

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN KANSAS...

Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy Newsletter

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Issue: #12

July/2008

Dear KYEA Family and Friends,

Welcome to a new issue of our KYEA E-Newsletter! This summer has proven to be a busy one for KYEA as we held our 8th Annual Kansas Youth Leadership Forum and are now gearing up to do the Disability Heritage Project across the state. Read all about these two programs below. As always, our newsletter contains opportunities for you on a state and national level. Be sure to check out our "cool links" to the left while surfing the web in your free time. Also, because the 2008 Presidential Election is quickly approaching and this is the time of year to learn about the candidates, we have included a special "Spotlight On: Election 2008." Take a look and enjoy!

Photo of the Month



BOND. The delegates and volunteers in "Team Us" pose for a photo during the 2008 Kansas Youth Leadership Forum.

[To view more KSYLF '08 photos, visit \[www.kyea.org\]\(http://www.kyea.org\).](#)

KYEA NEWS

KSYLF welcomes 18 new alumni!

The 2008 Kansas Youth Leadership Forum welcomed 18 delegates to the campus of Washburn University this summer for a week of learning, memories, and lots of empowerment! This year's KSYLF was held on June 17-21 at Washburn University in Topeka. There were 18 delegates in attendance. The youth came from all over the state including the cities of Kansas City, Topeka, Hutchinson, Manhattan, Wichita, as well as Atchison, Garfield, Osborne, Satanta, and more. The delegates were joined by 26 volunteers and staff who facilitated the week. The volunteers included five alumni who returned to serve in staff positions.



The theme for this year's KSYLF was, "Own Your Dreams. Make Your Mark. Leave Your Legacy." The delegates learned about creating one's own legacy by making a unique, individual mark on the world. As always, each delegate created their own Personal Leadership Plan, which allowed them to write down their goals for the future. Delegates also participated in the usual KSYLF activities of a barbecue, mentor luncheon, day at the Capitol, talent show, and dance. They were able to learn about community resources through the resource fair and Real Life Affair. The delegates also participated in wheelchair basketball alongside the Kansas Wheelhawks, presented group banners, and heard from a variety of speakers, including advocate and teacher Matt Christensen from Overland Park, KS.

KSYLF '08 was full of great memories for everyone! These memories will be captured and

Check out these websites!

www.kyea.org
www.disaboom.com
www.disabledstudents.org
www.mapping-your-future.org
www.youthmove.us
www.deafyouthusa.org
www.kansascareerpipeline.org

Join Our List

Join Our Mailing List!

The Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy is made possible by a grant from Kansas Rehabilitation Services and match funds from the Kansas Legislature.

shared on the KSYLF 2008 page of our website. If you would like to share a memory, story, or comment about this year's KSYLF, or have pictures that you would like to post on the website, please email me at carrieg@kyea.org.

Each KSYLF is different and unique in its own way. We would like to thank all of our supporters, volunteers, and staff who helped to make this year a success. Congratulations to the 18 delegates who are now alumni... welcome to the family!

[VISIT KSYLF 2008 ON THE WEB - www.kyea.org/content/view/141/117](http://www.kyea.org/content/view/141/117)



Justin Cosco Award presented to Cort Hughes

Each year, KYEA presents the Justin Cosco Scholarship Award to an alumni of the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum. This year's recipient has shown much growth since his time as a delegate in 2003. He has demonstrated a commitment to KSYLF by returning to serve as a volunteer for three summers now. This year's award was presented to Cort Hughes, KSYLF Alumni 2003.

The Justin Cosco Scholarship Award began in 2004, but was renamed in 2007 after the death of an alumni of the first Kansas Youth Leadership Forum, Justin Cosco. Justin was very important to the KSYLF family and was a true leader and supporter of the Youth Leadership Forum. This award is given each year to an alumni who has demonstrated progress toward their goals and growth as a leader. This year's winner, Cort Hughes, has demonstrated just that. He has been a great mentor to other alumni by returning to KSYLF as a volunteer in 2005, 2007, and 2008. He is currently pursuing his goal to be a teacher and will be attending college in the Fall. Cort was nominated by Roger Frischenmeyer, KSYLF 7-year volunteer, who stated that he nominated Cort because of his growth in the past five years.

A big congrats to Cort for all of his accomplishments!

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS AWARD - www.kyea.org/content/view/152/175](http://www.kyea.org/content/view/152/175)

Disability Heritage Project available for all ages

As another school year quickly approaches, KYEA is gearing up to start scheduling the Disability Heritage Project (DHP) in local classrooms. The DHP works to bring disability history and pride into the schools. KYEA staff are available to come and present to students of all ages about a variety of topics. Students learn what leaders, laws, and movements paved the road to the freedom of our future. They also learn what it means to be proud of one's disability and the disability community. KYEA will speak to elementary, middle school, high school, and college aged groups, as well as people with OR without disabilities. Community groups, companies, and organizations are also encouraged to schedule one of these trainings. KYEA will cater each presentation to the audience.

Do you know of a group who would benefit from this presentation? Then bring the Disability Heritage Project to your area today! To obtain a cost estimate and schedule a presentation, contact Julia at 785.215.6655 ext. 3 or juliaf@kyea.org.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DISABILITY HERITAGE PROJECT - www.kyea.org/content/view/10/35](http://www.kyea.org/content/view/10/35)

Introducing... Heather Grace, KYEA Office Assistant

When visitors stop by the KYEA office, they will notice a new face on staff. Heather Grace has been working as the KYEA Office Assistant since April of this year.

Heather previously served on the KYEA Board of Directors and has always had an interest in working with youth. She worked on youth activities at Independent Connection in Salina for many years. Heather currently works for KYEA part time and also works for an eye doctor in Topeka part time.



Heather obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Communications and Journalism from Kansas State University in 2001. In her free time, she enjoys handcycling and other wheelchair sports. She is also a huge KU Jayhawk fan. Heather has enjoyed her first three months with KYEA. She states, "It's a great opportunity to do what I love to do- working with people with disabilities, particularly the youth."

New mentoring program for 2008 KSYLF alumni

KYEA believes that having a mentor is a very important tool in the development of youth with disabilities. With this concept in mind, we have created a new program called "Mentoring Our Leaders To Employment" (MOLE). KYEA recently received a grant from the Kansas Health Policy Authority to successfully implement this program. MOLE will target our 2008 KSYLF alumni for now, with the possibility of branching out to other alumni in the future.

The purpose of the MOLE program is to assist the participants in reaching their employment and education goals by developing a continued relationship with their mentor. All participants will build upon their relationship with their adult mentor whom they met at the 2008 Mentor Luncheon. This mentor will assist them with specific career related activities (interviews, resume writing, job fairs, part time employment, volunteerism, etc). Participants will take part in monthly conference calls and other frequent email or in person contact with their mentor.

Our hope is that through this program and continued contact with a mentor, our alumni will make progress toward reaching their employment and education goals for the future.

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates

All KYEA board meetings are open to the public, but attendees do not have voting rights during the meeting.

Next board meeting: Thursday, August 7, 1:00 - 4:00 pm. The meeting will be by conference call. Contact KYEA for further information about joining the call.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Cole Mills- KSYLF Alumni '02

Cole Mills, KSYLF Alumni 2002 and recipient of the KSYLF Youth Leader of the Year Award in 2004, recently graduated from college. Cole graduated this Spring from Friends University with a Bachelor of Science degree in organizational management and leadership. Cole recently sent a note of thanks to KYEA for supporting him and enclosed his graduation picture (see right). Congrats to Cole!



Brian Butters- KSYLF Alumni '04

Brian Butters, KSYLF Alumni 2004, is reaching his goals and enjoys living independently in Alaska. He is currently serving as an AmeriCorps volunteer. His work includes serving as a Lead Computer Instructor and Career Mentor. Brian plans to take night classes in the Fall. He is also working on a goal to start up his own small business. Brian is looking towards the future and plans to study art in London when his schooling is complete. We look forward to witnessing your future accomplishments Brian!

This past Spring, many of our KSYLF alumni and volunteers graduated from high school or college. We would like to say a big congratulations to all of them! We also know that many of you are preparing for your senior year, your first year of college, or continuing towards your degree. We wish you a great upcoming school year and hope to hear all about it!

Are you a KSYLF alumni or past volunteer who has a bit of news to share? We are always eager to hear about your accomplishments and updates! Send them to us and we will publish YOU in future issues of our e-newsletter. Give us a call or send us an email... let us know what you have been up to!

[CONTACT KYEA - CLICK HERE - www.kyea.org/content/view/21/46](http://www.kyea.org/content/view/21/46)

Local public gatherings seek input from people with disabilities

The youth voice is needed! Three public gatherings are scheduled to be held in local areas across the state to collect input from people with disabilities. These gatherings, hosted by the Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas (SILCK) and the Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living (KACIL), will be used to shape issues that are discussed during the 2009 legislative session. The two main purposes for these meetings are (1) Provide information to Independent Living Advocates that they can use when meeting and talking with your legislators and public officials and (2) Gather information on the current issues and barriers people with disabilities and Kansas seniors continue to face while living independently and productively in Kansas. A topic of discussion will be employment for people with disabilities.



A representative from KYEA will be present at each of these meetings. We encourage any youth across the state who have something to share to attend a gathering. This is the perfect opportunity to tell your experiences with employment, give ideas for positive change in our state, and really share your voice with local advocates. Sharing your concerns, ideas, and experiences will also help us at KYEA to shape our future programs.

The three gatherings to be held are:

Kansas City, KS - August 11

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Kansas City, KS Public Library (1737 N. 82nd St.)

Manhattan - August 18

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Manhattan Fire Station (Assembly Rm., 2000 Dennis)

Hutchison - August 25

2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Hutchison Public Library (901 N. Main)

Three hearings will be held across the state, but you are encouraged to attend the hearing closest to you. If you are unable to attend the hearings, please contact SILCK or KACIL with comments by August 30, 2008. You may call the SILCK office toll free at 800-217-4525.

Share your thoughts... your voice counts!

[VIEW PUBLIC GATHERING FLYERS - www.kyea.org/content/view/153/176](http://www.kyea.org/content/view/153/176)

Yes I Can! Award looking for youth nominations

The Kansas Council for Exceptional Children is currently seeking nominations for the Kansas Yes I Can! Award. This award honors a child or youth with a disability who has made outstanding achievements in one or more areas. These areas include: academics, arts, athletics, community service, employment, extracurricular activities, independent living skills, technology, and self-advocacy. One award winner will be recognized at the Kansas CEC Annual Conference in October of 2008.

The award criteria is stated below:

- Nominees must be 2-21 years old when they are nominated.
- Each nominee must be eligible in one of the above listed categories.
- Each nominee must be nominated by two individuals (teacher, principal, related service provider, friend, parent, etc).

If you would like to nominate someone, you must act fast! Nominations are due by tomorrow,

Families Together to hold transition conference

Families Together will be holding a transition conference in September titled "Flying Solo in the Future." The conference will be on Saturday, September 13 from 8:30 am - 4:00 pm. It will be held at the Wichita Airport Hilton in Wichita, KS. The conference is targeted at youth with disabilities, parents, educators, providers, and others. Sessions will revolve around the topic of transitioning out of high school and what that means for a youth with a disability. Topics will include vocational rehabilitation, transitioning to college, community services, transition and the IEP, and a workshop on the future, specifically geared toward the youth. There will also be a variety of exhibitors present to share information on community resources.

The registration fee for this conference is \$15, but youth ages 13-22 may attend for free. Lunch will be provided. The registration deadline is September 8, 2008.

[VIEW THE FLYER AND REGISTRATION FORM - www.familiestogetherinc.org](http://www.familiestogetherinc.org)
[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

Share your transition stories and tips!

Do you have an experience or idea about transition that you would like to share? If you are a youth with a disability or a parent of someone with a disability, then you have likely experienced the transition process. The Council for Exceptional Children Division on Career Development & Transition is asking you to share your experiences. They are collecting ideas and tips about the transition process from those who live it everyday. Their goal is to compile and develop "101 Practical Transition Ideas" consisting of transition practices that are currently being used by people everywhere. CEC-DCDT wants to find out what you are doing that works and asks you to share your stories with others.

They are collecting transition ideas in the areas of :

- Transition Planning
- Student Involvement
- Family Involvement
- Interagency Collaboration
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Inclusion and Access to the General Curriculum
- Transition Assessment
- Cultural Diversity
- Assistive Technology and UDL
- Students from Specific Disability Groups

To submit your ideas, all you have to do is fill out a quick survey.

[SUBMIT YOUR TRANSITION STORIES AND TIPS - www.transitioncoalition.org](http://www.transitioncoalition.org)

Conference geared toward law students with disabilities

If you are a law student with a disability, then this is the conference for you! The National Association of Law Students with Disabilities (NALSWD) announces its 2nd annual conference in conjunction with the IMPACT Career Fair for Law Students and Lawyers with Disabilities. The conference will be held August 15 - 17, 2008 in Crystal City, Virginia, which is just outside of Washington, D.C.

Current law students and recent graduates are encouraged to attend. The conference will include a day long seminar for first year law students, presentations by a variety of speakers, panel discussions, and planning for the future of NALSWD.



[LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION AND CONFERENCE - www.nalswd.org](http://www.nalswd.org)

Online course offered on career planning

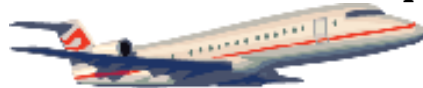
An online course will be offered in September focused on career development, planning, and discovery. This course is being offered by TRN, Inc. and will be taught by Rob Hoffman. An online course offers two weeks' access to online web instruction, interactive exercises and readings, and a Forum discussion board. With this two week training, participants will receive a certificate of 18 service hours and a greater knowledge of career planning.

This course will take place September 10-23, 2008. It will focus on a variety of topics including self-determination, discovery of career goals, building job seeking skills, resume building, and much more.

The online course costs \$149 for a two-week session. Students are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

[SIGN UP FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT ONLINE COURSE - www.trninc.com](http://www.trninc.com)

Website launched to capture air travel "horror stories"



Flying on an airplane can be an interesting experience at times for people with disabilities. A new website has been created to collect feedback and experiences with air travel. This website was launched by consumer advocates who wanted better airport services. Oftentimes, airline passengers face many problems when flying, from stranded flights, to a growing list of fees, to safety and security concerns and disability discrimination. The online site includes U.S. airline information and captures air traveler complaints and "horror stories." It also contains airline rankings - such as best time, worst time, and most complaints - and includes many how-tos for new equipment and services found at airports. The website can be found at www.howwasyourflight.com.

If you have an air travel story to tell, then this is one place to share. People with disabilities are encouraged to take a passenger survey, submit complaints or travel horror stories, and to send photos or videos of situations or circumstances illustrating problems or solutions for accessibility.

[VISIT THE "HOW WAS YOUR FLIGHT?" WEBSITE](http://www.howwasyourflight.com)

Survey targets people with sensory/mobility disabilities

Washington University is conducting a study to learn about the daily living of people with sensory and/or mobility disabilities. This research project aims to understand the daily lives of people who have these specific disabilities, how their environments affect their community participation, and what, if any, help they need to complete activities.

In order to be eligible, you must:

- Be between the ages of 18 and 75
- Live in the community
- Have access to a computer
- Be able read at or above the 6th grade level
- Be able to enter responses into a web-based survey or direct another individual to enter your responses into a web-based survey

AND

- Have either a mobility disability, a visual disability, or a hearing disability

To participate in this study, you must complete two online surveys that will take approximately one hour to complete. All information is kept confidential and no connection between you and your survey answers will be made. Participants will be reimbursed by either a personal check or by a gift certificate to either Target or Walgreens, and may choose the method of reimbursement they prefer.

[PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY](http://emc.wustl.edu/nscl/nsclnlogn.htm) - <http://emc.wustl.edu/nscl/nsclnlogn.htm>

Conference focuses on accessing services for children and youth with disabilities

The national Opening Doors Conference is scheduled to take place on November 10-11, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, Md. This conference focuses on accessing services for children and youth with disabilities from traditionally underserved communities. Sessions will focus on early screening for disabilities; inclusive recreation; and adolescent transition. The keynote will be given by motivational speaker and disability advocate Greg Smith. A variety of people are encouraged to attend, including youth, families, community organizations, and practitioners and researchers in rehabilitation, health, education, and public policy. To register, see the link below. Registration begins September 1. For more information, contact Berenise Reyes-Albino at berenise.albino@umb.edu or 617-287-4314.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OPENING DOORS CONFERENCE](http://www.openingdoorsforyouth.org) - www.openingdoorsforyouth.org

AT&T introduces new phone plan for customers with disabilities

If you are looking for a fully accessible, user-friendly phone, then look no further than the AT&T iPhone. The iPhone is now even more accessible for Americans who are deaf or have a hearing or speech disability. AT&T Inc. recently announced a new Text Accessibility Plan (TAP) for iPhone, designed to give iPhone customers with disabilities the choice of unlimited text messaging, Web browsing, and easy access to e-mail for \$40 a month. This phone has many accessible features including an innovative, easy to use Multi-Touch touch screen.



This new plan is available to new and current iPhone users with qualifying disabilities through AT&T's National Center for Customers with Disabilities (NCCD). To qualify for the iPhone TAP, customers must complete an application for eligibility (see link below). During the iPhone

activation process, customers sign up for a standard iPhone voice and data plan. After the iPhone is activated, customers can e-mail, fax, or mail the eligibility form back to the NCCD to change their rate plan to the TAP for iPhone.

For further information, call 866-241-6568 voice or 866-241-6567 TTY.

[DOWNLOAD TEXT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN - www.wireless.att.com](#)

[READ ABOUT OTHER AT&T OFFERINGS FOR CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON: ELECTION 2008

You've seen the ads, you've heard it on the news, you've seen their faces, but are you really ready to vote for the next President of the United States? The 2008 presidential election is right around the corner, and we want to make sure that you are prepared. Are you registered to vote? If not, register today! Voting is your right as a US citizen. It allows you to choose who you feel is the best person to lead our country (or your state, county, etc. in other elections). Voting is one way to use your voice. It may seem like your one voice does not make a difference, but one vote really does count. Make your choices and vote in this year's election.



To help you prepare for the 2008 presidential election, we have compiled some useful information. Please contact KYEA if you need any assistance with registering to vote or understanding the voting process.

National Forum on Disability Issues Webcast

Where can you learn all about the 2008 presidential candidates and where they stand on disability issues? Watch the taped webcast for the recent National Forum on Disability Issues. This event was a historic, nonpartisan forum on national disability policy that was held on July 26, 2008 in Columbus, Ohio. All presidential candidates were invited and asked to speak on important disability issues. Candidates were able to individually present their visions for the future of the disability community in America and were then asked questions by Judy Woodruff, news anchor and journalist, who served as the moderator. The event was taped and can now be viewed on the web.

[VIEW THE NATIONAL FORUM ON DISABILITY ISSUES WEBCAST - www.aapd.com](#)

Important Election Dates to Remember

October 20, 2008: Voter Registration Deadline (Last day to register to vote)

October 31, 2008: Deadline to Apply for Advanced Ballot (Last day to request voting through the mail)

November 4, 2008: General Election (Voting Day!)

January 20, 2008: Inauguration Day (Winning candidate becomes President)

Register To Vote!

Are you registered to vote? If not, then today is the day to do so! Voting is your right, and it allows you to share your opinion on very important decisions. The process to register is VERY easy. There are only three steps:

1. Make sure that you are eligible to vote. The requirements are:

- be 18 years of age or older;
- be a U.S. citizen; and
- be a resident of Kansas.

2. Fill out the voter registration form completely.

[VIEW VOTER REGISTRATION FORM](http://www.voteks.org/voteks/pdf_voterreg.html) - www.voteks.org/voteks/pdf_voterreg.html

3. Send your registration form to the county office listed on the second page of the form.

If you need any assistance with registering to vote or understanding the voting process, contact KYEA toll free at 866-577-5932. We would be happy to help you out!

Links For Further Information

[Vote KS](http://www.voteks.org) - www.voteks.org

[Rock the Vote](http://www.rockthevote.org) - www.rockthevote.org

[MTV Choose or Lose](http://www.chooseorlose.com) - www.chooseorlose.com

[AAPD Election 2008 Action Center](http://www.aapd.com/news/election/peac2008.php) (Dedicated completely to disability issues)- www.aapd.com/news/election/peac2008.php

[2008 Presidential Election on Yahoo! News](http://news.yahoo.com/elections) - <http://news.yahoo.com/elections>

[CNN Election Center 2008](http://www.cnn.com/election/2008) - www.cnn.com/election/2008

[Barack Obama Official Website](http://www.barackobama.com) - www.barackobama.com

[John McCain Official Website](http://www.johnmccain.com) - www.johnmccain.com

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The thing that makes us different from others is how we use our abilities."

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of our e-newsletter. We always welcome feedback and ideas from our friends, so please email me anytime at carrieg@kyea.org. Also, please check our website often for more updates.

Enjoy the rest of the Summer!

Sincerely,

Carrie Greenwood
Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy