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# inter**ACT**ion

Summer 2005

Alternative Community Training .....

## MANY QUALIFY FOR APARTMENT PROGRAM



**INDEPENDENCE.** Bill, left, and Gale enjoy independent living at this southwest Columbia apartment complex. Each just moved to more spacious apartments. Bill has lived on his own since 1993 and Gale since 2002.

She adds that the program has found that “having their own space and different freedoms has helped them to learn to have better behavior. To me that’s really exciting.”

The program began two-and-one-half years ago with placement of all participants at Tiger Village. Today participants can choose where they want to live. Now the seven participants live throughout Columbia.

The program involves three staff members and a program manager. Staff assist the clients in many ways such as setting up weekly medications’ planners, reordering meds, setting up doctor’s appointments, cooking, grocery shopping and keeping a checkbook.

The staff, Anderson says, “are the greatest. They’re extremely flexible and caring; they have to be because they’re responsible for seven different places.”

The program is positioned to grow, Anderson believes. “I think it’s going to grow because there are a lot of people in supported living homes that given the chance could live in their own apartment with support. I think there are lots of people who with the right support could be in less strict environments.”

There’s an apartment waiting for countless numbers of individuals. ACT’s apartment program, through the Community Living Program, is anxious to help individuals live on their own.

The apartment program has the staff and philosophy to help a wide range of individuals live on their own. The key to the program is support for each client ranging from 10 to 30 hours per week determined by a team on an individual basis.

And contrary to what you may think, an individual does not have to have all the life skills and behaviors to live on their own. It’s necessary, however, for them to have health and safety skills, be able to self-medicate and be responsible in the community. It’s also required that they know how to use appli-

ances and be able to get in touch with community, fire and emergency contacts.

“This program has proven with the right

*“This program has proven with the right support that individuals even with serious behavior issues can live on their own,” — Sue Anderson, program manager.*

support that individuals even with serious behavior issues can live on their own,” says Sue Anderson, program manager.

“Most people would have thought they need a more restrictive environment. We think these individuals need a less restrictive environment with different kinds of support.”

Candidates for an apartment don’t need to be fully independent, she adds. “Our emphasis is on teaching so someone doesn’t have to have every skill in the world. Staff support is there to teach.”

“I’m really excited about it,” she says. “It’s great.”

# Three new employees join Community Living Program

Three new employees have joined the Community Living Program. The new program managers are Jill Pyeatt, Nancy Brandt and Alanta Free. Each one is responsible for two homes with each home housing two or three ACT clients.

Each new employee finds many good reasons to be a part of ACT. Each enjoys working with the clients as well as the variety in each of their jobs.

"I really like working with clients," says Pyeatt. "It's really cool to just spend time with them and talk with them."

She's a natural for her job because "I really like working with people with developmental disabilities. They're just really great people and they're fun to hang out with."

A native of Fairfax, Missouri, Pyeatt has a psychology degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She hopes someday to earn her doctorate in psychology. Her experience includes working with juvenile sex offenders. She also worked at the Algoa Correctional Facility.

For Nancy Brandt, having a person with disabilities in her family motivates her to help others at ACT.

"I love caring for individuals. You have to have a heart and you have to be a caring person to be in this field—period."

She adds that anyone could have a person with disabilities in their family.

"You could have a family member—like I do—who has disabilities." She says her main motivation comes from her experience caring for her father who was in a nursing home for 12 years. "I know he got good care, so I want to pay society back by me taking care of others."



**NEW TO ACT.** Three new program managers in the Community Living Program have joined ACT. They are, from left, Alanta Free, Jill Pyeatt, and Nancy Brandt.

One of the key goals she has for her clients is independence. "I want to foster independence," she says.

Another aspect of her work is promoting family involvement. "I support family involvement 100 percent. She adds, "and the community needs to know they're individuals with disabilities but they have a right to be out in the community."

Brandt has more than 13 years experience working with individuals with disabilities. She also served three years as a program manager for a facility in Callaway County.

She adds that ACT "is a very supportive place. I enjoy the teamwork we have here. They're very supportive. It's almost a family atmosphere."

For Alanta Free, ACT's not-for-profit nature is a big reason she has become a program manager.

ager.

"I really like working with nonprofit organizations. That's my main focus."

The native of Independence gained experience with people with disabilities many years ago. Her love of horses spurred her to work with a Jackson County therapeutic horse riding club for seven years. During that time she gained a deep desire to work with those who have disabilities.

Free is an advertising and marketing graduate from William Woods College, Fulton. She adds that her job's variety makes work fun. "It's fun because you wear a lot of different hats. Sometimes you do personal care, other times you do the management kind of thing."

ACT, "is a service organization," she says. "It's helping people. We make people's lives richer and give them a better quality life."

## TONS OF USEFUL PLASTIC HEADED TO RECYCLER

The demand for recycled videotapes is rapidly drying up. So what is ACT going to do with the thousands of tapes it has warehoused?

ACT is joining with Major League Recycling, a national firm, to recycle the plastic in videotapes.

"We could be the first place in America that can recycle videotapes," says Jim Williams, director of operations and community employment. ACT could grow into the business because "there'll be more and more that won't be used."

ACT collected between 60,000 and 70,000 pounds of material from November to February. With an average collection of 16,000 pounds a month a new use for the tapes is definitely needed. In addition to videotapes, ACT has collected America Online disc cases, cases for DVD cases and computer floppy disks. All of the materials would be prepared

for recycling.

Recycling the tapes would provide work for many ACT clients. ACT would be responsible for collecting the tapes and then taking any paper out of them. "That'll be a big task for ACT," says Williams. If successful, a trailer loaded with tapes would be parked at ACT.

### Videotapes overfloweth

A generous videotape and DVD maker has given ACT thousands of videotapes and DVDs.

Funimation of Ft. Worth, TX has delivered 26 semi-truck loads of videotapes and other recyclables. The business found ACT on the Internet.

The firm is the maker of the Dragon Ball Z animation. Some of the tapes will be reused and others will be processed for plastic recycling. DVD cases will be sold by ACT on the Internet and other means.

Williams says the plastic materials could go for up to 10 cents a pound.

Working with Major League Recycling "could be an ongoing relationship—one where they make money and we make money." ACT will split the revenue with Major League Recycling.



**NEW USE.** Videotapes, like these being processed by Michael, now have a new use.

## FULLFILLMENT SERVICE GAINS TWO NEW CUSTOMERS

ACT's recently formed fulfillment service has two new customers. New customers are PNP Outdoors and Mothwing Camo Technologies.

PNP Outdoors is an organization that sells products to National Rifle Association members. ACT will stock the group's 20 different items which are promotional products for the NRA. Some camping equipment also will be sold.

Jim Williams, who heads up the fulfillment service, expects about 10 orders a week. Mothwing Camo Technology, the second new customer for the fulfillment service, sells items with a camouflage pattern. The pattern is that of a mothwing and is said to be more effective than current camo designs.

Items ACT will stock and ship for Mothwing include hats, T-shirts, boots, rugs, Bibles, duck calls and camouflage for ATVs, trucks, and boats.

In addition to fulfillment services, ACT will help the company develop a Web site. ACT will manage the Web site once it is complete.

## NEW HOME A DREAM COME TRUE

After four years of searching, the perfect home has been found for Dolly and Veronica, Community Living clients of ACT.

Carrie Griffith, program manager for the two ladies, says several requirements were necessary to meet the needs of Dolly and Veronica.

A main concern was to have the home near the Community Integration Program at ACT because Dolly and Veronica don't enjoy long trips. Located on Phyllis Ave., the home is just minutes away from ACT. Another goal was to find a home with minimal stairs. The final goal was to have adequate space for a live-in staff member. The home has a walkout basement which is perfect for the live-in staff member. Having staff living at the home "gives the ladies a little more stability," says Griffith.

To meet the clients' needs, a minimal amount of stairs also would be required. The home has only two stairs with a railing for each. Griffith says the two clients "adjusted beautifully" to the home and their parents couldn't be happier.

"It's been a dream come true," she says. "Everything we were looking for we found. It'll serve them many years to come."

## STAFF MEMBER RETURNS FROM YEAR IN IRAQ

The entire staff and clients of ACT welcome back Larry Barnett.

Barnett, home manager, spent one year in Iraq. The Army reservist served as a sergeant first class responsible for a squad of 12 men and women.

His job was to oversee the movement of equipment, supplies and people across Iraq.

Barnett served in the Sunni Triangle and moved personnel and equipment to Mosul, Baghdad, Tikrit, Camp Streicher, Fallujah, and the Turkish and Syrian borders.

"We took fire several times down the road," Barnett says. "We hit planted bombs and were mortared on day and night."

His squad was well-decorated for heroism. There were eight Purple Hearts and 20 Bronze Stars awarded.

"The experience had its bad and good points," he says. "I was able to get to know a lot of different people and going somewhere else was nice too. Under the situation or conditions—not the greatest."

He adds that it was better not to spend a lot of time thinking of his family which includes a daughter and three sons. "You tend to miss your family but you try not to think about it because you have another mission."

## SPOTLIGHT Jeremy Anderson

### How long have you worked at ACT?

Two years. I started in Community Living and they stole me away to do the eBay business. They knew I knew something about computers so they gave the job to me. I've worked about one year with eBay.

### What do you like about your job?

I like the fact that it deals with something that I know about. Computers are something I'm familiar with so that's nice to have skills that are being used that weren't being used before.

### What else do you do in your job?

I also work with the computer server. When new employees have to be added I do that. I also install software for everyone.

### What are your sales responsibilities?

I'm sales coordinator — that includes eBay and the fulfillment business for Software Blowouts. Mondays are the busiest for eBay because all the auctions end and the new ones go up. It keeps me busy.

### What's surprised you about the eBay business?

I had no idea there'd be a market for used videotapes and CD jewel cases. There's a much larger market than I thought there would be. When eBay's down, Software Blowouts is up so I never have a free moment. I like it being busy.

### Did you ever envision you'd be doing this work?

I did all I could to get away from computers and that's where I ended up. I guess that's my destiny. That's fine.

### What do you like about ACT?

I feel like I'm part of a team instead of just being a cog in a machine. They're good at listening. They actually care. I like working here. When a manager works with you to solve problems and make sure you're happy, it's a good place to work.



Jeremy Anderson, Sales Coordinator

## TECHNOTRASH BOXES SHIPPED TO HUNDREDS OF FIRMS

TechnoTrash is taking off.

After a trial period of several months the office recycling program is expanding.

David Beschen, president of GreenDisk and the creator of the TechnoTrash concept, expects to ship 400 to 600 of the TechnoTrash boxes to businesses.

The boxes are a collection point for all types of technology-related items. Ink jet and toner cartridges, cell phones and pagers and many other items can be placed in the box.

Once filled, the box will be shipped to ACT where the content will be sorted. ACT will be paid to sort and ship returned materials. "It's a good solution for companies to recycle some of their electronic media and hardware," says Jim Williams, director of Operations and Community Employment Services. Hopefully companies will recycle some good things that we can make good use out of."

To make the operation run smooth, ACT has created a data base and assigned a barcode number for each TechnoTrash box.

The expansion "may create a few more jobs and that's always a good thing," says Williams.

Day Program participants

# OUT & ABOUT



**LEARNING BY DOING.** ACT travelers, top, give a thumbs up to the food of the Wagon Wheel in Sedalia. And Larry, center, and Michael learn about Missouri History while visiting the Governor's Museum in the Missouri Governor's Mansion. Bottom, Clarence, checks out one of the many displays at the Space Center located in the St. Louis Science Center.

Ever have a Gooberburger? Several of ACT's clients have. The tasty concoction spreads peanut butter over a hamburger and is found at the Wagon Wheel restaurant in Sedalia.

Several members of the Community Integration Program, or Day Program, traveled to Sedalia for the tasty treat as part of recognition of George Washington Carver during Black History Month. It was just one of many activities over the past several months. Other interesting outings include:

- A trip to the Winston Churchill Memorial located on the campus of Westminster College in Fulton
- A visit to the Space Center located within the St. Louis Science Center
- A walk along the trails at the Runge Conservation Center in Jefferson City
- Sampling many new businesses in Columbia including BackYard Burgers, Hobby Lobby and the Bass Pro Shop
- Learning about Missouri history at the Governor's Museum located in the Missouri Governor's Mansion

Beside these trips, clients have begun a line dancing class which meets once a month. Also a Lunch and Learn activity has been started. Each month a person comes to share information about a specific topic during lunch. The most recent guest was Larry Barnett, an ACT program manager and Army reservist who recently returned from Iraq.

"The guys really like it," Jonnette Whittler, training specialist, says about the Lunch and Learn sessions. "They have lots of questions."

## Business Profile

### Healthcare Service Group, Inc.

James Mars of Healthcare Service Group, Inc. never has to run an employment ad. Instead he calls ACT.

He calls ACT because he gets well-trained, quality help— help like Barb who's been at The Bluffs retirement home for about two months.

Barb is part of a 14-person staff managed by Mars at the retirement home. Healthcare Service Group, Inc. operates similar housekeeping services at facilities throughout the country.

For Mars, he likes ACT because ACT clients receive attentive care from a job coach when first starting a job.

"I think what's especially good is having the job coaches that come on site for the new employee. They're kind of cutting back now limiting the time they spend with Barb. To me it's neat to see someone come in, have a job coach, and then seeing the employee take off on their own."

Barb, he says, took to her job immediately. With previous housekeeping experience, she jumped right in her job. Three days a week she cleans 16 resident rooms, vacuums hallways, and cleans a dining area.

"Barb is really a great worker," says Mars. "She's here and she's accountable. And she fits in great with our staff. "She just came in and boom she became part of our family here."

He adds that Barb is a hard worker who seldom takes a break. "She hardly ever takes her breaks. I have to tell her to take her breaks."

Because of her hard work, Barb's job security is rock solid. "I'm happy to have her work for me," says Mars. "She's great. I hope she'll be here as long as she needs to be."

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