

TWP CONNECTS

WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1

Connecting people with disabilities to the resources they need

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2015 at TWP

Welcome to the first issue of *TWP Connects*. This is a quarterly newsletter of The Whole Person, a Center for Independent Living serving people with disabilities in greater Kansas City. *TWP Connects* is published with YOU in mind – the people we serve and your families, friends, caregivers and co-workers; our donors and volunteers; and many other stakeholders who support and are impacted by our work.

Each newsletter will feature ways The Whole Person assists people with disabilities to live independently, and encourages change within the community to expand opportunities for independent living. We will also spotlight the people who make this mission a reality, day in and day out. Since our inaugural issue is coming to you at the end of 2015, here are some highlights from the past year.

More than 2,000 people received TWP services

In the past year, The Whole Person delivered programs and services to 2,014 people across all disability types in Jackson, Clay, Platte and Cass Counties in Missouri, and Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas. Consumers set and achieved independent living goals in significant life areas throughout the year, including self-advocacy/self-empowerment, self-care, vocation, education, mobility/transportation, community-based living, and communication/information access/technology.



A delegation of staff and consumers traveled to Jefferson City to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the ADA as well as Disability History and Awareness Month in October. While there, the group participated in the "Hands Around the Capital" event, encircling the state capital with hundreds of others supporting disability awareness.

TWP's anniversary party for the ADA

People all across the country celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) last July, and The Whole Person was no exception. Following our month-long promotion of the many improvements that the ADA has made in the lives of people with disabilities, we culminated our celebration with a "party in the parking lot" on Monday, July 27 for 300 consumers, neighbors, volunteers, public officials, board members and staff. The ADA and its amendments gave civil rights protections to people with disabilities and assured equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities for access to businesses, employment, transportation, state and local government programs and services, transportation and telecommunications.

Fifth core service added

Centers for Independent Living, like The Whole Person, provide specific core services for people with disabilities. The original core service areas are information and referral, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and individual and systems advocacy. Now there is another: Services that facilitate transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community, provide assistance to those at risk of entering institutions, and facilitate transition of youth to post-secondary life. Look for stories about TWP's transition services in this newsletter (p.3) and in upcoming issues of *TWP Connects*.

MISSION

The Whole Person assists people with disabilities to live independently, and encourages change within the community to expand opportunities for independent living.

VISION

The Whole Person envisions a fully integrated community of equality, where opportunities and choices are not limited by disability. We will promote a world in which people with disabilities will exercise independent choices and join with their supporters to advocate for positive change within society and its systems.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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SOCIAL MEDIA



Letter from CEO

September 30 marked the end of the fiscal year for The Whole Person and the one-year anniversary of my employment as CEO of The Whole Person. It has been a very good year! I have learned a lot about the history and mission of Centers for Independent Living, worked with great staff and board members, and had the pleasure of watching the organization provide high quality services and advocacy to over 2,000 people with disabilities in the greater Kansas City area.



I have had the opportunity to meet hundreds of new people during this past year; many from other nonprofit organizations, disability advocates, city and state employees, professional Centers for Independent Living associations, federal and state legislative representatives/senators – people who care about the mission of The Whole Person and about the people with disabilities that we assist in our programs and services.

The organization was able to complete over 90 percent of the strategic plan goals developed last year. We also exceeded our budgeted margin by increasing program revenues and grant awards.

It takes a team and that is what The Whole Person is all about. Several employee and consumer committees were initiated this past year to focus efforts more on advocacy, public policy, teamwork, and communication. In addition, staff have been encouraged to become more involved in the National Centers for Independent Living committees with over 20 staff participating in 20 different committees.

The future for TWP is full of opportunities to continue our advocacy work, expansion of programs and fulfillment of our ultimate goal: increased inclusion for people with disabilities.

Julie DeJean, CEO

The Whole Person Presents Annual Celebration Awards Luncheon

In recognition of individuals and businesses working to promote independent living for people with disabilities, The Whole Person presented its fifth annual Celebration Awards Luncheon at Grand Street Café on Friday, November 6.

This year's event brought together more than 280 supporters, sponsors, and staff members for an inspiring afternoon, punctuated by insights from award recipients and a performance from singer-songwriter Blessing Offor, contestant on Season 7 of *The Voice*.

Award recipients included: Susie Haake, The Paul H. Levy Founders Award; AMC Theaters, Corporate Award; Tina and Leon Jackson, Individual Award; and Mark Gash, Civic Leader Award.

Emceed by Fox 4 news anchor Phil Witt, the luncheon raised funds to help The Whole Person expand independent living services for people with disabilities.



TWP CEO Julie DeJean with the Paul H. Levy Founders Award winner Susie Haake and TWP Board President Rick O'Neal.



TWP CEO Julie DeJean with the Individual Contribution Award winners Leon, TaMara, Miss T., Tina Jackson and TWP Board President Rick O'Neal.



TWP CEO Julie DeJean with Mark Gash, Chairman of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Board (PDAB), Olathe and TWP Board President Rick O'Neal. PDAB won the Civic Leader Award.



TWP CEO Julie DeJean with Rosalind Reeves, Vice President of Talent Management for AMC and TWP Board President Rick O'Neal. AMC was presented with the Corporate Leader Award.

Getting Back into the Community

TWP runs the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program within our Deinstitutionalization program. MFP is a federal demonstration grant given to the state of Missouri to transition residents of qualified institutions move back into their homes and communities.

The goal for the Money Follows the Person program (MFP) for the 2015 fiscal year was set at 30 transitions. By July 15, there were already 32 successful transitions made. Included in this number were two couples who had met and married while living in a nursing home. In some cases the MFP team partners work with the Home Modification team to bring the prospective property up to the accessibility standard needed to accommodate the new occupants.

MFP not only covers the basics to meet the physical needs of the recipients, but in many cases, an activity such as container gardening is proposed to also address an emotional need, that being nurturing. This is both fulfilling and practical as the consumer doesn't have to make a major investment from year to year to keep the garden going – only the cost of a few packets of seeds. Some consumers who have experienced this would agree that whatever the investment, the end result is invaluable.



Spencer Neal visits with a consumer who just transitioned from a nursing facility into the community through the Money Follows the Person Program.

TWP Programs and Services

- Independent Living Services
- Consumer Directed Services
- Employment Services
- Telecommunications Access Program (TAP)
- Individual and Systems Advocacy
- Mental Health Services
- Deinstitutionalization
- The Whole Family Project
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Youth Services

FACES OF TWP



TWP employee Callie Yeater and her service dog Elf enjoy the "Party in the Parking Lot" celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ADA in August.



Tristan Sherman and Camille Givens visit the 25th Anniversary ADA Legacy Tour Bus at the Missouri State Capital for Disability Rights Legislative Day on March 31, 2015.



TWP hosted a free eye exam clinic for service dogs in May. Eye Care for Animals donated their time to provide ocular exams.



The EXPRESSIONS Art Exhibition sponsored by TWP was held in October. Ryder Bryant, one of the artists, meets Mike Wiley, our COO.



A delegation from The Whole Person visited the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City on March 31 to participate in Disability Rights Legislative Day.



Blessing Offor, contestant on Season 7 of The Voice, was the guest speaker at TWP's 2015 Celebration Awards Luncheon in November.



Austin Dearth, Sherri Alcosta and Kevin Walters were three of the artists showing their work at the EXPRESSIONS Art Exhibition.



Consumers enjoyed a holiday meal and sitting with Santa Claus in December.



Youth Services held an educational event for home schooled children in November. They had several stations that allowed the children to experience different disabilities.



TWP employees volunteered their time to help at Camp Wonderland in July. The camp provides a fun, educational summer camp experience for campers of all ability levels.

FACES OF TWP



TWP employees held an event to help consumers learn to use public transportation in September.



TWP hosted a special event during Women's Equality Week in August.



The Public Policy department hosted several public officials from our district in September.



Caitlin Dearing and TWP volunteer Lea Klepees participated in the Kansas City Ability Expo in August.



TWP started a new Consumer Advocacy Group for individuals with a disability or PCAs who would like to participate in advocacy activities.



TWP employee Clark Corogenes (top row, middle) was part of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum in July. The program helps youth with disabilities realize their full potential by developing leadership skills and career strategies.



Our office supported the Kansas City Royals as they won The World Series!



TWP hosted the first "Day of Giving" in November. Consumers were given the opportunity to shop for free items in our community garage "sale." All inventory was donated by TWP employees.



The Deaf Services program held several computer learning classes in partnership with Connecting for Good. The classes provided hands-on assistance on computers, laptops and tablets for the Deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind.

News from Resource Development and Community Relations

As of May, the Resource Development and Community Relations Department was fully staffed and has been moving and shaking ever since. Terri Goddard came on board in May as the Manager of Resource Development and Community Relations. She immediately began working with the team on the first ever Employee Giving Campaign and we are happy to report that 88 percent of our employees participated.

We held the 25th Anniversary ADA event in July, hosted the Expressions Art Exhibition in October, treated consumers to a day of archery, fishing and air rifle target shooting at our annual Cast and Blast, presented at 177 health fairs and community events, and held our annual TWP Celebration Awards Luncheon in November.

88 percent of TWP employees participated in our Employee Giving Campaign.

Grants

The Whole Person receives most of its financial support from federal and state grants and contracts, but these sources do not cover all costs such as new and expanded programs and services. One of TWP's primary goals is to diversify our funding by identifying and securing private support from foundations, corporations, nonprofit agencies and individuals. From January to early December 2015, we have received non-governmental grants totaling \$188,707 – over 75 percent more than last year. The TWP Board of Directors and staff are grateful

to the following grantors on behalf of the children, youth, adults and families served through their generosity:

- Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City: \$71,636 for Mental Health Services
- United Way of Greater Kansas City: \$31,997 for Independent Living Services
- Hall Family Foundation: \$25,000 for The Whole Family Project
- Victor E. Speas Foundation: \$25,000 for Employment Services
- State Street Fund at the Boston Foundation: \$15,000 for Employment Services
- Jewish Heritage Foundation: \$10,000 for Home Modification
- Oppenstein Brothers Foundation: \$5,000 for The Whole Family Project
- Francis Family Foundation: \$2,700 for *Expressions 2015*
- ArtsKC Catalyst Program Grant: \$1,874 for *Expressions 2015*
- United Spinal Association: \$500 for Life with SCI/D (Spinal Cord Injuries/ Related Disabilities) Peer Support Group

Volunteers are the Heart of TWP

Volunteers are vital to the success of our mission and essential for the people we serve. The volunteer program seeks to build relationships and find meaningful activities while providing lasting results for the people we serve. In other words, volunteers are the heart of our organization.

Yard Clean-up Days: June 4, 2016 and October 5, 2016

If you are a person that doesn't mind a little strenuous activity and are willing to roll up your sleeves and maybe your pant legs to help, this opportunity might be for you. This activity is ideal for a family, church group, or any organization seeking an opportunity to work as a group.



TWP had a great group of volunteers participate in our ADA celebration in July.

Volunteers Needed to Work with the Blindness/Low-Vision Experience

Would you enjoy being part of activities made accessible for individuals who cannot see, such as Bowling Blind or Audio Descriptive Theater performances? We offer a myriad of experiences that will be recreational, artsy and cultural in nature.

If you are interested in helping out with these kinds of activities or would like more information on how you or your group can volunteer, contact: Mary Pat Mahoney, Volunteer Program Coordinator, at mmahoney@thewholeperson.org or 816-627-2203.

Community Relations

The Whole Person provides education on disability etiquette, including reasonable accommodations and accepted social interaction as well as why disability awareness is important. We support and train businesses that employ people with disabilities and offer assistance in completing ADA accessibility assessments. TWP is active in the community by networking with local partners for health, recreation and expos, and by providing information and referral services.

To arrange a presentation or to invite TWP to your event, contact Ben Dillon, Development Specialist, at 816-627-3342 or via email at bdillon@thewholeperson.org.

Public Policy Update

The off-season for Public Policy, i.e. the time between state legislative sessions, brings opportunities for networking, collaboration and relationship building. Just before the annual luncheon we received an urgent call from Senator Claire McCaskill's staff. A group of 12 social service professionals from Novosibirsk, Russia, hosted by the Lee's Summit Sunrise Rotary club through the Open Worlds cultural exchange program, came to tour

We are excited by opportunities for networking, collaboration and relationship building.

our building and discuss general disability issues and, specifically Blind and Low-Vision advocacy. Their professions ranged from teacher to



TWP staff pose with a visiting group of Russian social service professionals.

doctor, psychologist to attorney, all working in various capacities with the blind and low-vision population in their community. Working through an interpreter, the group spoke with Sheila Styron, Blind & Low Vision Specialist, to understand our various programs and accommodations.

- Yekaterina A. Pichikova, 27, Ophthalmologist, Novosibirsk Branch of Fedorov Multisectorial Research and Technical Complex, Eye Microsurgery
- Alekandra N. Simagina, 26, Leading Methodologist Novosibirsk Regional Library for the Visually Impaired
- Aleksandra N. Golovina, 24, Category 1 Technologist, Novosibirsk Regional Specialist, Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired

- Mariya V. Ryabkova, 30, Psychologist, "Self" Center for Psychological Support
- Olga V. Pereskokova, 32, Teacher and Therapist
- Novosibirsk Municipal Kindergarten #320 for the Visually Impaired Children
- Olga I. Shchukina, 32, Lead Legal Advisor, Novosibirsk Theater of Musical Comedy
- Marina A. Seysenbayeva, 32, Open World Facilitator
- Olga Osadcii, Open World Interpreter

Subscribe to the Public Policy Newsletter: www.thewholeperson.org/programs-services/advocacy.html
Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/405211319662787/

TWP Support Groups Grow

Peer support groups provide a place for gathering with others to share common experiences. The groups offered at The Whole Person help people connect with other individuals who are like themselves. Participants form a sense of community that comes from a mutual understanding of each other's circumstances, and can offer empowerment and inclusion to the individuals attending.

Over the past year, TWP support groups have grown in the number of active participants as well as the type of groups available to the community. The newest group, the Brain Injury Support Group, was the result of an effort by community stakeholders to identify a

location conveniently located at a bus stop so participants may utilize public transportation.

The Life with SCI/D group expanded in 2015 through a partnership with Mid America Rehabilitation Hospital and the Greater Kansas City Spinal Cord Injury Association to allow greater participation on both sides of the state line, and to take turns hosting monthly meetings at the three locations.

Our groups don't "meet to meet," they gather together with compassion for others with similar experiences. Participants identify personal goals and encourage each other to meet them, and often form bonds of friendship that are taken outside the group. As one participant stated, "If it wasn't for this group, I wouldn't have the special friendships that I have." TWP provides the facility, facilitators and activities,



The Life with SCI/D group hosted a picnic for attendees in July.

but it is the group itself that provides the social inclusion, energy and unique connections resulting from peer to peer interaction and support.

For more information about our groups, please visit our website or contact Becky Williams, Youth & Adult Support Services Manager, at 816-627-2276 or bwilliams@thewholeperson.org.

*Connecting people with disabilities
to the resources they need.*

3710 Main Street, Kansas City, MO 64111
thewholeperson.org

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

Signing up for our email list is a great way to stay connected to TWP. Visit thewholeperson.org to sign up.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

For media inquiries, interviews or statements, please contact:
Terri Goddard
Resource Development Manager
816-627-2220
tgoddard@thewholeperson.org

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Contributions from Individuals,
Honorariums and Memorials
Corporation and Foundation Gifts
Planned Giving

For more information on planned giving, contact Terri Goddard, Resource Development Manager at tgoddard@thewholeperson.org, or call 816-627-2220.

It makes
cents to
support
The Whole
Person

Nearly 1 in 5
people will be
affected by
disability in
their lifetime.

Together with
your family or
friends your
“change” can
change lives!

CHANGE FOR CHANGE!



Visit thewholeperson.org today for information on how you can donate your loose change to make a difference.