



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

# Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy Newsletter

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Dear KYEA Family and Friends,

Thank you for being a part of our KYEA family! It's been awhile since the last issue of our newsletter, and you know what that means... things are busy in the KYEA office! We have lots going on, and we are sharing all of it with you. One of our greatest bits of news is that we have added 26 more youth to our KSYLF alumni! Hear all about our 2009 Forum in this newsletter. Also, it's back to school time! The summer has flown by, but we are ready to prepare you for a successful, empowered school year. Read tips, resources, and helpful links in our Spotlight On: Back to School Time. There is much more in this issue, so get started...

## KYEA NEWS

*by Carrie Greenwood*

### **Kansas Youth Leadership Forum welcomes 26 new alumni!**

Build Your Life One Layer at a Time... this was the theme that rang out at the 2009 Kansas Youth Leadership Forum. Twenty-six youth leaders throughout the state came together to learn about leadership, advocacy, resources, and much more during our ninth annual Forum. The 2009 KSYLF was held June 16-20 at Washburn University in Topeka. Along with the 26 delegates that attended, 28 volunteers and staff were on hand to facilitate the week's activities. Nine alumni returned this year to give back and serve as peer mentors.



Throughout the week, the delegates learned how to build their life one layer at a time. They were able to explore the tools or resources that are available to them, met many supporters who can assist them, and made a plan for building their future. One of the highlights of the week was the Day at the Capitol. Delegates had a lively debate in the Senate Chambers about the passage of a Disability Awareness and History Bill (*see real version of this bill below*). With the assistance of Senator Vicki Schmidt, the delegates were able to present both sides and were very passionate about their arguments. Another highlight of the week came during the Mentor Luncheon. The audience enjoyed an enthusiastic keynote presentation by Michael Murray with the North Carolina Disability Action Network. Michael shared his story about living with a learning disability and was able to interact with the delegates through an advocacy presentation as well.

## Photo of the Month



**FAMILY.** Small Group 5 takes some time out to pose for a photo during the 2009 Kansas Youth Leadership Forum. **VIEW MORE '09 KSYLF PHOTOS** - [www.myspace.com/ksylf](http://www.myspace.com/ksylf)

### **KYEA On the Web**

[www.kyea.org](http://www.kyea.org)  
[www.myspace.com/ksylf](http://www.myspace.com/ksylf)

### **Check out these other websites!**

[www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)  
[www.nyl.n.org](http://www.nyl.n.org)  
[www.disabledstudents.org](http://www.disabledstudents.org)  
<http://ahead.org>  
[www.youthactivism.com](http://www.youthactivism.com)

### **Join Our List**

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

*The Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy is made possible through a grant from Kansas Rehabilitation Services.*

As in past years, the delegates were able to participate in the usual KSYLF activities of a wheelchair basketball demonstration, a barbecue, a talent show, and a dance. At the end of the week, delegates returned home with their very own toolbox and blueprint for the future, their Personal Leadership Plan.

We would like to welcome our new alumni and volunteers to the KSYLF family! To our '09 alum, you will be hearing from us and please know that our door is always open. We look forward to seeing you all in the future!

SEE PHOTOS OF OUR 2009 KSYLF - [www.myspace.com/ksylf](http://www.myspace.com/ksylf)

## **Justin Cosco Scholarship Award given to '07 alumni**

*by JoAnne Fluke*



Joseph Stroud, KSYLF '07 Alumni, received a unique tool this year at the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum. During the Mentor Luncheon, it was announced that Joseph, who is from Wichita, was the recipient of the Justin Cosco Scholarship Award.

This year the scholarship came with a new gift... MONEY! Thanks to KYEA's spring fundraiser, a garage sale, and donations from KSYLF alumni, Joseph received a \$100 scholarship.

Joseph said, "I felt very honored receiving the scholarship."

When asked what he plans to do with the money, he said, "When I graduate in 2012 from Butler County Community College, I plan to use the money to help disability programs."

Joseph hopes that people keep going and never give up on their dreams... and that is why he is the 2009 Justin Cosco Scholarship Award recipient.

## **KYEA team growing every day... meet our staff...**

### **Shannon Cox, Office Assistant**

Things are running quite smoothly around the KYEA office these days, and this is much in part to our office assistant Shannon Cox. Shannon has been with KYEA since April of this year. As office assistant, she is in charge of answering phones, welcoming guests, organizing the office, and so much more. Shannon is a mom to one and a half year old, Savannah, and has a baby on the way. Shannon has a wide range of skills and has worked in a variety of jobs including cake decorator, accountant, and office manager of an insurance company. She lived in Kansas City, Missouri for most of her life up until two and half years ago when she moved to Topeka. Shannon says that her favorite part of the job is the people. She states, "I love it! My co-workers are wonderful."



### **JoAnne Fluke, VISTA Fundraising Coordinator**

As one of the founding board members of KYEA, JoAnne Fluke has an investment in this organization and has returned to work with us in a very different capacity. She is currently serving as Fundraising Coordinator for KYEA, where she works to obtain funding for current and new programs.

JoAnne was born in Columbia, MO, but has lived in Ottawa, KS for most of her life. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Religion with emphases in Philosophy and Music. JoAnne was Ms. Wheelchair Kansas 2005, and she is currently the co-director of Groovability,

which is a wheelchair basketball organization. In addition to this volunteer position, she wanted to give back to the disability community in other ways. So, in April, JoAnne entered the VISTA Program through Washburn University and is serving as Fundraising Coordinator for KYEA through this program. JoAnne has enjoyed being involved with KYEA over the years. "I love the people that KYEA connects with," JoAnne said.

## Emily Bergman, Summer Intern

KYEA staff had a little extra help this summer from KU intern, Emily Bergman. Emily began an internship with KYEA at the beginning of the summer and has been helping out with a variety of programs, including the creation of peer groups in southeast Kansas. She chose to intern at our organization because of her interest in working with youth with disabilities. Emily is originally from St. Benedict, KS, but has been living in Lawrence where she is attending the University of Kansas. She will return to KU this month where she will be entering her junior year as a social work and business major. Emily would eventually like to manage a non-profit organization someday. She has learned a lot from her experience at KYEA. Most of all, she has learned that there are programs available for youth with disabilities. "They can succeed and get out there and do what they want to do, which is pretty awesome," Emily said.



KYEA staff would like to thank Emily for spending her summer with us! We truly appreciate your hard work and passion. We will miss you, but know that we will see you again in the future!

## **Disability Awareness and History Bill passed in Kansas!**

Kansas has made history! After months of planning, strategizing, and advocating with our youth taskforce, the Disability Awareness and History Bill was officially passed during the last few days of the legislative session. KYEA formed a taskforce to work on this bill in November of 2008. The members of the taskforce, including Andrew Crane, KSYLF '06 Alumni; Chris Roberson, KSYLF '08 Alumni; and Thad Smith, KSYLF '07 Alumni; presented testimony to the House and Senate during the session and received positive support from most legislators. They rallied support in their local communities and spoke with various groups to share the importance of the bill. Many months, and an amendment later, what was originally known as Senate Bill 162 was put within Senate Bill 41 and was passed by both houses of the legislature. KYEA staff, youth representatives, and Senator Anthony Hensley all were present for an official bill signing ceremony on June 4, 2009.

KYEA and our youth taskforce will be working very hard in the coming school year to make sure that schools have the resources to teach disability awareness and history in their classrooms. We are currently recruiting for more youth presenters in local communities (*see story below*). We would like to say a HUGE thank you to all of the supporters and advocates who helped to get this bill passed. We would also like to thank our Kansas legislators for recognizing the importance of such a bill. This is a large step in the right direction for our state, and we could not have done it without all of you!

READ THE DISABILITY AWARENESS AND HISTORY BILL - [www.kslegislature.org/bills/2010/162.pdf](http://www.kslegislature.org/bills/2010/162.pdf)

READ ABOUT EFFORTS IN OTHER STATES - [www.disabilityhistoryweek.org](http://www.disabilityhistoryweek.org)



## **NEEDED: Youth presenters for the Disability Heritage Project**

With the passage of a new Disability Awareness and History Bill in Kansas, more and more students will begin to learn about people with disabilities during their school day. Also, many more community groups and organizations are interested in hearing about this topic as well. For the past few years, KYEA has been conducting presentations across Kansas on the topics of disability heritage and awareness. With a greater demand comes a need for more presenters, so..... we need your help!



On August 22, KYEA will be providing a free training for youth with disabilities to learn how to present in their local communities. This training will be the beginning step for the participants to go out and present in their city on disability history and awareness. All presenters will first try out their skills by speaking alongside KYEA staff. They will then have the opportunity to pair up or present by themselves to various other groups. The training itself will give those interested the tools to go out and present this material in an educated, meaningful way. The training will cover the disability history and awareness curriculum, tips for presenting, ideas for gaining interest, and more.

If you are interested in attending our training, or know of a youth who would be good for this project, contact Carrie at 785-215-6655 or [carrieg@kyea.org](mailto:carrieg@kyea.org).

## **Disability Heritage Project available for community organizations and companies**

Do you work for an organization or company who could benefit from hearing about disability history and awareness? Then the Disability Heritage Project is for you! KYEA is making a large effort to branch out with our Heritage presentations to non-school related groups. This includes organizations, companies, civic groups, youth camps, etc.

The Disability Heritage Project brings disability history and pride into the community. Youth leaders present on various topics surrounding disability heritage, culture, awareness, and the struggles and triumphs that mark our history. Audiences learn what leaders, laws, and movements paved the road to the freedoms that we have today. They also learn how awareness can break down barriers. The presentation is interactive, informative, and can benefit ALL people!

To schedule a presentation, contact Carrie at 785-215-6655 or [carrieg@kyea.org](mailto:carrieg@kyea.org).

## **MOLE program targets 2009 KSYLF alumni**

KYEA is gearing up for a new year of our Mentoring Our Leaders to Employment (MOLE) program. The MOLE program works to facilitate mentoring relationships between our KSYLF alumni and successful adults working in a variety of career fields. Each participant is paired up with a mentor who is working in the field of interest to them. The ultimate goal of MOLE is that each alum will be mentored on employment topics, which will lead to full or part time work or a volunteer position.

As a MOLE participant, alumni are able to meet with their mentor on a regular basis, chat about topics related to employment, begin working on a resume, learn about their career of interest, and keep in contact with KYEA through conference calls. Each participant can request their mentor from the KSYLF Mentor Luncheon or ask for someone new in their community.

We are currently recruiting for this program from our 2009 KSYLF alumni. If you are a part of this group and would like to take part in the MOLE program, contact us! Give us a call at 785-215-6655 or email us at [carrieg@kyea.org](mailto:carrieg@kyea.org).

## **Peer groups formed in SE Kansas / new website launched**



Youth with disabilities in southeast Kansas will soon be coming together to learn, share, and have some fun! KYEA



is currently working with SKIL Resource Center to form peer groups in cities where SKIL offices are located. These areas include: Parsons, Chanute, Columbus, Fredonia, Hays, Independence, Pittsburg, Sedan, and Yates Center. These peer groups will give young people with disabilities the

opportunity to meet other youth and interact in an empowering environment. Participants will take part in activities, hear from speakers, learn about resources, and, most of all, have the opportunity to support each other. If you live in southeast Kansas and would like to be a part of a peer group, contact us at 785-215-6655 or [carrieg@kyea.org](mailto:carrieg@kyea.org).

As a tool for these new peer groups, SKIL has launched a new website designed by and for the youth of Kansas. This website is available for all youth with disabilities throughout the state to network together, post events, find friends, and more. EmpowerKansasYouth.com even allows you to create your own website. Check it out now!

VISIT THE EMPOWER KANSAS YOUTH WEBSITE - [www.empowerkansasyouth.com](http://www.empowerkansasyouth.com)

### **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:** Saturday, October 10, 2009, at the Topeka YWCA at a to be determined time.

## **LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR**

As I prepare to walk down the aisle and get married in September, I think back to when I was younger and how I thought I would never be able to find a man that would marry me! Even though I never announced to the world that I wanted to get married as a goal of mine, deep down in my heart, I had made it my secret goal. Over the years, my progress with this "secret" was pretty bleak. One boring date after another, one lonely Valentine's Day after another, and one lonely weekend after another... I almost tried to forget that I had ever set this secret goal in the first place!

Getting married, graduating from school, finding a job, getting a promotion, having a family, losing weight... these are all goals that do not give you satisfaction over night. You have to work hard at building relationships, getting good grades, and doing your best at work. Sometimes, we just want to forget it all! Any goal that you set for yourself is not easy. If it was easy, it wouldn't be a goal! I can guarantee one thing though- the reward in the end is so worth the time and effort it takes to get to the finish line. So, don't quit the race now on your goals. Remember that you have people beside you on the same path ready to help you on your journey!

Julia Fonseca  
KYEA Executive Director



## Jenny Unrein- Owner of JennyLU Designs

Jenny Unrein of Topeka has found a way to take her love of drawing and make it into a business. Jenny, who is 21, currently owns JennyLU Designs, which allows her to sell her own original artwork and merchandise. This merchandise includes stationary, magnets, t-shirts, hats, calendars, and more! All artwork is created solely by Jenny, with some assistance from her mom, Wendi.

Jenny's talent for drawing was originally discovered some time ago when she would design creative cards for her mom. One day, Jenny began to create larger drawings and her mom would color them in with bright colors all chosen by Jenny herself. This led to the idea of giving back to the community by selling her artwork and giving 10% of the proceeds to the Williams Syndrome Association. Jenny has Williams Syndrome and her unique perspective from her disability shapes her artwork that is created. This hobby eventually turned into a business, over a year ago, with some funding from Vocational Rehabilitation.



Jenny now sells all of her merchandise on the web, as well as at local conferences and events. She is always looking for ways to promote JennyLU Designs at local events. If you have ideas, or would like to get in contact with Jenny, send an email to [jennyludesigns@yahoo.com](mailto:jennyludesigns@yahoo.com).

VISIT THE JENNYLU DESIGNS WEBSITE - [www.jennyludesigns.com](http://www.jennyludesigns.com)



## Jeremiah O'Dell- Local Advocate

For those who think that youth with disabilities can't make a difference, just look at Jeremiah O'Dell. Jeremiah is proving that young people can be involved in their communities and can stand up for what they believe in.

Jeremiah has lived in Kansas for most of his life and currently lives in Topeka. He is 26 years old and has a variety of disabilities, including non-epileptic seizures, ADHD, Agoraphobia, and OCD. Jeremiah has a passion for fighting for the rights of people with disabilities. He got involved with the local advocacy group ADAPT three and a half years ago much in part because of a need for more youth involvement within the group. Through ADAPT, Jeremiah has been involved in non-violent direct actions, has had the opportunity to educate legislators on issues affecting the disability community, and has helped with some local organizing.

In addition to ADAPT, Jeremiah is also currently on the ADA Advisory Council of Topeka and the AARP Diversity Council of Kansas. Some of his future goals include becoming a national organizer for ADAPT, becoming a city council member, helping more youth become involved, and eventually becoming a Senator. As a young person with a disability, Jeremiah wants to help other youth with disabilities become empowered. He suggests, "Get involved and make your voice be heard. You can't change anything by sitting on the sidelines as a spectator."

*Are you a Kansas youth with a disability who has a story to share? We are always eager to hear about youth who are active in their communities! Send us your stories and we will publish YOU in future issues of our e-newsletter. Give us a call or send us an email... let us know all about your accomplishments!*

CONTACT KYEA AT [CARRIEG@KYE.A.ORG](mailto:CARRIEG@KYE.A.ORG) OR 866.577.5932.

## **Families Together to host upcoming transition conference**

Transition... it happens to all of us at some point in our lives. Families Together is making an effort to assist youth with disabilities in the transition process. In September, they will be hosting their annual transition conference that is open to youth with disabilities, parents, educators, providers, and more. The 2009 conference will be held on September 19 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. It will be held at the Independent Living Resource Center in Wichita.



The theme for this year's transition conference is "Navigating Your Way Into the Future." The agenda will include a keynote speaker and many breakout sessions including preparation for transition, estate planning for families, a session on taking control of your life, and more. Exhibitors will also be on hand to share about resources that they offer.

The registration fee for this conference is only \$15.00. Students, ages 13 to 22, may attend for free. Also, lunch will be provided. To sign up for the conference, visit the link below. For more information, call 316-945-7747.

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

## **RCIL offers Employment Connection sessions in Topeka**

The Resource Center for Independent Living in Topeka is helping people with disabilities move closer to employment. RCIL is currently holding weekly sessions called "Employment Connections." These sessions are an opportunity to learn about a variety of employment topics, as well as learn from other people with disabilities about job success. "Employment Connections" is held at the RCIL office in Topeka (519 SW 37th St). Each session is from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. The following topics will be discussed in the coming months:

August 17: How to do successful applications  
August 24: Let's role play interviews  
August 31: Employer expectations and mock interviews  
September 14: Find a job that matches you  
September 21: Kansas Works  
September 28: Employment paperwork, benefits, and pay stubs  
October 5: Develop an employment crisis plan  
October 12: Final practice from applications to interviews

For more information or to request accommodations in advance, call Johnna at 785-267-1717.

## **"Yes I Can" awards seek motivated youth with disabilities**

Do you know of a youth with a disability in our state who has achieved goals and promoted awareness? Then nominate them for a "Yes I Can" award! The Kansas Council for Exceptional Children will be dedicating their entire fall awards luncheon to the youth and are currently accepting nominations for the "Yes I Can" awards.

These awards honor students with disabilities who excel. The awards celebrate the achievements of children and youth with disabilities, encourage individuals to seek their highest potential, and increase public awareness of the abilities, aspirations, and personal qualities of those with disabilities. All teachers, principals, service providers, friends, and parents from all over the state are encouraged to provide nominations. The award winners will be recognized at the annual Kansas CEC luncheon on October 17 in Topeka.

Nominations will be accepted until September 28, 2009. Nomination forms can be found at the link below. For further information, contact Joy Fuqua at 620-227-9383 or [joyfuqua@yahoo.com](mailto:joyfuqua@yahoo.com).

NOMINATE A YOUTH FOR THE YES I CAN AWARD - [www.kansascec.org](http://www.kansascec.org)

## **Kansas Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired changes address on the web**

The Kansas Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (KABVI) has changed their website address. The site can now be found at [www.kabvi.com](http://www.kabvi.com). It contains information about the organization, updated news, resource links, and much more.

KABVI strives to increase the independence, opportunity, and quality of life for all Kansans who are blind and visually impaired. Their mission is to assist this population with becoming equals among their sighted peers.

VISIT KABVI ON THE WEB - [www.kabvi.com](http://www.kabvi.com)

## **Conference focuses on assistive technology for students**

When school starts this month, many students will be using assistive technology in order to do their daily work. For some students with disabilities, technology is a large aid in getting through the school day. An upcoming conference will focus on this very topic. In November, Infnitec will be hosting a one-day conference entitled "Empowering Students through Assistive Technology." The conference will take place at the Memorial Union at Emporia State University on November 13. It will be from 8:30 am - 3:30 pm.



The conference is open to anyone who is interested in learning about assistive technology for students. The sessions will focus on four main topics: classroom modifications and visuals for students with autism, technology to improve math skills, running technology on mobile devices like iPods and flash drives, and obtaining electronic text materials for students.

Registration for this conference is \$125 per person. To register, visit the link below or call 877-378-5433.

REGISTER NOW - [www.emporia.edu/jones](http://www.emporia.edu/jones)

## **Resource Spotlight: Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City**

Adapted recreation, computer technology programs, community events, driver's training program... these are all services offered by the Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City. This facility has been serving people with disabilities for the past 62 years. While the Institute does offer a hospital program, rehabilitation services, and various forms of therapy, there is much more offered by this facility. Check out some of their other programs below:

- Successful Adult Independent Living Skills Program (SAILS)- assists with being successful upon returning to work and school after obtaining a disability
- Driver's Training Program- helps people with physical disabilities to obtain the appropriate equipment and training to drive a vehicle
- Adaptive Computer and Communication Technology Program (ACCT)- exploration of assistive technology tools
- Wheelchair Evaluation and Seating Assessment Program- assists wheelchair users with finding wheelchairs and comfortable seating options
- Annual Community Events- Day at the Lake (held in July), summer camps for youth, Arts on the Hill exhibit (coming up on September 12), adapted sports opportunities, and much more.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE KC REHABILITATION INSTITUTE - [www.rehabkc.org](http://www.rehabkc.org)



## **Topeka YWCA offers class on highway construction**

Get your construction career started today! The YWCA in Topeka is offering an eight-week program focusing on highway construction and life skills management. This program is offered as part of the Career Assistance Network (CAN).

CAN creates opportunities for individual growth and empowerment through self-sufficiency. The Highway Construction and Life Skills Management (CLSM) course is designed to provide pre-employment, entry level training, and supportive services in an effort to increase the total number of women, minorities, and disadvantaged persons employed in the Federal-aid highway construction industry in northeast Kansas.

This training course is completely FREE. All interested participants must fill out an application and meet certain requirements. To apply, contact the Career Assistance Network at [lindak@ywcatopeka.org](mailto:lindak@ywcatopeka.org) or 785.233.1750 ext 262.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS PROGRAM - [www.ywcatopeka.org](http://www.ywcatopeka.org)

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

*by Emily Bergman*

### **Fulbright program provides opportunities abroad**

Do you want to study law in Tunisia? How about work as an intern in Bogota, Columbia? These are just a few of the amazing things that you could do through the Fulbright Program. The Fulbright Program provides equal access to the U.S. Department of State's Fulbright Scholarships to study, teach, or participate in other professional, cultural, and educational activities internationally.



There are currently more than 155 countries across the globe with Fulbright Programs. Recipients of the scholarships have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make their mark on a foreign country and share their experiences upon returning home. The Fulbright Program also provides disability-related accommodations to award recipients, like adaptive computers or personal care attendants. They encourage participation of people with disabilities to enhance diversity and provide overseas opportunities to qualified people, regardless of disabilities.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM - [www.miusa.org/ncde/spotlight/fulbright](http://www.miusa.org/ncde/spotlight/fulbright)

### **Kids as Self Advocates publishes first issue of newsletter!**

Kids as Self Advocates recently published their first ever issue of the KASA newsletter. View this newsletter at the link below.

KASA is a national project created by youth with disabilities for youth to educate society about issues concerning youth. Their biggest belief is that young people with disabilities will have control over their own lives and futures. The project consists of teens and young adults working to teach youth about their rights, give peer support and training, and change systems to include youth with disabilities.

READ THE KASA NEWSLETTER - [www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org)

## **Obama administration makes effort to hire people with disabilities**

Nineteen years have gone by since the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) has been passed. The ADA is a landmark legislation that was designed to prevent discrimination and enable individuals with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of society, including the workforce. The ADA affects each and every one of us, and includes the right to seek, obtain, and maintain employment without being hampered by physical or attitudinal barriers. The Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, under Obama, has made a formal commitment to increasing employment of people with disabilities.

The employment rate for people with disabilities is 22.6%, compared to 71.9% of people without disabilities. The Secretary of Labor points out that, in our government, which tries to be a model employer; the number of people with disabilities has actually decreased in the past decade. She points out that there is no excuse for this decrease, due to resources that are available. With the help of all these resources, Solis encourages the federal government to push for the right of those who are qualified for and want to work, the right to work. Solis points out that this recent effort to hire 3000 people is an amazing opportunity to recruit and employ people with disabilities.

## **Social Security Administration begins 2009 Hiring Project**

If you are a person with a disability, and you are looking for a job, the place for you might be the social security administration. In the past, the social security administration has hired a significant number of employees with disabilities. With the opening of some new facilities in the next few years, they plan to open the door for hiring more.

SSA offers a unique opportunity for individuals with disabilities to be considered for hire. For example, SSA reaches out to Ticket to Work ticketholders who are trying to return to work, veterans with disabilities, and students with disabilities. Many individuals with disabilities will qualify for consideration under a special placement authority called Schedule A, which allows federal managers to hire individuals with certain disabilities noncompetitively.

The types of jobs available at SSA include work in field offices and teleservice centers where employees assist the public by phone and in person with a wide variety of program related activities such as filing claims, applying for a new or replacement social security cards, and other types of inquiries. SSA also recruits new employees to work in claims processing centers and in hearings offices.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE OPPORTUNITIES -  
[www.cessi.net/ttw/SSAHires/index.html](http://www.cessi.net/ttw/SSAHires/index.html)

## **President Obama visits with group of disability leaders**



With the passing of the 19th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, many people have asked whether or not the United States has fulfilled the promise of this act. A meeting on July 24 marked an important first step for the President and the disability community to work together toward fulfilling this promise of equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. President Obama invited a group of 12 representatives of the disability community to meet privately with him and other administration officials before a White House celebration marking the anniversary of the ADA.

Before the President arrived, the disability community representatives discussed their priorities for civil rights enforcement, including internet accessibility, Olmstead act enforcement, reducing the waiting period for ADA complaints to be resolved, using OFCCP (Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs) to enforce the affirmative action provisions in the Rehabilitation Act, protecting children from the use of aversives and restraints, and implementing a government wide strategy to improve the representation of people with significant disabilities in the federal workforce.

After the President arrived, he mentioned the fact that he had a wide-ranging agenda that

included employment, education, technology, health care, and civil rights policy. He also indicated his interest in using this first meeting as a listening session, to where the group can have follow-up meetings in the weeks to come.

The disability community representatives came away from this meeting with the belief that the President, his cabinet, and his senior White House staff are committed to working with the disability community to achieve the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This meeting represented a landmark step forward for our community and for the country.

### **Seeking participants for disability employment study**

Are you living with a disability? Are you employed? If the answer to these two questions is yes, you could be eligible for a research study! Washington University in St. Louis has teamed up with Region 7 Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center to conduct a study of people with disabilities who are successfully employed.

To become involved, participants must have a mobility, visual, and/or hearing disability; have been at current full or part-time job for at least two years; and must work in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, or Nebraska. Participants must fill out a web-based survey and share experiences of finding and holding a job as an individual with a disability. Once this is completed, participants may be offered the option to participate in a videotaped interview and have at least five job tasks videotaped. All participants will be reimbursed for their time and effort.

The overall hope of this study is to provide information on what task modifications, assistive technologies, personal assistance, build environmental features, and/or worksite accommodations can be helpful to individuals with disabilities to be successful employees.

PARTICIPATE IN THIS SURVEY - <http://emc.wustl.edu/DEsclogn.htm>

### **Web training available on employment of people with disabilities**

An online course called "Orientation to the Employment of People with Disabilities" is available to those who are interested in learning about the history of supported employment. This is a two-week, self-faced course that introduces participants to the importance of employment of people with disabilities, which is a group with the highest unemployment rate in the country. It teaches about the unique obstacles that the disability community faces in getting hired and succeeding at work. In addition, participants get an opportunity to learn about the history leading up to supported employment, how the process of supported employment works, the current outcomes it has produced, and what legislation, regulations, and funding governs it. Other topics covered include the role of the job seeker, his or her family, and the employment specialist, as well as the job seeker's right to services and non-discrimination.

SIGN UP FOR THIS WEB TRAINING - <https://trn-store.com/drupal/node/936>

### **AASPIRE Gateway Project seeks participants**

You could be eligible to participate in an online research project called the AASPIRE Gateway Project! Conducted by the Academic Autistic Spectrum Partnership in Research and Education (AASPIRE), along with many other organizations, this project aims to collect a variety of types of data. The survey collects personal information (age, gender, disability, education, and employment status), information about which hand you prefer to use when doing activities such as writing with a pen or pencil, and information about personal preferences regarding interests, habits, and social interactions. The data will be used to invite eligible participants to AASPIRE's continuing online research studies and used in AASPIRE online research studies as well.

Participants must be at least 18 years old and have access to the Internet. Adults who identify as having a disability and adults who identify as being on the autistic spectrum are especially encouraged to participate. By taking the survey, participants are automatically entered into a 1 in 25 chance drawing to win a \$25 gift certificate at Amazon.com.

PARTICIPATE IN THE AASPIRE SURVEY - [www.aaspire.org/gateway](http://www.aaspire.org/gateway)

## **Take Care Health Clinics provide free health care services**

If you have suffered from job loss and have no health insurance, there is a way you can receive free health care services. The program, known as the "Take Care Recovery Plan," offers free healthcare services for families in this situation through 2009. Offered by Walgreens and Take Care Health Systems, the Plan applies to most services currently provided at the Take Care Clinics, including routine treatment of the following conditions: respiratory illnesses, such as colds sinus infections, bronchitis and strep throat; common conditions, such as seasonal allergies and pink eye; and skin conditions, like poison ivy and minor skin infections. This program is aimed at helping patients meet their health care needs and giving families peace of mind for basic healthcare services.



Under the Take Care Recovery Plan, patients can access these services anytime between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Also provided are certain free laboratory testing services.

This offer applies to any Take Care Clinic patient that loses his or her job on or after March 31 and has no health insurance. Any other individual who visits a Take Care Clinic as a patient on or after March 31, and then loses his or her job and is uninsured, will qualify as well for the offer for the remainder of 2009.

For more information, visit the link below or call 1-866-Take-Care.

LEARN MORE ABOUT TAKE CARE HEALTH CLINICS - [www.takecarerecoveryplan.com](http://www.takecarerecoveryplan.com)

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

### **American Association on Health and Disability Scholarship**

A new scholarship has been created that will support students with disabilities. The American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) will be giving away scholarships this year to support students with disabilities who are pursuing higher education. Preference will be given to students who plan to pursue undergraduate/graduate studies in the field of public health, health promotion, disability studies, to include disability policy and disability research.

These scholarships are competitive and will be limited to under \$1000. The scholarship criteria is below:

- Applicant must be a high school graduate, have a documented disability and provide documentation of their disability.
- Applicant must be a US citizen or legal resident living in the US and enrolled in, or accepted by, an accredited US four year university or graduate school on a full-time basis.
- Preference will be given to students majoring in public health, disability studies, health promotion or a field related to disability and health.

All applications must be postmarked by October 15, 2009. The first AAHD scholarships will be given out in December 2009. For more information, contact Roberta Carlin at [rcarlin@aahd.us](mailto:rcarlin@aahd.us) or 301-545-6140 ext. 206.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AAHD SCHOLARSHIP - [www.aahd.us](http://www.aahd.us)

### **Directory offers large list of disability scholarships**

Are you looking to go to one website for a whole list of disability related scholarships? Then we have the website for you! Check out [Disaboom.com](http://Disaboom.com). With a focus on supporting educational opportunities for students with disabilities, Disaboom's Scholarship Directory describes more



than 125 financial aid programs that encompass a large range of providers, disabilities, and financial packages. Some of these programs provide award amounts up to \$20,000, while most are not less than \$1,000, and can be applied for annually.

The directory includes scholarships and financial aid programs in three categories:

- Comprehensive disability-related scholarships, available to students with any type of disability
- Condition-specific scholarships (including such conditions as autism, vision and hearing impairments, cystic fibrosis, learning disabilities, lupus, and wheelchair use)
- Group-specific disability scholarships (for example, caregiver scholarships and scholarships for disabled veterans)

For each entry, the directory notes the name of the scholarship, the amount of the award, specifications and restrictions, application deadline, and the contact URL for further information. In addition to the scholarships already identified in the Directory, the Disaboom research team will continue to add new financial aid sources on a regular basis.

VISIT THE DISABOOM SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY - [www.disaboom.com](http://www.disaboom.com)

## SPOTLIGHT ON: Back to School Time!



**It's back to school time! We know, we know... probably not your favorite time of year, but look at it this way, you are one step closer to graduation. Summer flew by and now it is time to start thinking about what is in store for you during this school year. Will it be a good year? Do you have the appropriate accommodations in place to be successful? What are some of your goals for the upcoming semester? In this "Spotlight On," we give you some tips and resources to make this the best year**

**ever. It's up to you, though, to make this a positive year. Whether you are in elementary school, middle school, high school, or college, you can choose to be an empowered, motivated student... and we hope you do just that!**

## **Back to School: Focus on College...**

*by Emily Bergman*

So you graduated high school, and you got accepted into your favorite college... What's next? For example, what happens to your IEP, and how do you get the accommodations you need? Transitioning from high school to college life is hard, but here are a few tips to help you figure out what you need to do to get off to a successful start!

1. Find a time management system that is good for you. Professors in college give you assignments at the beginning of the semester, expecting you to turn them in with little to no reminder of the deadline. To help you keep track of your assignments and tests for each class, you need to find a good time management system that fits your needs, whether it be a day planner, wall calendar, or even a digital planner with reminders.
2. You are responsible for getting your classroom accommodations in place. Different from high school, where you have an IEP, colleges have either one person or an office dedicated to determining eligibility for classroom accommodations and services. To get your accommodations, you must register with the disability support services office on campus and meet with them to determine appropriate ones. When determined eligible, you receive a letter that specifies your accommodations and you are responsible to give this letter to your professors.
3. Find a useful tool to organize your class materials. It's a good idea to use a separate notebook or folder for each class. Also, your class syllabus should be in the very front, where you can see it. Have a different section for notes, assignments, handouts, and tests.
4. Read through every course syllabus. Most college professors express what they expect out of a student through the course syllabus. It provides an overview of the course, learning outcomes expected, materials you need, contact information for the instructor, and descriptions of assignments and exams.
5. Develop a good, professional relationship with your instructors. Introduce yourself to your professor after class. This makes communication a lot easier when he/she has some idea of who you are. Also, be sure to communicate very professionally with them, whether in person or through email.
6. Make use of those classroom accommodations. It is your choice whether or not to use the accommodations provided to you that I mentioned earlier, but most students with disabilities perform better with them.
7. Utilize technology. Research what kind of access to technology you have at your school. There could be lots of technological opportunities out there to help you manage your time, comprehend reading assignments, or even assist you with writing.
8. Utilize campus resources. Lots of colleges offer peer support and other means of support to help you with anything from everyday assignments to studying for your finals. Some examples might be a writing center or peer tutors.
9. It is your decision whether or not to tell anyone about your disability. While we encourage you to be open about your disability, it is your decision whether or not to disclose it to anyone. Consider what your reason would be for sharing your disability, and if you decide to, think about how you are most comfortable with sharing about it. Disability information is considered confidential, so sharing it is totally up to you.
10. Take advantage of resources in your community. Check into whether or not certain community resources are available, for example vocational rehabilitation or public transportation. It can be a good help to use resources on campus and in the local community.

## **Back to School: Focus on Teens...**

"After a summer of sleeping in or doing things on your time, the alarm bell announcing that first day of school can be a rude awakening. Whether you're an anxious new freshman or a confident senior, heading back to school signals a time of transition: new classes, new teachers, new schedules, and a new social scene. Dread it or love it, you gotta go to school. Here are some ways to make the transition from summer to school a little easier..."

READ THE FULL ARTICLE - [http://kidshealth.org/teen/school\\_jobs/school/back\\_to\\_school.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/back_to_school.html)

## **How do I get the accommodations that I need?**

As a student with a disability, you may need some accommodations to help you get the most out of school. It is your right to get these accommodations and it is okay to ask for what you need to be successful. Below are a few links to articles about obtaining accommodations in school:

Advocating for Yourself in Middle School and High School: How To Get What You Need - [www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-advocating-hsms.html](http://www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-advocating-hsms.html)

Breaking Down Barriers: Going to College - [www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-breakingdownbarriers.html](http://www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-breakingdownbarriers.html)

How to Get the most out of your IEP - [www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-iep.html](http://www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-iep.html)

Other Education Links from Kids As Self Advocates - [www.fvkasa.org/resources/education.html](http://www.fvkasa.org/resources/education.html)

Self-empowerment for Young People - [www.nyln.org/Clearinghouse/Documents/Self-Empowerment%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](http://www.nyln.org/Clearinghouse/Documents/Self-Empowerment%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

A Student's Guide to the IEP - [www.nyln.org/Clearinghouse/Documents/A%20Students%20Guide%20to%20the%20IEP.pdf](http://www.nyln.org/Clearinghouse/Documents/A%20Students%20Guide%20to%20the%20IEP.pdf)

## **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

**"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi**

We hope you have enjoyed this new issue of our e-newsletter. We always welcome feedback and ideas from our friends, so please email us anytime at [carrieg@kyea.org](mailto:carrieg@kyea.org).

As always, thank you for your support of KYEA!

Sincerely,

KYEA Staff  
Julia, Carrie, Shannon, JoAnne, and Emily