

TWP CONNECTS

SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 22

Connecting people with disabilities to the resources they need

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The Whole Person – Impact

The Whole Person (TWP) believes in pushing boundaries and creating opportunities so people with disabilities may experience their best quality of life. Our services and programs build the confidence of these individuals and improve the many skills they need to live, learn, and work across the bi-state Kansas City region.

After more than 43 years of service, The Whole Person continues to offer community-based, consumer-driven programming for people with all types of disabilities. We continue to expand our reach, serving more than 2,430 individuals annually, with most of our programs and services offered at no charge.

Bringing Our Services Closer to Home

Our headquarters, located in Kansas City, Missouri, serves as a hub of activity for the disability community from peer support meetings to workshops and trainings. In 2018 we added a location to better serve Kansans with disabilities.

Most of our programs happen in the field: in schools, trial work locations, nursing

homes for transition evaluation, and private homes where we visit personal care attendant clients, teach families sign language, offer independent living skills training, deliver adaptive technology, and more.

Personalizing the Client Experience

Our process begins by working with consumers to identify their core goals and creating a plan to help them succeed. Needed services are outlined and the consumer guides the process. Some people with disabilities may participate for a day or two, while others work with TWP for weeks, months or even years. We believe in allowing each person to guide the experience, and we offer the resources and support they need to feel confident in their progress.

Leading Positive Change in Our Communities

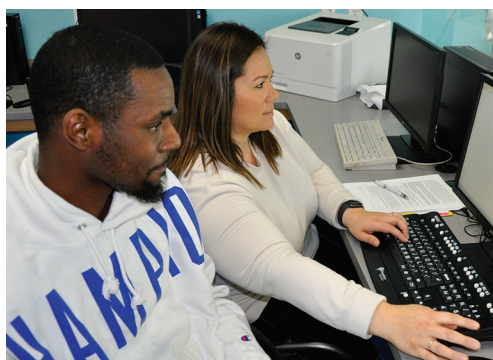
In addition to working with individuals, we also strive to make our communities more accessible for people with disabilities. By building partnerships and advocating on behalf of those we serve,

we continue to make improvements throughout the region including an increase in:

- The number of curb cuts throughout the metropolitan area
- The number of accessible businesses, programs, agencies, recreational facilities, and more
- Visibility for the number of people with disabilities within the community
- Transportation options for people with disabilities
- Media coverage of, and attitudes toward people with disabilities

The Whole Person Approach

Paul H. Levy founded The Whole Person in 1978. Four decades later, we continue to place special emphasis on building relationships, independent living, access to community services, and collaboration with community partners. Mr. Levy's vision is still relevant today, "The name, The Whole Person, reminds the public to involve themselves with those with disabilities, seeing each in his or her entirety as complete, whole people with varied abilities and interests. The public is encouraged to look beyond the disability, the points of difference, to accept a person for his intellect, humor,



MISSION

The Whole Person connects people with disabilities to the resources they need by supporting independent choice and advocating for positive change in the community.

VISION

The Whole Person envisions a fully accessible community where opportunities and choices are not limited by disability.

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An accessible PDF, screen reader compatible file, is available in the newsletter archive on our website.

Impact *(cont. from page 1)*

expression, skills, potential and, above all, individuality.”

We work to remain financially strong and committed to continuing the needed services we provide, even in the face of possible cutbacks in public support. We have improved program efficiency and diversified sources of income to help offset the risk created by a singular payor source. In 2017, we acquired a home health agency in addition to in-home services.

Expanding Our Reach

Recognizing a need to make our services more readily available for people with disabilities on the Kansas side of the state line, particularly through our Home and Community-Based Services program, we opened a second location in early 2018 offering core services in Johnson, Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties.

Expanding our Kansas footprint allowed TWP to:

- Reduce or eliminate Kansas-based clients’ need to travel to our Missouri office
- Reiterate our dedication to providing independent living services
- Increase our services in the areas of Youth Transition, Deaf Services and Employment Services as well as our expanded Home and Community-Based Services

Looking Forward with Renewed Confidence

TWP is truly unique. As the only Center for Independent Living (CIL) in the bi-state Greater Kansas City metropolitan area, we take our role as an advocate for people with disabilities seriously. We

continue to learn from our clients and partners and work toward bringing new ideas and solutions to those we serve. We believe innovative programming sets us apart in Kansas City. As an example, our recently launched catering-focused social enterprise is the only one of its kind in the region.

Our growing list of programs and services include nursing home transition services, youth transition programs, independent living skills training, information and referral options, peer support and mentoring, advocacy, personal care assistance, employment services, and more.

Independence... means not requiring or having to rely on others for care or livelihood and showing a desire for freedom. Independence is self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Assisting people with disabilities to obtain and maintain independence is what The Whole Person is all about.

Integration... happens when individuals are incorporated into society as equals. Integration means to unite, to form, coordinate, or blend into a functioning or unified whole. Our advocates support our consumers’ wishes to become fully integrated into the community through transition, independent life skills training, employment, and accessibility.

Impact... is a direct effect. It is the power to provoke interest and bring about a strong result. TWP has taken the lead in showing the community who we are, what our mission is, and how our services impact both the community and all people with disabilities.

TWP Programs and Services

- Independent Living Services
- Consumer Directed Services
- Employment Services
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Individual and Systems Advocacy
- Telecommunications Access Program
- Benefits Enrollment Center
- Kansas Resident Services
- Transition Services
- The Whole Family Project
- Blindness Low Vision Experience
- Youth and Adult Services
- Adaptive Sports
- Legal Services

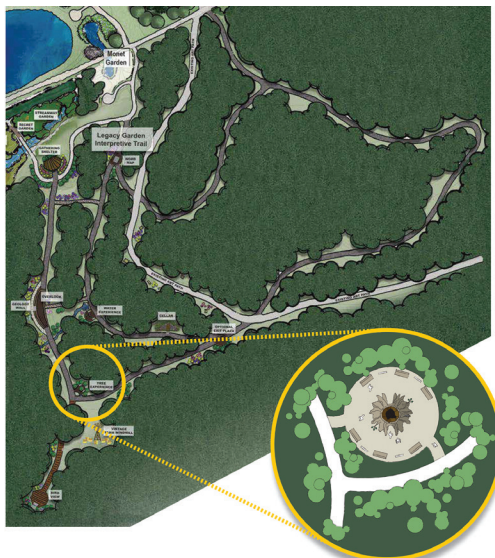
Nature Encounter for All at the Legacy Garden

Several years ago, the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Garden embarked on a thrilling improvement plan at the urging of a member of the Friends of the Arboretum (FOTA), Bob Lane, around the time his son, Adam, worked for The Whole Person. Several TWP staff met with Bob about the project then, and recently other TWP staff were briefed on some exciting updates.

The vision is for the addition of an area accessible for all people that provides experiences with and about nature. Robert Whitman with design firm Gould Evans was commissioned to create a plan. He surveyed the Arboretum and found an area in the Legacy Garden that is accessible from the parking lot and could contain a pathway with no more than a 2% grade. Originally called the Interpretive Trail, the new concept includes several wheelchair-accessible stations that will incorporate sound, smell, and touch. The design also includes “safe” areas for people with neurological disorders.

The “old homestead” elements of the Legacy Garden will be incorporated into the new Interpretive Trail, to be renamed the Nature Encounter for All at the Legacy Garden. This change was made to emphasize that it is an area for exploring nature rather than for hiking.

Work has begun. The staff at the Arboretum have cleared and mulched the path, and markers have been placed at the two entrances and where the stations will be located. In addition to the stations, interactive sculptures and other features are expected to be placed along the path as funds and donors are identified. Plans



Visual of the concept for the Tree Experience area.

for the first two stations are underway. The first construction that will take place is the installation of the path, which, in addition to having the correct grade, will be wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and will have raised edges and different textures to identify the location of various features.

Feedback sought. The FOTA's Nature Encounter committee is committed to seeking ongoing feedback from the community to help ensure the new area is as accessible and usable as possible. TWP staff met with three members of the FOTA Advisory Board this spring to offer feedback.

The Nature Encounter committee hopes to begin giving tours to interested parties soon. The project is expected to be privately funded through grants and donations to the Friends of the Arboretum.



Members of the Friends of the Arboretum met with staff from TWP to discuss accessibility.



Friday, September 24

THE ABBOTT
KANSAS CITY

Make plans now to be whisked away by the ambience of the romantic streets of Paris!

The current plan is for this event to be a HYBRID event. We will offer in-person tickets and virtual options as well.

All KCMO Health Department guidelines in effect at time of the Gala will be followed.

Cocktail Reception
Live Music & Surprises!
Silent and Live Auctions
Awards Ceremony

 **The Whole Person**
People with Disabilities Leading Independent Lives

The Gala honors individuals and organizations working to further The Whole Person's mission to connect people with disabilities to the resources they need to live independently.

thewholeperson.org/paris

Planting Independence 2021



Groups of volunteers took part in TWP's Planting Independence event in April. Thank you to all the volunteers who make this event possible! 1. and 2. Westlake Ace Hardware 3. Worcester Investments 4. United Health Care 5. UMB 6. McCownGordon Construction 7. KMBC & KCWE 8. KC Streetcar Constructors 9. IRS 10. Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy

Planting Independence 2021



11. Individuals 12. Country Club Bank 13. Horizon Orthotic & Prosthetic Experience 14. Girls on the Run 15. Church of the Resurrection 16. Blue Cross Blue Shield 17. Boy Scout Troop 218 18. Future Farmers

EVENT CALENDAR

Due to COVID-19, our event calendar changes frequently. For specific locations and times of the events listed, visit our calendar at thewholeperson.org.

JUN. 4; AUG. 6:

TWP Getting Social Peer Group

JUN. 7;

BLVE Virtual Mind's Eye View

JUN. 7, 14, 21, 28; JUL. 12, 19, 26:

BLVE Virtual Stretching Without Looking

JUN. 8, 15; JUL. 6, 20:

Mental Health Support Group

JUN. 9:

Virtual Volunteer Fair

JUN. 9, 16, 23, 30; JUL. 7, 14, 21, 28:

KC No Coast Wheelchair Tennis

JUN. 10; JUL. 8:

Brain Injury Peer Support Group

JUN. 21; JUL. 19:

BLVE Tech-info

JUN. 22; JUL. 27:

Advocates in Action Group

JUL. 11:

Big Dill Classic Pickleball and Cornhole Tournament

JUL. 15:

SCI/D Spinal Cord Injury Disability Peer Group



Pickleball and Cornhole Tournament

The Whole Person will hold our first Big Dill Classic. The tournament will be held on Sunday, July 11 from 5:00-8:00 pm at Chicken N Pickle, 1761 Burlington Street, North Kansas City, Missouri.

There will be 22 Pickleball teams and 20 Cornhole teams. Join us to cheer on the teams and enjoy great food and a fun atmosphere. Ten percent of all food sales that evening will go to The Whole Person's Adaptive Sports Programs.

Learn more at www.thewholeperson.org/bigdill

Volunteers are the Heart of The Whole Person

The Whole Person celebrated National Volunteer Month in April. We are grateful for the support of our incredible volunteers! Planting Independence, a yard clean-up program for people with disabilities, gave a spring make-over to 36 homes with the help of over 275 volunteers that included groups from McCownGordon Construction, Westlake, UMB, Country Club Bank, Future Farmers, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Boy Scout Troop 218, HOPE, and Worcester Investments along with many individual volunteers. Even with the rainy weather, volunteers visited homes in the Kansas City metro area to help "Plant Independence – One Yard at a Time" for people with disabilities. We are also grateful for our 2021 Planting Independence sponsors: Westlake



Ace Hardware, VMLY&R Foundation, Collaborative Industries, UMB, and Kurt Kavanaugh Orthodontics.

During the upcoming summer and fall months of 2021, there will be many other ways TWP can put your talents and skills to work. The next event is our inaugural Big Dill Classic Pickleball and Cornhole Tournament. Visit the TWP website to volunteer for this fun event!

Whether you are an individual, church, club or corporation, or have a lot or limited amount of time to give, we have a variety of volunteering options that will work for you.

Contact Kelly Grooms at (816) 627-2232 or kgrooms@thewholeperson.org for more information. To sign up go to www.thewholeperson.org/volunteer.

TWP Hosts Accessible Healthcare Workshop

The Whole Person hosted a webinar on April 27 entitled "Accessible Healthcare Workshop." The webinar was conducted by a leading attorney on disability rights and healthcare law, Andres J. Gallegos, Esq., who also serves as chairperson of the National Council on Disability (NCD).

The focus of the webinar was to learn how to become an empowered, proactive healthcare advocate for people with disabilities. Attendees learned about their legal rights and how to enforce them so they may become their own patient advocate. The workshop also explained to healthcare providers and students how to increase accessibility for patients and clients and inform them of their legal rights.

Attendees learned there are solutions to situations they may experience while seeking healthcare:



- Examined while in your wheelchair
- Exam rooms are too small to move around in
- Exam tables or exam chairs are too high and can't be lowered, or you are told to bring someone to lift you to access medical equipment
- Long waits or refusal of service because of your disability
- Important information is not given to you in an accessible format
- No qualified sign language interpreter at appointments
- No service animals allowed

TWP was excited to host the webinar and looks forward to future support and education for people with disabilities.

Getting Social

Getting Social is one of the peer groups facilitated by The Whole Person, and is held on the first Friday of every month at our headquarters on Main Street from 1-3 pm.

The theme of April's Getting Social was "Everyone needs a Tune-Up!!" The Getting Social group had a wonderful time. First, we heard from Breta Alstrom from Eat with B the RD, LLC. Breta, a Registered Dietitian, did a fantastic job explaining the ins and outs of eating a balanced diet and the small steps we can take to achieve a healthier lifestyle. Afterward, we played a few rounds of high-intensity bingo, ate healthy snacks, and chatted until the end. Getting Social is always looking for great people to add to the group. If you are interested, contact Stephanie Brand at sbrand@thewholeperson.org.



Peer Mentoring Program Success Story

By Justin Clarke

Monterio came to The Whole Person through Missouri's Vocational Rehabilitation Peer Mentoring pilot program focused on youth with disabilities who are considered "at risk" by the justice and foster care systems. Monterio has a speech impairment and cognitive delays that have kept him behind in school. He is a high school senior, but he needs to make up credits before he can graduate.

As part of his goals, Monterio expressed interest in a welding career. He worked with his Peer Mentor to explore options for transitioning from high school to college with a focus on attaining that goal. One of Monterio's additional goals was to improve his handwriting, so his Peer Mentor worked with him to create a series of drills focused on fine motor improvement and exercises to build confidence in his handwriting ability.

Another concern expressed by Monterio was his inability to focus on remote learning during the pandemic. He and his Peer Mentor discussed his ability to self-advocate for his needs using language that demonstrates structural



barriers instead of personal ones. Monterio self-advocated his needs to his teacher by identifying the remote learning model as hindering his ability to complete assignments; he requested an accommodation to have assignments completed on paper.

Monterio was happy to report that he is now on track to graduate early. The Whole Person provided him with an iPad as a reward for his accomplishments. He is confident in his ability to express himself in writing and is looking forward to starting on his chosen career path in college.

Housing Vouchers

By Travis Rush

Michelle has one of the most interesting consumer stories that I have encountered. Michelle is a veteran of the US Armed Forces and was at one point pursuing an advanced degree.

A traumatic brain injury changed the course of Michelle's life. I am unsure how the events unfolded, but Michelle ended up experiencing chronic street-level homelessness. She was living in an abandoned tractor trailer, with no running water or heat. In short, it was not made for human habitation. The individual who owned the trailer called The Whole Person and asked for assistance. It was a difficult case, but we enrolled Michelle in our Housing Choice Voucher Partnership Program. Following advocacy from TWP and Housing Authority staff, Michelle was finally awarded a housing choice voucher. She also received assistance from TWP staff to acquire all necessary vital documents that she needs in her everyday life, and she received some furniture, warm clothing, and several other referrals to partner agencies for additional assistance and mental health care.

Michelle acquired and successfully maintained her housing for a year, and then decided to relocate to a unit adjacent to more accessible mental health care in Johnson County, Kansas. TWP staff were able to connect Michelle to the right resources so she could transfer her voucher to Johnson County where she now resides.

Michelle spent years experiencing homelessness. Since enrolling in TWP's housing choice voucher program, she has not only gained successful housing placement, but has begun to piece additional needs together as well. Staff has commented on a significant change in Michelle's decision-making processes, as well as her physical appearance and health outcomes. Michelle is a testament to the Housing First model of service provision, and we hope she continues to experience safe, decent, affordable, and accessible housing for years and years to come.

amazon smile

You shop. Amazon Gives to TWP

The Whole Person is a designated charity under **AmazonSmile**, a simple and automatic way to support our mission every time you shop! AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that

when customers shop on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to The Whole Person when you select us as your charity of choice.

Support TWP by *starting* your shopping at smile.amazon.com....thank you!

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

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thewholeperson.org

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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:

Mike Wiley

816-627-2262

mwiley@thewholeperson.org

PRESENTATIONS:

- TWP Services
- Disability Awareness and People First Language Training
- Universal Design Building Tours at The Whole Person
- ADA Assessments

For more information on presentations for your place of business, contact Mike Wiley, at mwiley@thewholeperson.org or call 816-627-2262.



REGIONAL ROUNDTABLES

Sessions will be held virtually and begin at 11:00 am. We will end promptly at 1:00 pm.

The next Roundtable is June 17, 2021

The ASGKC Regional Roundtable is an initiative developed by The Whole Person and supported by a Healthy Communities grant from the Health Forward Foundation. Adaptive/accessible sports stakeholders (nonprofit organizations, agencies, and businesses) from throughout the bi-state metro area gather together and are invited to share information and work collaboratively for greater access to sports and recreation for people with all types of disabilities.

Contact Anthony Trakas for an invitation to join the quarterly meetings:

816-627-2205 | atrakas@thewholeperson.org



**Pickleball and
Cornhole Tournament**

Benefitting The Whole Person's
Adaptive Sports Programs

**Sunday, July 11
5-8pm**

TheWholePerson.org/BigDill

Chicken N Pickle.
KANSAS CITY

Chicken N Pickle (NKC)
1761 Burlington St.
North Kansas City, MO