



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

Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy Newsletter

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Issue: #11

February/2008

Dear Carrie,

Welcome to the February issue of our KYEA E-Newsletter! As you can see, we have made some large changes to the design of this newsletter, and we hope that you like the new look. This month's issue features lots of updates from KYEA, as we have gone through some changes since November. We also have included some news bits on state and national opportunities, as well as some helpful resources. Take a look around and enjoy our new and improved newsletter!

Photo of the Month



RELAX. A group of delegates hang out and pose for a photo during the Real Life Affair at the 2007 Youth Leadership Forum.

[To view more KSYLF '07 photos, click here.](#)

Check out these websites!

KYEA NEWS

Are you a KSYLF alumni? Update us!

KYEA needs an update on our KSYLF alumni! If you are an alumni of the Youth Leadership Forum, then we have some questions for you. We need to know if you are working or currently in school, as well as a few other questions. All of our alumni will be receiving a quick survey in the mail. This survey is also available on our website. See the link below.



By collecting the results of surveys like this one, KYEA is able to report back to our funding sources and continue programs like KSYLF! Please assist us by filling out this short alumni survey. You may email it to us at juliaf@kyea.org, when you are finished.

[VIEW OUR ALUMNI SURVEY](#)

[Our KYEA Website](#)
[National Youth Leadership](#)
[Network](#)
[Kids As Self Advocates](#)
[NCWD-Youth](#)
[Disabled and Proud](#)
[The Youthhood](#)
[Do Something](#)

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.

Volunteers needed for KSYLF 2008

Calling all former and potentially new volunteers! KSYLF is still accepting applications for volunteers for our 2008 Youth Leadership Forum. We are searching for committed, enthusiastic people who are willing to devote a week to this great program. Do you have the skills and passion to facilitate groups and motivate youth with disabilities? Then consider serving as a volunteer at our upcoming KSYLF to be held in June.

The goal of all facilitators is to empower and support each delegate as they discover inner strengths and abilities as individuals and as members of a group. Volunteers are assigned to work with a small group throughout the week. They also interact with the large group during many activities. Volunteers must stay on campus for the duration of the week that KSYLF is taking place.

Past volunteers, KSYLF alumni, and new volunteers are encouraged to apply! Volunteer applicants must fill out our application form, as well as two background checks, and send to the KYEA office (see link to forms below).

[VIEW KSYLF VOLUNTEER APPLICATION](#)

KYEA has moved offices...

KYEA has a new home! The KYEA office has moved to a new location in Topeka. Our new mailing address is PO Box 475, Topeka, KS 66601. Please update your address books. Our new location has great offices for us, as well as a "hang out" area for youth to come and watch videos, read a book, search through our resource library, or just lay back and chill on our comfy couch! We welcome visitors anytime, so stop by if you are in the Topeka area. Give us a call and we can direct you to our new location.

A big thanks to the Resource Center for Independent Living for giving us a home for the past eight years! We truly appreciate RCIL's continued support. We look forward to many more years in our new location!

KYEA welcomes new Office Assistant

Not only does KYEA have a new location, but we also have a new addition to the family! Tami Wise has been hired as the new part time Office Assistant for KYEA. Tami has lived in Topeka for most of her life. She is married and has two sons. In her spare time, Tami enjoys animals, music, and gardening.

Tami has worked in a variety of jobs, mostly pertaining to the health field. She says that she enjoys helping people and has obtained jobs that allow her to do this. It is this love of helping others that led her to KYEA! Tami states, "I love it here so far! I feel like it's a good fit. I look forward to meeting everyone associated with the organization."

Welcome to the KYEA family, Tami!

Search continues for Executive Director...

KYEA is still in search of a fourth person to round out our staff. We are currently accepting applications for the position of Executive Director. KYEA is looking for qualified applicants who have a passion for the organization's mission and who would like to serve in this full time position. This person would be responsible for the implementation of policies set by the Board of Directors, as well as annual goals and objectives, and financial, program, and administrative management of the organization. See the full job description by clicking below.

If you are interested, please e-mail a letter of interest and resume to searchcommittee@kyea.org. Questions can be directed to Julia at 866-577-5932 ext. 3.

[VIEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION](#)

Board positions still available!

Do you have a passion for the KYEA mission? Then consider serving on the KYEA board of directors. We are currently searching for youth and adults who will bring skills and commitment to our board. The KYEA board has two youth positions and one non-youth position available at this time. All interested persons must fill out an application and be interviewed. If you want to invest in KYEA, then consider serving on our board of directors.

[VIEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION](#)

[VIEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS DESCRIPTION](#)

Reminder: KSYLF website has moved

Many months ago, we announced that our Youth Leadership Forum website is now fully integrated with our KYEA website. This is just a reminder that we are no longer affiliated with, nor do we endorse, any content relating to the www.ksylf.org site. If you still have this site bookmarked on your internet browser, we suggest that you replace it with our KYEA website (www.kyea.org). The old web address now contains unwanted spyware and, possibly, viruses that can damage your computer. So, we highly suggest that you DO NOT visit it. For ongoing information about KSYLF, please visit www.kyea.org/content/view/37/56.

STATE NEWS

Important Upcoming Events

Independent Living Day at the Capitol

Thursday, February 21 ~ 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

State Capitol in Topeka

Show the youth presence at the upcoming IL Day at the Capitol on this Thursday, February 21! Come to the Capitol in Topeka on this day to learn about independent living resources in your community and visit with legislators on topics that are important to you. Stop by the KYEA booth to chat with staff and learn more about recent happenings at KYEA! The event will be going on from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Let's show our state that the youth movement is alive and visible! If you need transportation, please contact your local independent living center to obtain a ride. To locate the IL center closest to your town, please visit www.silck.org/cils.htm.



Mental Health Advocacy Day

Wednesday, February 20 ~ 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

State Capitol in Topeka

Come join fellow consumers, family members, providers and advocates for a chance to become better informed about mental health policy issues in the Kansas legislature. This is your chance to educate legislators about the issues affecting people with mental health disabilities. Learn about specific issues, '08 legislative goals, and tips for visiting legislators. To learn more about this event, visit the site below.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY DAY](#)

Ms. Wheelchair Kansas crowning open to the public!

It's time to select a new Ms. Wheelchair Kansas! This year's crowning ceremony will be held on Sunday, March 9, 2008 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm. The event will be held at the Holiday Inn Holidome in Topeka. It will be open to the public and free of charge. Crowning activities will include platform speech presentations by the contestants, a keynote speech from Juliette Rizzo (Ms. Wheelchair America '05), a wheelchair dance performance led by Grooveability, farewell from the current titleholder, and crowning of the new Ms. Wheelchair Kansas 2008.

The mission of the MWKS program is to annually select one woman, who is wheelchair mobile,

who will successfully advocate, educate, and empower all people on a state level. This is NOT a beauty contest, but rather a competition to select the most articulate, accomplished delegate who will serve as a role model and spokesperson for people with disabilities in Kansas.

Be there to say goodbye to the current titleholder and watch as the new Ms. Wheelchair Kansas is crowned!

[LEARN MORE ABOUT MS. WHEELCHAIR KANSAS](#)

Disability Rights Center celebrates 30th Anniversary

The Disability Rights Center of Kansas is having an event to celebrate their 30th Anniversary. The event will take place on March 12, 2008 at the Heritage Hall in Topeka. A reception will be held at 6:00 pm, with a presentation starting at 7:00 pm. The event is free and open to the public. This celebration will include a presentation by Bernard Carabello who will tell his story about an event in the disability rights movement, Willowbrook, and how it created DRC and helped make changes in Kansas. Carabello is a former resident at Willowbrook and a nationally-known speaker and self-advocate. Kansas advocates will also present on the positive changes in services and independence for people with disabilities over the last 30 years, as well as the challenges still faced in Kansas and what you can do about it.

For more information, contact DRC Kansas toll free at 877-776-1541 (TDD toll free 877-335-3725) or by email at info@drckansas.org.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER](#)

K-State hosts Disability Awareness Exhibition

Kansas State University is preparing to host their second annual "K-State For All" Disability Awareness Exhibition. The goal of this exhibition is to increase awareness among K-State students, staff, faculty and visitors about people with all types of disabilities. The event will take place on Wednesday, March 5 from 11:00 am - 1:30 pm. It will take place at the K-State Student Union Courtyard in Manhattan. The exhibition will include booths from various community organizations. It will also include a student panel and entertainment, which will be conducted from 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm.

This event is part of K-State's campus disability awareness week entitled "K-State for All!" The week's events also include a wheelchair basketball game featuring the Kansas Wheelhaws, a show by comedian Chris Fonseca, and a UPC movie. There is no cost to attend this event. For more information about these events, call 785.532.6441 or email dss@ksu.edu.

NATIONAL NEWS

Study abroad program available for students who know sign language

A unique study abroad opportunity is now available to students who are American Sign Language users (deaf and hearing). If you know sign language and have always wanted to travel abroad, then this is the opportunity for you! The Siena School for Liberal Arts, located in Tuscany Italy, is offering a unique three week study abroad experience in the Summer of 2008 for American Sign Language users, Deaf and hearing. These two programs give ASL users an opportunity to learn Italian Sign Language in a formal setting.



The Language and Culture Program for Deaf Adults brings Italians who are Deaf and Americans who are Deaf together for an opportunity to exchange cultural and linguistic experiences. Americans learn Italian Sign Language or LIS and written Italian, while the Italians learn American Sign Language and written English. Students are housed in apartments in the city center for a full opportunity to practice their new skills.

The Summer Program for LIS and Deaf Studies brings hearing students who know ASL from all over America to learn LIS, written and spoken Italian and Italian Deaf culture. Outside the classroom, students stay with local hearing families and are completely immersed in Italian culture and language. Students are also required to complete or participate in a final project which gives back to the Deaf community.

These programs are geared towards college students and may be used as college credit. All classes are taught by native users. In addition to classroom activities, the programs have a variety of opportunities to interact with the local Deaf community. Students also go on excursions to various museums, landmarks and other events.

For more information, send an email to s.allen@sienaschool.com.

Have you traveled to a different country? Share your photos!

Are you a person with a disability? Have you traveled to another country to study, volunteer, teach, intern, or research? Do you have photos? Share them with the world! Mobility International USA (MIUSA) and the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange (NCDE) want your photos for a full-color, 12-month 2009 calendar and screensaver. They are looking for high quality photos showing people with various disabilities (apparent and non-apparent) taking part in overseas experiences: studying, volunteering, teaching, interning, or participating in an international educational experience. All photos must be submitted by March 31, 2008. For contest details and how to enter, click the link below. Show the world where you've been, what you've seen, and what you've done!

[READ FULL CONTEST DETAILS](#)

National Youth Leadership Network searching for new members

The National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN) is currently searching for new members! NYLN is a non-profit organization run by young people with disabilities. They empower all young people to reach their maximum potential. If you have attended our state Youth Leadership Forum, you will see that NYLN is very similar, except it is on a national level. Members receive the following:

- Weekly e-mail updates of opportunities for young people around the country
- Quarterly e-newsletters
- Invitations to participate on national teleconfernces/webcasts
- Links to training materials and resources created by young people, for young people
- Information about other opportunities through the Network

To be a member of NYLN, participants must (1) Be between 15 and 28 years old; (2) Have a disability; and (3) Want to share and learn more about leadership and advocacy skills. This opportunity is free to all youth. To become a member, visit the link below. For more information, contact Betsy toll free at 866-480-6565 or by email at bvalnes@tie.net.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT NYLN](#)

[SIGN UP TO BE A MEMBER OF NYLN](#)

Standardized testing report published, input on paras needed

Kids As Self Advocates (KASA) has been busy at work! They recently published a very important report on standardized testing and are now working on a new project gaining feedback on paraprofessionals.

KASA's newest report is entitled "Standardized Testing: What Youth with Disabilities Have to Say." This report shares what young people with disabilities have to say about the high school exit exam (a standardized test a student must pass to get a high school diploma) as well as other standardized tests? The report shares the youth voice, including many quotes from youth; cutting edge ideas to improve test accessibility and knowledge of rights; and how standardized testing has affected people with disabilities in history. For copies of this report contact KASA at Family Voices at info@fvkasa.org. You may also visit the link below to download an order form.

KASA now wants to hear from youth with disabilities (ages 12-25) about their experiences with paraprofessionals (paras). If you are a youth and want to share your ideas/opinions in order to help improve the way paras work with youth, then complete the KASA survey (see link below). Share your thoughts with the world!

[VISIT THE KASA WEBSITE](#)

[COMPLETE THE KASA SURVEY ON PARAPROFESSIONALS](#)

Art contest announced for people with disabilities

Do you have an interest in art? Do you also happen to have a disability? Then we suggest that you take a closer look at this contest! VSA arts is searching for visual artists with disabilities whose work is inspired by the performing arts. They are seeking art for a display that draws inspiration from music, theater, or dance. These entries should bring to be pleasing in the following areas: storytelling, grace, balance, class, timing, strength, rhythm, humor, costume, irony, beauty, ability, drama, and suspense. Art submissions must be original work that has been completed in the last five years and after the onset of disability. Eligible forms of art include, but are not limited to:

- two-and three- dimensional art (painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, textile, glass, etc.)
- digital art
- installation
- time-based media (video, film, etc.)

This contest is open to artists (ages 18 and over) who are committed to their artistic progress and who have a physical, cognitive, or mental disability. A panel will select the chosen artists for the display. They will be looking for the development of original ideas in the artwork submitted, for example, imagination and ability. So, be sure to pick out your best work!

All artwork must be submitted online. To learn more about the contest, or submit your artwork, visit the link below. The deadline to enter is March 21, 2008. Winners will be notified by April 11, 2008.

[READ MORE ABOUT THE CONTEST OR SUBMIT ARTWORK](#)

Voting accessibility stories wanted!

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) wants to hear about YOUR voting experiences! Last year, NCIL conducted a survey to receive feedback on accessibility of voting places. Now, they want to hear stories from people with disabilities. The NCIL Voting Rights Task Force is seeking feedback from people with disabilities about their experiences voting - both positive and negative. Send all polling place experiences to Kathy Hoell at khoell@cox.net or to Deb Cotter at deb@ncil.org.

Remember, presidential elections will be right around the corner! Also remember that your ONE VOTE does count! If you are not registered to vote, but would like to be, please contact the KYEA office at 866-577-5932, and we will help you out. To learn more about the Presidential Candidates, visit NCIL's "Vote 2008" site. See the link below.

[READ ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES](#)

Upcoming webcast on traveling rights for people with disabilities

Do people with disabilities travel? Of course they do! An upcoming webcast will explain the rights of people with disabilities as they travel for business and leisure purposes. This webcast is entitled "Planes, Trains & Automobiles & Ferries, Cruise Ships, Hotels, Resorts, etc: Your Rights as a Business and Leisure Traveler with a Disability." The presenter will be J. Aaron McCullough who is an attorney specializing in discrimination law, with a special focus on architectural accessibility. He will talk about the rights of travelers with a disabilities while traveling in and outside of the US. He will also talk about traveling with a service animal, as well as rights in motels, hotels, and resorts. The webcast will offer some key tips on how to avoid unpleasant travel experiences. Also, enforcement options will be explored.

The webcast will take place on Wednesday, February 20, 2008 at 2:00 pm. The great thing is, you don't even have to leave your home or office! A webcast can be seen and heard through the internet. Visit the website below for more information.

[VISIT THE TRAVELING WEBCAST SITE](#)

SCHOLARSHIP

STOP Hunger scholarship to recognize students for community service

The Sodexo Foundation wants to recognize and honor students for their outstanding community service. They are seeking nominations to recognize students in the fight against hunger in America.

More than 35 million Americans are at risk of hunger and Sodexo has made a commitment to working to create a hunger-free nation. The STOP Hunger Scholarships recognize and reward students who have made a significant impact in the fight against hunger and its root causes in the United States.

Students will be selected from among applicants with the following criteria:

- Must be enrolled in an accredited education institution (kindergarten through college) in the United States.
- Must have demonstrated on-going commitment to their community by performing volunteer services impacting hunger in the United States at least within the last 12 months.
- Volunteer services must be helping non-family members.
- Multiple applications of the same student will not be accepted; if more than one application for an individual is received, the first application received will be the application accepted and reviewed.

Up to five national scholarship recipients will each receive a \$3,000 scholarship as well as a \$3,000 grant made in their name to the hunger-related charity of their choice in their local community. Up to twenty regional recipients, designated as STOP Hunger Honorees, will each receive a \$1,000 grant made in their name to the hunger-related charity of their choice in their local community.

Applicants must fill out an application and obtain a nomination statement from an adult. Applications are due by February 29, 2008.

[APPLY FOR THE STOP HUNGER SCHOLARSHIP](#)

HELPFUL ARTICLE

Entering work for youth with mental health disabilities

"Starting a job can be difficult for any young person. If you happen to have a hidden disability, such as a mental health impairment, a new workplace can be overwhelming. If you have ever felt this way, you are not alone. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15-44 is major depressive disorder (and this is only one type of mental health impairment). Along with questions about the job itself, you may have questions about when and how to disclose your disability. You may wonder if it is appropriate to ask for modifications in your new work setting. This fact sheet provides guidance to assist you with a successful transition into the workforce by answering questions regarding disclosure, accommodations and resources."

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

[ADDITIONAL RESOURCE: NCWD/Youth- Navigating the Road to Work](#)

That's it for February! We hope you enjoyed our new and improved 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 last few months of Winter!

Sincerely,

Carrie Greenwood
Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy