritter.
3 St. Louis-Area Districts will Stop Suspensions for Preschoolers Through 3rd Grade

By Kristen Taketa St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Three school districts say they will end out-of-school suspensions in the next two years for preschoolers through third-graders and instead use social workers, behavioral health specialists and other services to reduce the need to discipline students. The announcement was made Sunday at an assembly at Maplewood-Richmond Heights High School for the Break the Pipeline campaign, an effort spearheaded by Metropolitan Congregations United to eliminate what it calls the “school-to-prison pipeline.” Maplewood-Richmond Heights promised to ban suspensions for young students in the next school year. Normandy and Ladue promise to ban them by the 2018-2019 school year. Even elementary school students are suspended for infractions that can range from failing to follow instructions to throwing chairs. Some experts say that out-of-school suspensions are not effective discipline in that they punish, but do not remedy the cause of the misbehavior, which often comes from trauma or poverty endured by students.

On top of that, a UCLA study released last year showed that Missouri has the biggest racial disparity when it comes to suspensions. Some experts say that out-of-school suspensions cause students to lose instruction time, fall behind further in their academic careers and become more likely to become incarcerated at some point in their lives. “When we remove them from the place, when we tell them they don’t belong, the impact of that decision stays with them,” said Felicia Pulliam, director of policy and community engagement at FOCUS St. Louis, a regional public policy foundation. They’re calling for an end to out-of-school suspensions, racial bias training for police and adequate counsel for juveniles in court, among other demands.

Maplewood-Richmond Heights has already had some wraparound services in place for years, such as Joe’s Place, a shelter for male homeless students to stay, and a student success center, where staff work with struggling students. The district is also conducting anti-racism staff training and racial equity audits of each of its schools, said Katie Kaufmann, vice president of the school board.

Meanwhile, Normandy is working on improving academics to reduce the need for discipline by implementing project-based learning and small-group instruction. “If kids are engaged, then we reduce the likelihood of kids misbehaving,” said Candice Carter-Oliver, an assistant superintendent for Normandy schools.

The district is also working to fill students’ basic needs by having washers and dryers in all schools, helping pay utility bills and partnering with Beyond Housing to address unemployment and housing security, Carter-Oliver added.

The district has trauma-informed training for staff, behavioral specialists from Barnes-Jewish in half of its schools, and a partnership with Parents as Teachers to stress early intervention for not just students but also their families.

St. Louis Public Schools is the only area district that has banned suspensions for a certain section of students. The district is three months into its ban on suspensions for preschoolers through second-graders. But the ban has been difficult to implement, said Stacy Clay, a deputy superintendent for the district, at Sunday’s event. “The reality is that we are challenged with keeping these students from their own behaviors, let alone other students who are in the building,” Clay said. He said that in a building of 300 students, it was hard to dedicate resources such as social workers and counseling to the one or two students. “We have certainly tried to address some of the broader issues of poverty and trauma,” Clay said. “But the reality of the school structure does not make it particularly easy to offer these additional services.”

He asked the audience for help in pressing for more funding for early childhood education and social-emotional programs for students and their families. Although more districts are now running early childhood programs, many are limited partly because there is no dedicated source of state funding for them. Seventeen other districts in St. Louis and St. Charles counties also sent representatives to Sunday’s event and said they would look at reducing suspensions for young students in the future.

Dozens march in Clayton for end to ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ They’re calling for an end to out-of-school suspensions, racial bias training for police and adequate counsel for juveniles in court, among other demands. Photo by David Carson, dcarson@post-dispatch.com.
We Just Had an Election. So...Who Are My State Representatives and State Senator? 
There is an (Web) App for That!

By Andrew Lackey, Public Policy Analyst

We just had an election on November 8th, and in addition to the president, congresspersons and senators, your state representatives and senators were elected too. Now that the election is over you might want to contact your new state representative or state senator to congratulate them or talk to them about a particular issue. But, how do you know which House or Senate district you are in? How do you find their contact information? What if the district you thought you were in changed, and you are in a new district now?

In the old days you would need to know your ZIP Code +4 to find out. Most of the time, when you send mail you don’t need the ZIP Code +4, just the ZIP Code, so many people may not remember it. But if you don’t know your ZIP Code +4 then you would have to contact the post office, or go online to find that. That’s a lot of extra steps to find your state legislators and how to contact them.

Lucky for us, the Office of Administration has a website where all you have to do is enter your standard address, and it will show you who your state legislators are and how to contact them. If you have a smart phone it’s even easier because all you have to do is go to the website, push a button, and if you are at home, then it will use the GPS in your phone to find your legislators for you. The GPS part only works when you are at or near your home. If you’re not home then the website will show you the legislator that represents where you are standing, which may not be your state senator or state representative. The link to the website is https://ogi.oa.mo.gov/LEGIS/legislativeDistrict/index.html. You can also find your county, school district, and representative in the US House. If you bookmark the website then you should always know how to get the contact information for your state elected officials.
Every year a group of Missouri organizations (Missouri Association of County Developmental Disability Services (MACDDS), The Arc of Missouri, People First of Missouri, along with the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC), produce a poster & bookmark celebrating inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in everyday life that will be displayed by schools, libraries, and other community organizations throughout the state. The group of organizations hosted a contest for an original design for the 2017 poster & bookmark from people with a developmental disability. A prize of $500 was awarded to the artist whose design has been chosen. Designs from previous years are available on the MODDC website www.moddcouncil.org. This year's winner's are:

AND THE WINNER'S ARE...

We are all unique and beautiful, but together we are a masterpiece.
**Be My Eyes! Lend Your Eyes to the Blind**

**Be My Eyes** makes life easier for people with a visual impairment by connecting them with sighted helpers through a smartphone app. This allows people with a visual impairment to handle big and small tasks, while the sighted get the joy of helping someone in need in an easy and informal way.

For you, it only takes a minute to choose the right can from the shelf, look at the expiration date on the milk or find the right thing to eat in the fridge. For the visually impaired, small domestic tasks are big challenges. Be My Eyes is changing that! It is the first app on the market, which allows people with a visual impairment to get in contact with sighted helpers via a direct video call. The system is built as a shuffle-call system that forwards the call until answered, establishing a connection to the first available helper. You simply download the app, register and then you are ready to help or receive help. To be able to download the application, you will need an IPhone 4 or newer. Check out their promotional video at: [www.bemyeyes.org/press/](http://www.bemyeyes.org/press/).

“It’s my hope that helping each other as an online community, Be My Eyes will make a big difference in the everyday lives of blind people all over the world.” Hans Jorgen Wiberg, Founder of Be My Eyes

Photos and article courtesy of [www.bemyeyes.org](http://www.bemyeyes.org), press page.
Missouri Assistive Technology’s **Swap 'n Shop** equipment exchange program is a free service designed to connect individuals looking to buy, sell, trade or donate durable medical equipment and assistive devices. Swap ‘n Shop is a person-to-person exchange program. Buyers and sellers are responsible for any purchase or sale agreements that take place, as well as determining the condition of the equipment and its appropriateness for the intended user. Buyers and sellers are responsible for all arrangements related to the viewing and exchange of equipment. Individuals interested in listing equipment or who have questions about the program, please contact David at (816) 655-6703 or by email at david.bkr@att.net.

Check out their website at: http://at.mo.gov/recycle-reuse/swap-n-shop-disclaimer.html.
MEXICO, MISSOURI — A formerly stray dog named Soldier is now helping veterans and their families when they needed it the most.

Initially taken in at the Garrett Animal Shelter in Fulton, Soldier was running out of time when the Puppies for Parole program at Algoa Correctional Center decided to give him a try.

“Our Puppies for Parole coordinator here at the institution contacted the Mexico Veterans Home and talked to them about the possibility of them wanting a house dog and they agreed,” said Louisa Bolinger, deputy warden of offender management at the center.

Bolinger and two veterans from the Mexico home made their way to Fulton to pick out a dog that could be trained and be adopted by staff at the veteran’s home. They chose a yellow lab/retriever mix and named him Soldier.

“We showed up there, and actually, Soldier was in one of the outside pens and at first he was scared of the two veterans,” Bolinger said.

Soldier found ball caps and motorized wheelchairs intimidating at the time of the visit. However, he was still selected as the house dog for the veteran’s home, but the home’s representatives said there was just something about him.

From there, Soldier was assigned to two offender handlers at the correctional center and participated in Canine Good Citizen training, an 8-10 week program for dogs in Puppies for Parole.

“He had a very sweet, genuine personality and he was very bright,” Bolinger said. “So we knew that he would be the perfect fit for the veteran’s home.”

Puppies for Parole was started in 2010 by Missouri Department of Corrections Director George Lombardi. Since then, the program has become a part of 19 out of the 21 correctional institutions in the state. More than 4,000 dogs have been saved, trained and adopted through the program.

It’s also not just puppies helping people.

“We have taken that (Fulton) from a high euthanization rate shelter to a zero euthanasia rate for adoptable dogs,” Bolinger said.

Lombardi said he started the program to help with the issue of puppy mills in the state. He said he’s seen the program give offenders a sense of compassion, while also bettering the atmosphere in correctional facilities.

“One of the things I didn’t foresee was the amazing fact that, as the program started, more than half the dogs at almost every prison were adopted by the staff of the prison,” Lombardi said. “So you can see where that would improve the relationship, in many ways, between staff and offenders.”

At the Mexico Veterans Home, residents are happy to have Soldier as a comfort companion.

Former Marine and resident Dwight Hudspeth has seen Soldier four-fives times a week for the last five years.

“No matter what kind of day you started off with, seeing Soldier come by, how he stops and likes to visit, greets, it makes your day. It brightens your whole day,” Hudspeth said. “I’ve been honored and blessed to be here; Soldier adds to that very greatly. I’ve been here six years - - I hope I’m here 15 - and I hope Soldier is with me every step of the way.”
PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING
DATES/LOCATIONS FOR 2017

FEBRUARY 3-4, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA
MARCH 3-4, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA
APRIL 7-8, CAPITOL PLAZA HOTEL JEFFERSON CITY
MAY 5-6, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA

JUNE 2-3, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA
JULY 7-8, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA
AUGUST 4-5, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA
SEPTEMBER 8-9, HILTON GARDEN INN COLUMBIA
SEPTEMBER 2016 COUNCIL MEETING
Wishing you peace, love and joy this Holiday Season!

Vicky Davidson  Andrew Lackey

Dolores Sparks  Katheryne Staeger-Wilson

Christie Holterman  Rebecca Bax

Chaz Nickolaus  Charlie German

Merry Christmas!
**Working With a Disability**

**Disability Benefits 101** gives you tools and information on health coverage, benefits, and employment. You can plan ahead and learn how work and benefits go together. Missouri Disability Benefits 101 is a tool that will allow you to see what will happen to your income, benefits and health coverage if you go to work.

- It is free, on-line, easy to use and Missouri specific and maintained.
- MO DB 101 allows a person to see how income from a job will affect their government benefits in real time.
- MO DB 101 is anonymous and completely confidential.
- Benefits and Work Calculator; designed for job seekers ages 18 to 65.
- School and work calculator; designed to help young people anticipate, navigate and plan for life situations and changes that can occur in late teens and 20’s.

Visit our site at: [www.db101.org](http://www.db101.org)

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**THE BASICS**

The possibility of work for people with disabilities is more of a reality than ever before. Many people with disabilities have meaningful jobs that they enjoy and are successful at doing.

With the right kind of training, preparation, and workplace accommodations, you can have a successful career.

DB 101 was developed through a cooperative project between the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council, Missouri Department of Mental Health, Office of Transformation, and maintained by Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health, Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities and Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation.
A CHRISTMAS QUIZ.....JUST FOR FUN!!

1. WHAT STORE HOSTS A HUGE PARADE EVERY THANKSGIVING?
   A. JCPENNY  B. MACY’S  C. WALMART

2. IN THE MOVIE A CHRISTMAS STORY, WHAT WAS THE DAD’S “MAJOR AWARD?”
   A. A BB GUN  B. A LEG LAMP  C. A DAY OFF

3. WHAT MOVIE FEATURING BING CROSBY AND FRED ASTAIR DANCING AND SINGING AT AN INN ONLY OPEN ON HOLIDAYS WAS THE FIRST TO FEATURE THE POPULAR TUNE WHITE CHRISTMAS?
   A. HOLIDAY INN  B. WHITE CHRISTMAS  C. CHRISTMAS IN CONNECTICUT

4. WHAT CHRISTMAS DESSERT IS MADE WITH MOLASSES?
   A. PLUM PUDDING  B. GINGERBREAD  C. CHEESECAKE

5. IN WHICH COUNTRY DOES SANTA LEAVE PRESENTS IN CHILDREN’S SHOES?
   A. FRANCE  B. THE NETHERLANDS (HOLLAND)  C. SWITZERLAND

6. IN NATIONAL LAMPOON’S CHRISTMAS VACATION, WHAT ANIMAL JUMPS OUT OF THE GRISWOLD’S CHRISTMAS TREE AND WREAKS HAVOC?
   A. A DOG  B. A SQUIRREL  C. A CHIPMUNK

7. CHARLES DICKENS’ A CHRISTMAS CAROL TAKES PLACE IN WHAT COUNTRY?
   A. UNITED STATES  B. GERMANY  C. ENGLAND

8. WHAT POPULAR CHRISTMAS SONG INCLUDES THE PHRASE, “IN THE AIR THERE’S A FEELING OF CHRISTMAS?”
   A. THE CHRISTMAS SONG  B. SILVER BELLS  C. WHITE CHRISTMAS

9. WHAT CHRISTMAS SONG IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE TITLE GREENSLEEVES?
   A. O HOLY NIGHT  B. SILENT NIGHT  C. WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

10. IN WHAT CHRISTMAS CAROL DO SINGERS REQUEST “FIGGY PUDDING?”
    A. ROCKIN AROUND  B. WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS
    C. O CHRISTMAS TREE

ANSWERS: 1;B  2;B  3;A  4;B  5;B  6;B  7;C  8;B  9;C  10;B
Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council

Meeting Dates and Locations For 2017

JANUARY 19-20, HILTON GARDEN INN, COLUMBIA
MARCH 16-17, HILTON GARDEN INN, COLUMBIA
MAY 18-19, HILTON GARDEN INN, COLUMBIA
JULY 20-21, EMBASSY SUITES, ST. CHARLES
SEPTEMBER 21-22, HILTON GARDEN INN, COLUMBIA
NOVEMBER 16-17, HILTON GARDEN INN, INDEPENDENCE