

# INTERACTION

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The Newsletter for Alternative Community Training

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## VUF DONATES TO ACT'S FUNDRAISER PROJECT

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ACT will soon break company soil, thanks to a generous donation made possible by the Veterans United Foundation.

In 2021, Day Services submitted a remodeling project to the Foundation for financial support. Adam Lafferty, a VU employee and the son of ACT's Executive Director, Don Lafferty, helped ACT's project come to fruition.

The 'Phase One Day Services Remodeling Project' will feature many internal and external facility upgrades. The improvements include windows and doors installation, a patio, and an accessible pergola swing on the southeast corner of the Day Services building.

*(Continue on P.2)*

# From the Executive Director's Desk

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**Dear ACT Advocate,**

The New Year is here, and we are excited for what it holds, where it will take us, and what opportunities lie ahead. But before we look to the future, I want to reflect on 2021 momentarily.

ACT navigated many obstacles, yet we remained steadfast in its mission, vision, and values. In the end, I feel immense gratitude for 2021.

I am *grateful* to our outstanding employees for their hard work and dedication. Amid the ongoing pandemic, our staff endured diligently in providing quality care to those in our services. Thank you.

Our CoMoGives 2021 campaign was another success. Again, I am *grateful* to our donors, old and new, for helping ACT raise over \$17,000—surpassing our 2020 donations by \$2000! That's \$2000 more that will assist the individuals with various financial needs throughout the New Year.

And my gratitude doesn't end there.

The Veterans United Foundation (VUF) selected us as a recipient for a most generous donation of \$284,162. Thank you to VU's employees and the Foundation for supporting ACT's Day Services project. With these funds, we hope to begin construction in late spring.

I am *grateful* to Governor Parson for making individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities a priority in his FY2023 Executive Budget. His proposed investment will increase funding for I/DD services. Such financial stability will allow us to recruit and retain quality staff, decrease our vacancy rates, and cover the growing costs of providing services.

So, please, ACT Advocate, help educate our State Representatives on how important this proposal is to our workforce and the individuals we serve! We need our local officials to support the Governor's Budget.

Lastly, I am *grateful* to you, the reader, for being an ACT advocate and friend. Together we can continue making a difference in our community and the lives of those who need us.

**Cheers to 2022!**

Don Lafferty

(Cover story continued)



Don Lafferty smiles alongside Jen Hendrick and Keegan Thompson of Simon Oswald Architecture.

Currently, two service areas in the Program, which support roughly 40 individuals, have no windows and doors.

The plan is to open up those enclosed spaces so staff and individuals can enjoy the outdoors more and access sunlight.

Also, by opening these spaces, there will be additional evacuation routes. Individuals and staff can now exit the building twice as fast during an emergency.

Simon Oswald Architecture of Columbia is overseeing the project. ACT hopes to begin construction in late spring 2022.



Don and son, Adam, hold ACT's check for a quick snapshot.

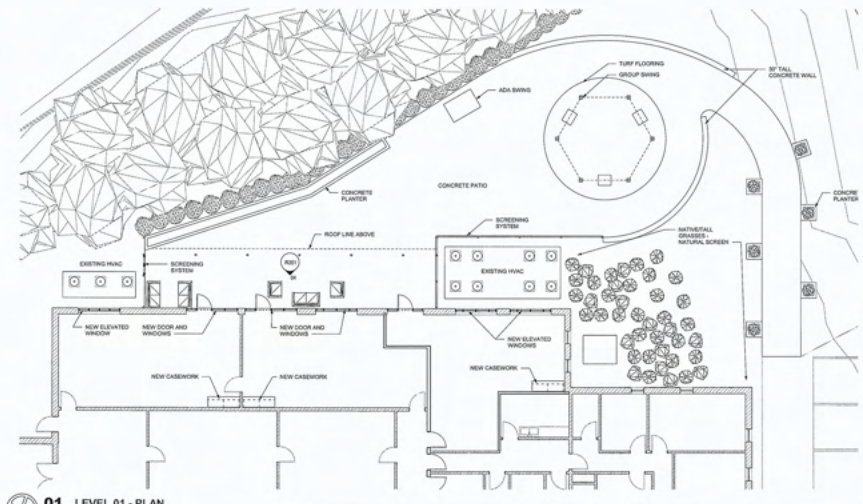
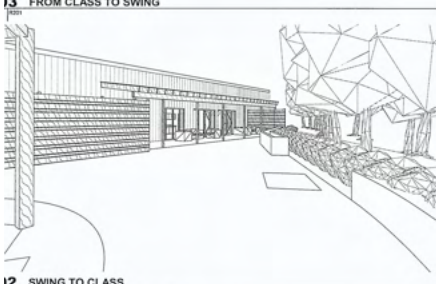
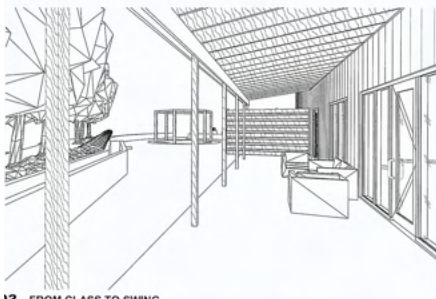
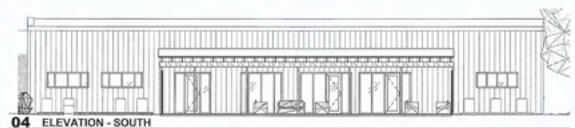
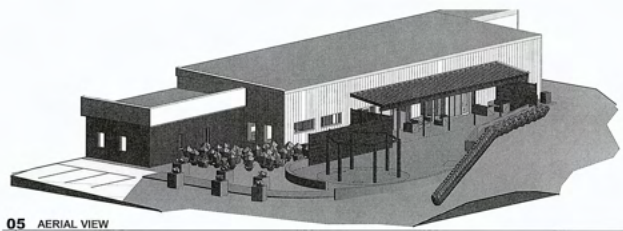


Don presents VU employees with a personalized thank-you card from ACT.



Smiles all around from VU employees. Thank you, VU!!

## Day Services Phase One Project Plan





# Program Updates: New Management

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## CAREER SERVICES



**LORI WILLIAMS,**  
Program Manager

**Fun Facts:**

She loves all things coffee.

She absolutely loves being a grandmother to her grandson.

She has the most amazing daughter she could ever ask for. She is blessed!

**What she loves about her job:**

"My fearless leader Fontella and my cohort, Bobbi. They are amazing! I have no doubt I will be successful at ACT due to the ongoing support and comradery.



**BOBBI NICHOLS,**  
Program Manager

**Fun Facts:**

She loves all things tea. She discovered the joy of taking tea from a local tea room while in college.

She got her first indoor cat in October, and her name is Princess Lilly Tea Blossom. She goes by Blossom.

She loves crafting - scrapbooking, making cards, crocheting, wood-burning, cake decorating, and more!

**What she loves about her job:**

"The people. I love working with others to creatively brainstorm solutions to support those we serve to be successful and fulfilled in their lives.

# Program Updates: New Management

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## COMMUNITY LIVING



**MELISSA "MEL" GOODSPEED,**  
Program Manager

**Fun Facts:**

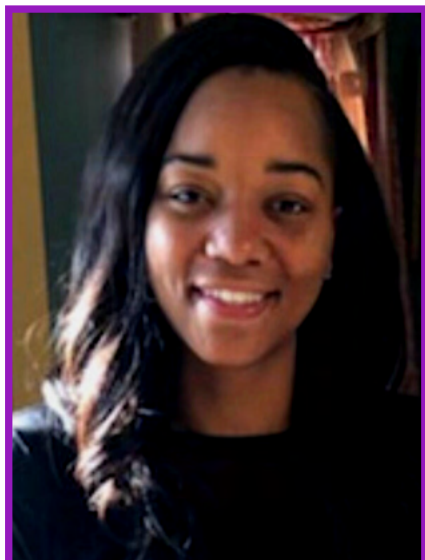
She is a new mom with a four-month-old baby boy.

She spent five full summers working at Wonderland Camp.

She absolutely loves cats and Harry Potter.

**What she loves about her job:**

"I enjoy working in an environment that prioritizes inclusivity."



**DANIELLE CURREN,**  
Program Manager

**Fun Facts:**

She knows ASL, although not wholly fluent, she enjoys learning continually.

She enjoys traveling.

She loves spending time with her family.

**What she loves about her job:**

"Being in a position that allows me to advocate for others and ensure that they receive the care they need to live their best life."

# Program Updates: New Management

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## DAY SERVICES



**BRIAWNA LYTLE,**  
Yellow Team Supervisor

**Fun Facts:**

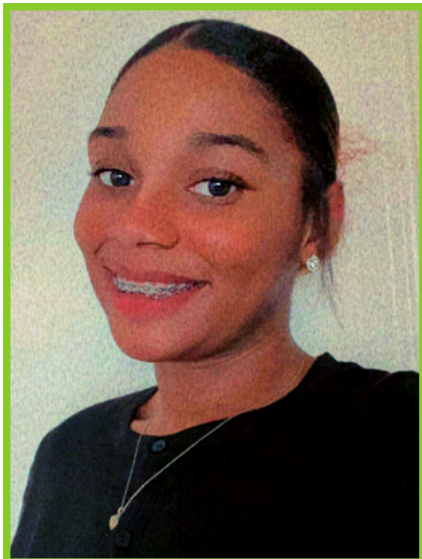
She has 14 pets!

She was born and raised in Texas.

She was a powerlifter in high school.

**What she loves about her job:**

"My favorite thing about my job is getting to know the amazing individuals and watching them learn, grow, and have fun!"



**DANASIA PITTMAN,**  
Green Team Supervisor

**Fun Facts:**

She loves meeting new people and trying new things!

She loves helping others.

She enjoys laughing.

**What she loves about her job:**

"I like the people I work with. Having a great team is the key to success in this field. Also, I love how everyone makes every new person feel welcome!"

# Program Updates: New Management

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## YOUTH SERVICES



**KYLIE DOKKEN,**  
Supervisor

**Fun Facts:**

She loves to crochet!

She loves any movie with Drew Barrymore.

Her favorite snack is a pickle.

**What she loves about her job:**

"Being able to have fun with the kids I work with. I could be having the worst day and they always brighten it up in a matter of seconds. They inspire me in so many ways and my days would be a lot duller without them around!"

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## Youth Services Gears Up for a "Fun"-tastic Year

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As ACT looks to expand and grow its services (and facility), creating a specific program dedicated to serving youth with disabilities in the community makes sense.

Although ACT has provided services to youth for many years, an independent program offers the benefit of change: more clarity on opportunities for individuals and their families.

Currently, the Program provides services after school and on some rescheduled school days for youth aged 12 and older. In addition, they extend their programming in the summer when school and summer school are not in session. They also provide transportation services during this time if needed and approved.

Through Youth Services, the youth can learn various skills: safely utilizing technology, teamwork, grooming and hygiene care, community safety, positive interaction with others, and more!

Besides learning, there is plenty of fun indoor/outdoor activities the Program offers.

For example, many youths participate in picnics/walks in the park, dining out with peers, and community scavenger hunts. Their hot spots include "Level Up" Arcade, Hotbox Cookies, and MU Butterfly House/Jefferson Garden.

Then, of course, there's also bowling, swimming, and miniature golf.

When indoors, they engage in UNO tournaments, movie parties, arts & crafts, "Kids in the Kitchen" - the Cooking Club, and pizza parties.

There is no shortage of fun and diverse activities for the youth receiving services!

Additionally, Youth Services announced its renovation plans! Coming soon, an area solely dedicated to technology/media use and a low sensory room for the youth struggling with high sensory environments or who need a space to relax.

**Stay tuned for future updates!**



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# In Memoriam: Randee & Daniel

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*"There are some who bring a light so great to the world that even after they have gone, the light remains."*



Randee passed away on December 3rd, 2021.

His smile. Most people who knew Randee would mention his smile when describing him. Welcoming and happy, he would share a huge grin that could brighten anyone's day.

Randee joined ACT's Day Services program in 2014 when the ACT Works program closed.

He had many friends, and he was truly part of his community. He created connections with the people he met, beginning with a huge inviting smile. He contributed to the lives of those he met, and his social circle wasn't just comprised of people who had disabilities and support staff. Randee had many families: a biological family, a caretaking family, a work family, a Day Service family, a church family. But, what Randee had --true inclusion-- is what we work towards every day. Randee will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. Day Services has lost a friend, but not the lessons he has taught us. The biggest lesson? Smile.

- Carrie Griffith  
Director of Day Services



Daniel passed away on February 23, 2022.

Daniel touched so many lives during the time that he received services at ACT. He began services with ACT in Community Living in 1992, and in 2005 he began attending Day Services. Daniel had a wonderful personality and touched many lives during his time with all of us, and he will be greatly missed.

Daniel was very friendly, affectionate, and had a great sense of humor. He enjoyed rock & roll music, movies -- especially sci-fi, and teasing those he had a special affection for. He will be greatly missed.

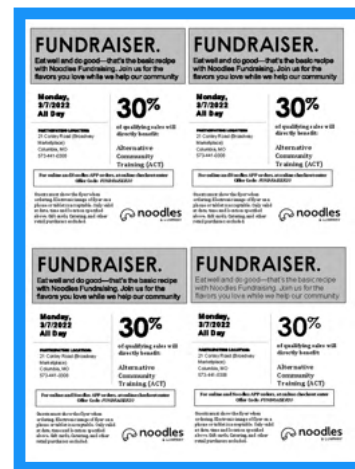
- Terri Kruger  
Director of Community Living



# Upcoming Event

## March 7th: Noodles & Company Fundraiser

- ACT is teaming up with Noodles & Company for an all-day, one-day-only event! When you dine out (or in), 30% of qualifying sales will go to ACT. To support our organization, present the flyer at the restaurant. If you order online, enter the code: **FUNDRAISER30** during checkout.
- The Conley Road Noodles & Company location is the only participating location for this event. So please make sure to direct all orders through this restaurant!
- To download the flyer, click [here](#).



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