

INTERACTION

*"An inclusive community where everyone belongs,
participates, and is valued"*



*For the latest news and updates,
follow us on social media:*



In This Issue:

- Don's Foreword
- COVID-19
- Masks Donations
- A Splash of Color
- Barbie's Trip
- A DSP in ACTION!
- DSP Crisis
- Black Lives Matter
- DSP Week 2020
- Breaking the Barriers
- All for ONE, ONE for All!
- New Hires & Promotions
- Anniversaries
- CoMoGives20'
- Fiscal Year Calendar

DEAR FRIENDS of ACT,

Welcome back to our newsletter, *InterACTion*. I'm thrilled to have you join us for the latest ACT updates in our 2020 issue!

I want to apologize for the lack of newsletters these past two years. We initially anticipated a March release for this issue, but the sudden COVID-19 outbreak postponed its release. We plan to publish quarterly newsletters beginning in February 2021.

ACT has experienced many changes in the two-year absence. Pre-pandemic, the agency spent time refocusing on ACT's vision, mission, and core values. We reevaluated our standard practices, implemented new policies, and strategized our next course of action. We also assembled a brand new leadership team, offered promotions, and hired skilled Direct Support Professionals (DSP).

We felt excited and confident about the future. When the pandemic struck in March, things appeared ambiguous. But our efforts over the past year created one of the best teams ever witnessed at ACT. Together, through commitment and perseverance, we stayed focused on ACT's mission!

Looking at ACT's 45-year-old history, we have always been a pioneer of innovation, and adapted to the needs around us. Once again, we rose to meet, perhaps, the most challenging hurdle our agency has ever faced. Our programs now operate at a limited capacity; we conduct and attend meetings virtually, and staff reinvents daily individual activities to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. Continuous adaptability to the changing environment fuels ACT's progression.



As 2020 continues to throw challenges our way, we remain committed to the individuals we serve. The safety and health of everyone is our number one priority. Our front-line employees and supervisors continue to provide excellent care and support to the individuals who receive our services.

Thanks to each of you for your continued support during these challenging times.

We wish you a safe, happy, and healthy 2021. Happy Holidays from our ACT family to yours!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Don Lafferty', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Don Lafferty
Executive Director



What is ACT doing to prevent possible exposure?

ACT is currently utilizing its Pandemic Continuity of Operations and Reconstitution Plans for the prevention and control of COVID-19 at the agency. All employees and individuals are encouraged to follow the CDC's recommendations, which includes frequent handwashing, disinfecting work areas, wearing a mask, and social distancing. It was also required that individuals and employees check and record their temperatures before each shift. Throughout Missouri and the US, more and more people are testing positive for the virus. In the interest of public safety, On March 16h, ACT chose to support the CDC's guidelines by temporarily closing Administration Offices, Day Services, ACTion Club, and After School Youth Program. Those services revolve around community integration, which would put everyone in those programs at risk. ACT's essential services (Community Living, Community RN Services, Job Supports, In-Home Services) remained open, but with strict guidelines. Currently, the affected programs are gradually opening back up.



Did the closures affect employees?

Most employees were assigned a new task that allowed them to continue working. For instance, Day Service employees picked up hours in ACT's Community Living Program. Community Living is an essential program that requires staffing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. CL's main objective is to make sure that individuals are living in a safe, healthy, and happy environment. Staff remain on-site to assist with medication management, housekeeping, self-care, financial planning, fitness, and cooking.

Employees were also able to maintain their hours through the Career Services Program. Individuals who worked in the community continued receiving job coaching, and retention supports in-person and through telehealth. Some individuals continued receiving services entirely through telehealth. Others had services suspended.

Full-time employees who were unable to work due to health concerns used accrued vacation and/or paid time off for up to 40 hours per week. If a full-time employee was out of accrued time, ACT allowed them to receive advanced pay with stipulations.

We have high hopes that the virus subsides. Taking the proper precautions is crucial during this time, as we want everyone to remain safe from the virus. Returning to a "normal" lifestyle is the plan after COVID-19 is fully contained. We will continue to grow and provide quality care to the individuals receiving services at our agency!

For more info on ACT's Pandemic Continuity of Operations and Reconstitutions Plans go to :
<https://actservices.org/resource-categories/>

Mask Donations



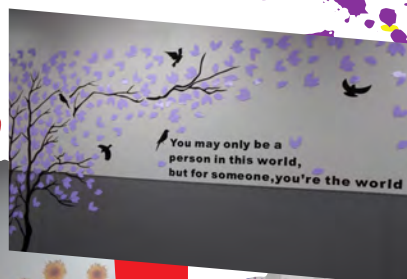
When Columbia officials mandated a mask ordinance, ACT received a generous amount of mask donations. As COVID-19 continues to challenge our livelihood, the generosity of the Columbia community doesn't waver.

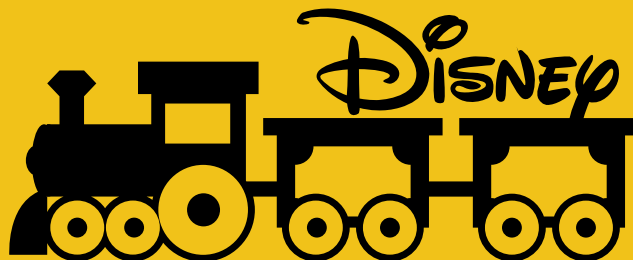
ACT would like to give a sincere thanks to Sandy Thompson and Jessica Mahon. Both employees coordinated with the Facebook groups "Sew For Safety" and "Masks For MC" to supply ACT with masks. Thank you Sandy and Jessica for helping keep us safe!

A Splash of Color!

Day Services is slowly opening up its doors, but with strict guidelines in place. As the individuals return to receive services, they were greeted with a splash of color! During the initial closing,

Day Services employees decorated each program room with themed colors. Adding a little more color to a room can change your mood in a positive way! Various wall art pieces were positioned on the walls, and much-needed storage units were placed in each room to hold individuals' belongings. Great job, staff!





Barbie's Trip to Florida

Life is short, so why not take a vacation? From February 7th through the 17th, Barbie got to experience a very memorable trip to Florida! Why did she chose to vacation in Florida? Barbie is a huge fan of *Disney* and trains. When she started planning the trip, she wanted to take Amtrak to Disney World. The Amtrak route from Missouri to Florida would have delayed the trip, so Barbie decided to go by car. She utilized CoMoGives funds to help pay for gas during her journey. Having those funds available allowed her to budget for things that she enjoyed, like cotton candy!



"My favorite part of the trip was riding on the Monorail at Disney." - Barbie

During her trip, Barbie went all over the place. Her first destination was Chattanooga, TN. She stayed the night in an Airbnb and got to ride a full-sized train. Barbie also visited an underground waterfall at Ruby Falls. From there she headed to Orlando where she spent the first day at Magic Kingdom where she met Mickey Mouse! Day two was spent on a boat looking for (and finding two) dolphins, as well as visiting a chocolate museum. The next day Barbie went to Hollywood Studios where she got to meet Mickey's companion, Minnie Mouse!

During her trip home, Barbie visited the Butterfly House in Gainesville, FL.. She stayed in another Airbnb located in Atlanta. While there, she visited Georgia Aquarium and The World of Coke! Barbie's trip was filled with experiences that will last a lifetime!

Some of her other experiences included:

Talking with Peter Pan about cotton candy!

Souring high on the Dumbo ride!

Eating gourmet donuts and dinner at the Cheesecake Factory

Hugs from Mike and Sulley of Monster's Inc

Cave hiking

A DSP in ACTION!

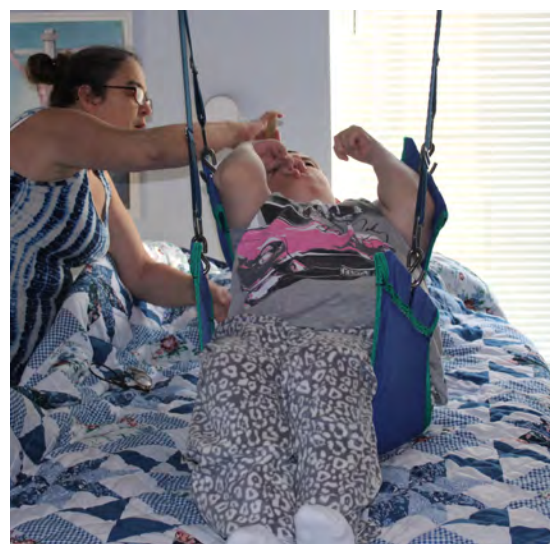


For the last ten years, the direct support workforce has been in a crisis. People with disabilities have individual and unique needs and abilities just like everyone else. To live a healthy and meaningful life, they depend on the services carried out by Direct Support Professionals. Although people may have a good idea of what a DSP is and what they do, others may not.

We followed one of our DSPs for a few hours during her shift. See what a day looks like for a DSP!

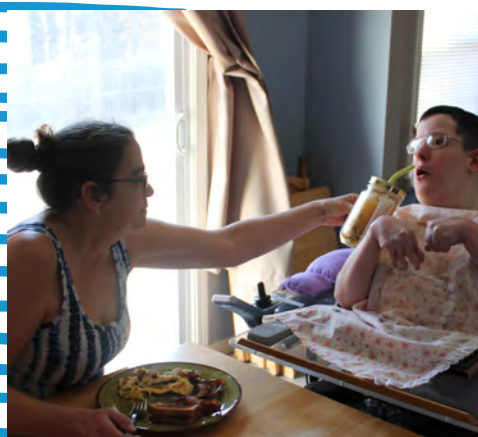
Early Morning Routine

Today we followed one of our Community Living DSPs during the busiest part of her shift. Pam works the morning shift Monday-Friday. After clocking in at 7 am, she immediately starts preparing for the day. When we arrived at the residential home, Pam was in the process of prepping Crystal for her daily shower. Crystal required full assistance during bathing time. After showering, Pam dried Crystal off and put her clothing on. She utilized an electric Hoyer lift to safely place Crystal back into her wheelchair. Crystal has a roommate named "Lindsey." Because Lindsey often wakes up later in the morning, Pam has to wake her to administer morning medications. When Lindsey decides to get up and out of bed fully, Pam or the 2nd staff will encourage her to shower. During that time, they assist Lindsey by giving verbal prompts to complete the showering process. Lindsey was not up during the time we visited the home.



Breakfast Time

Everyone moved to the kitchen for breakfast. Pam asked Crystal what she wanted for breakfast before starting the meal. Because Crystal is physically unable to cook for herself, Pam did the cooking. Crystal stated that she wanted her bacon to be crispy because she doesn't like rubbery bacon. Pam respected her request and made sure the bacon was crispy. After being asked if she picked out her own clothing each day, Crystal stated, "Yes, I pick out my clothing and what I want to eat each day." After Pam finished cooking, she sat down to feed Crystal. During that time, Crystal said "I used to eat independently until I had my surgery. I try to feed myself, but it takes too long and my food gets cold. That's why I prefer assistance from my staff." After finishing her meal, Pam assisted Crystal with teeth brushing.



Remainder of the Shift

Crystal and Lindsey choose to stay home during the day. Pam stated that she loves playing UNO with the ladies. She purchased a foam block to hold Crystal's cards up during the game. Community access is also an essential part of their day. Pam takes the ladies out into the community and to places like the mall, library, or grocery store. Crystal and Lindsey display excellent self-advocacy skills, which helps when planning for the day. I asked Pam what she liked most about her job, and she said, "I enjoy helping others better their lives. I want to see people succeed and be happy!"

Each supported home is different in their own way. Some individuals receive full care, and some require very little. Some individuals have jobs or go to Day Services, and others chose to stay home. At ACT, we encourage self-advocacy and choice. Without our awesome DSPs, we could not offer the variety of services and care that we currently do.

In these uncertain times, one thing that is abundantly clear is the essential role of Direct Support Professionals. They are at the frontlines, providing life-sustaining supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities every day, among all circumstances.

There has never been a better time than now to recognize DSPs and their accomplishments. This year they've continuously gone above and beyond, supporting individuals with disabilities and ensuring their safety amid the COVID-19 epidemic. Please help us advocate for increased funding so we can pay DSPs the wages they deserve!

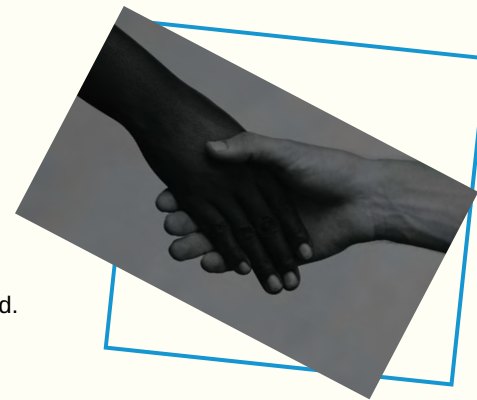
A collage of 15 photos showing various people wearing face masks. The photos are arranged in a circular pattern. The masks are diverse in design, including solid colors, patterns, and logos. Some photos show people in their homes, while others show them in public spaces or at work.

#BlackLivesMatter

ACT's mission is fundamentally aligned with equality. Our agency was built upon the idea that people with disabilities are equal and should have the same social capital that any individual in our society has. Now we stand with our friends, family, peers and coworkers as we stand up for Black Lives because again we believe that people are equal and should have the same social capital that any individual in our society has. The Black Lives Matter movement is an international human rights movement originating within the African-American community, which campaigns against violence and systemic racism towards Black people. ACT made our position clear as an agency by sending out a statement of solidarity (see below) and posting "Black Lives Matter" signs in the windows of our main office buildings.

The Cultural Diversity Committee took the next step and asked staff to fill out a survey about inclusivity and belonging at ACT. We had a tremendous response that helped to direct our efforts on how to help our agency improve. Funds were included in the FY21 budget for the Cultural Diversity to bring in outside presentations and facilitators to help ACT increase our Cultural Competency. The Cultural Diversity Committee is creating leadership training that will look at our hiring practices and how to increase diversity in our applicant pool for leadership positions. ACT has been sharing educational materials with our leadership team and our staff about racism and why Black Lives Matter is an important movement. We will continue our efforts to continue to deepen our understanding and be sensitive of cultural diversity.

ACT will continue to support equality. We are here to be our best selves and to support the individuals we work with to do the same. We will treat each other with professionalism, respect and kindness. At ACT we strive for an inclusive community where everyone participates, belongs and is valued. Everyone.



As noted in the Code of Ethics, ACT's vision is an inclusive community where everyone belongs, participates and is valued. ACT is an organization of diverse individuals possessing a variety of perspectives, identities and lived experiences.

The incidents over the past few months involving violence toward Black people in our country are devastating. We are disheartened by what has happened to Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Christian Cooper, and George Floyd. While these incidents did not happen in our community, we know that many in our community are impacted, not just by recent events but by years of racism and injustice across our country.

The individuals, families and staff we support come from all walks of life. We are committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect within the agency.

ACT aligns with the black community in the peaceful protests taking place across the country. ACT supports those feeling the painful sting of systemic racism and marginalization. ACT categorically dismisses anyone or any system that discriminates against people, and recognizes that a large part of our mission is to work to change those systems.

Please check back with ACT regularly as we share resources about this important issue.



"So Shines a good deed in a weary world."



2020 Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week...

was celebrated in a new fashion at ACT. Due to COVID-19 health and safety regulations, a social gathering was not permissible this year. Much to the chagrin of management and the ACT social committee, alternatives for celebration were put in motion.

DSP Week 2020 became a week-long virtual celebration with very limited social interaction. In addition, the social committee announced a new concept to make this year's both special and memorable. DSP Week 2020 introduced an event theme – something DSP Week celebrations never had in the years past.

So what was the theme? None other than Willy Wonka and his candy emporium!

The week's festivities included many fun and "sweet" activities. There were daily cash, basket, and mystery prize giveaways, social media shout-outs for each of the four programs, a candy jar guessing game, a t-shirt contest, gift bags with Wonka-inspired items, and a special tribute video from ACT's executive director, Don Lafferty (with an additional contest attached!).

DSP Week 2020 may have strayed from tradition, but the outcome was still the same. Celebrating our DSPs and their success. It's been a challenging year for them, but they've remained strong and vigilant in supporting the individuals. Their dedication makes ACT a successful agency.

Thank you, DSPs!

BREAKING THE BARRIERS

DETERMINATION KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES.

DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, JOSH MET WITH HIS CAREER SERVICES TEAM TO DISCUSS CAREER OPPORTUNITIES. HE WAS IN PURSUIT OF A JOB THAT CHALLENGED HIM. TOGETHER JOSH AND HIS TEAM FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR AT HY-VEE. IN AUGUST, HE STARTED HIS NEW POSITION AS A HY-VEE COURTESY CLERK.

JOSH'S OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE DID NOT GO UNNOTICED BY HY-VEE. HIS DRIVE FOR SUCCESS EARNED HIM ADDITIONAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES, AND, NOW, HE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR A PROMOTION!

JOSH HAS CONSTANTLY APPLIED HIMSELF TO ALL THINGS IN LIFE. RECEIVING ACCOMMODATIONS PROVIDED BY CAREER SERVICES, TO MANAGING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, AND LEAVING BEHIND A JOB HE LOVED AND MAKING THE MOVE FROM ASHLAND TO COLUMBIA, HE HAS FORGED HIS OWN CAREER PATH WITH GREAT ACHIEVEMENT!

JOSH RECENTLY PARTICIPATED AS A PANELIST AND PRESENTER IN "ON EMPLOYMENT IN ACTION – CELEBRATING NDEAM CONFERENCE." HE SPOKE ABOUT HIS TRIUMPHANT JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT AND HOW HE REMOVED AND OVERCAME PERSONAL BARRIERS.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM) IS OBSERVED EACH OCTOBER TO CELEBRATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES AND EDUCATE ABOUT THE VALUE OF AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE.

THANK YOU, JOSH, FOR SHARING YOUR SUCCESS STORY OF DETERMINATION AND COURAGE WITH OTHERS!

All for ONE, ONE for All!

The ACT ONE CLUB program brought the heat this summer! For June, July, and August, the program provided full-day programming. The guidance of ACT's pandemic plan, along with additional safety planning, and creativity, allowed the ACT ONE CLUB to open its doors on June 1st. This year marked their second year of extended day services during the summer months.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Columbia canceled summer school sessions. ACT ONE CLUB provided service to a total of 12 youth students, each from middle school and high school within Boone County. Many of the parents expressed their thanks for the full-day services offered.



The program upheld its mission and goal despite the hurdles the pandemic presented. Everyone exercised COVID-19 guidelines; all staff members and youth wore masks, social distanced, and washed hands regularly.

Tara Shade, the Assistant Program Director, said, "I couldn't ask for a more talented, passionate, and dedicated group of core staff." ACT ONE CLUB employees worked additional direct hours to cover the extended day services. They provided a combined individual total of over 1800 hours! She added, "I was very fortunate for their [employees] willingness to provide an increased level of support this summer!"



"ACT ONE CLUB provides opportunities for youth to engage with peers while participating in activities that encourage friendship building, community engagement access, and essential support."

New ACT Membership!

ACT is proud to announce its new membership with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP).

NADSP is a nonprofit organization that elevates the status of direct support professionals by improving standard practices, promoting system reform, and advancing their knowledge, skills, and values.

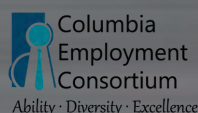
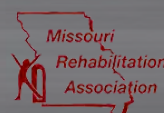
ACT's membership with NADSP comes with many wonderful benefits. To name a few: exclusive access to information and resources, tools, training, one-day seminars, and discounts to attend the annual NADSP conference.

ACT is very excited for this opportunity and what it means for our DSPs!

You can learn more about NADSP by visiting their website at <http://www.nadsp.org>.



is also a proud member of the following:





New Hires

★ Mary Baumann

★ Jasmine Jones

★ Amanda Coats

★ Maha Libdeh

★ Sydney Embry

★ Karina Mitchel

★ RJanai Griffin

★ Sophia Parmacek

★ Nakya Johnson

★ Daisy West

★ Phyllis Williams



Promotions



Mary Arnold - Communications Coordinator



Nancy Beatty - Day Services Activities Coordinator



Clarissa Collier - Community Living Program Manager



Darrell Derritt - Maintenance Supervisor



Casey Winemiller - Community Living Program Manager

Congratulations!!

2020 ACT Anniversaries

Thank you for your time and dedication to ACT!

5 Years

Dorcas Njau
Justin Robson
Kari Manning
Danica Reynolds
Michelle Miller
Forrest Neal

Ida Knox
Jennifer Duncan
Latara Roland
Terrese Hayes
LaTroya Cowans
Suzan Schuetz

Josphat Sawe
Jacquelyne Coats
Frankie Harris
Melody Troesser
Francis Munyao

10 Years

Ardella Crawford
William Taylor
Curtis Collins

Clarissa Collier
Robert Mokono

15 Years

LaKayla Prince

20 Years

Carrie Griffith
Jonnette Whittler

Pamela Adams
Susan Braselton

25 Years

Zina Horn

30 Years

Larry Barnette

Demetrice Bell

CoMoGives 2020

ACT is excited to announce its participation in **CoMoGives 2020!**

What is the CoMoGives campaign?

CoMoGives is an annual online fundraiser that supports 142 high-impact nonprofits in Columbia and Mid-Missouri. The month-long campaign starts on December 1st and runs through December 31st.

Thanks to all our wonderful and generous donors, ACT raised \$10,610 of their \$15,000 goal during the 2019 CoMoGives campaign! ACT additionally received a \$500 Challenge Grant for the "Organization with the Highest Increase from 2018 - 2019!"

It has been a financially challenging year for ACT. This year, more than ever, the individuals we support need family, friends, and donors to help reach their goal of \$15,000. **100%** of donations received go directly to the needs of the individuals.

Make a difference this holiday season, and support ACT through CoMoGives!





ACT Fiscal Year Calendar

2020-2021

July '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Observed Holidays

Date	Description
07/04/20	Independence Day
09/07/20	Labor Day
11/26/20	Thanksgiving
11/27/20	Thanksgiving
12/24/20	Christmas Eve
12/25/20	Christmas
12/31/19	New Year's Eve
01/01/21	New Year's Day
01/18/21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
02/15/21	Presidents' Day
05/31/21	Memorial Day

ACT Holidays Observed - Offices and Facility Based Programs Closed

