Peggy Kemp to serve Kansas as Act Early Ambassador

Peggy (Miksch) Kemp is one of thirty new Act Early Ambassadors selected by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDDD)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)/Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). As the Kansas Act Early Ambassador, Peggy serves Kansans as their State Liaison point-of-contact for CDC’s national Learn the Signs. Act Early.

About her new Kansas role, Peggy says, “The CDC’s Learn the Signs. Act Early. program aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need as early as possible. This is an aim I share and I am very excited to be a part of this mission. My priority focus for this first year is to work with early care and education providers in the roll out of a new free one-hour online training. This training, Watch Me!” Comparing Milestones and Sharing Concerns, highlights the important role in monitoring children’s development held by these professionals. The training includes a section on How to Talk with Parents about their Child's Development which I believe will be a strong resource for this community.”

Ambassadors are chosen through a Request for Application process. Peggy’s application was supported by Michael Wehmeyer, Ph.D., University of Kansas Department of Special Education; David Lindeman, Ph.D., Director, University of Kansas, Life Span Institute at Parsons; Louann Rinner, former Ambassador; and Jeanie Zortman, Kansas Act Early Team Leader. To be eligible, applicants must have a history of relationships/connections with state-level programs that serve young children and their families. In Kansas, Peggy has worked in

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early intervention/early childhood since 1997 in positions including her current position with KITS that have afforded her the opportunity to participate in a number of early childhood initiatives at the local, state and federal level. The campaign is to reach all families, all children so interaction with the broader early childhood community is critical.

Peggy’s role as Kansas Ambassador is an added responsibility but in many ways parallels what she already does in terms of working with a variety of early childhood partners to improve services to young families in Kansas. Kemp was elected to the fourth cohort of Act Early Ambassadors. The Ambassadors were selected to serve as liaisons to “Learn the Signs. Act Early” for their respective states. This cohort includes 32 Ambassadors representing 29 states and one organization (Autism Speaks). Ambassadors work as community champions with programs that serve young children and their parents such as Head Start and Early Head Start, WIC, home visiting, and others as well as health care and child care professionals to improve early identification of developmental delays and to collaborate with state agencies and campaign partners to improve policy and programs for early identification.

Peggy Kemp (Miksch), MS, IMH-ET (IV), Infant Toddler Technical Assistance Specialist, Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS), University of Kansas, Life Span Institute at Parsons.

Just the “STATS * Life Span Institute at Parsons’ faculty and staff provided training and technical assistance to more than 14,000 participants through more than 500 activities in Kansas. Regional and national audiences numbered more than 2,500 participants.

Welcome Marcia Gilbert

Marcia Gilbert is the new Community Outreach Coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association, Heart of America Chapter following the recent retirement of John Von Wedell.

Marcia graduated from the University of Iowa School of Social Work with her LMSW in 2011, and received a certificate in End of Life studies. Prior employment includes hospice and community based mental health services.

She is excited for the opportunity to bring her past experiences together with her enjoyment of working with the aging population at the Alzheimer's Association.

When she is not working Marcia tries to enjoy life as much as possible. Some favorite activities include any time spent outdoors, searching for treasures at flea markets, and traveling. She lives in Pittsburg with her husband, Gabe, and their two cats.
PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK): iPad Training Workshops

Sara Sack, Ph.D., Project Director
Sheila Simmons, M.S., Project Coordinator

Today’s employers expect job candidates to be familiar with technology – touch screen cash registers, multi-line digital phone services, and instant messaging communications are commonplace expectations in today’s job market. People with disabilities often need training to develop basic technology skills for job settings from technology specialists familiar with accessibility features of digital technology.

Staff from three of Assistive Technology for Kansans’ AT Access Sites developed an accessible online curriculum focusing on the use of iPads to develop common job skills. Forty-five individuals were selected to participate in the iPad training workshops held in Topeka, Wichita, and Parsons sponsored by UnitedHealthCare’s Empower Kansans initiative.

Workshop participants identified their disabilities and selected a minimum of two employment outcomes. Learning to use technology to find job sites, complete online applications, and develop common office skills were prioritized by 22 of 45 participants. Forty-two of the 45 participants identified mastery of a specific skill to deal with a barrier to employment. The most common targeted skills were scheduling appointments, setting reminders, and managing contact lists.

Twenty-five individuals prioritized managing a health issue to improve their chances of employment. These goals addressed stress management, healthy eating and diet planning, and monitoring blood sugar and medications. Forty-four of the 45 participants completed the four, five-hour workshops. At this time, four are working full-time; five have part-time positions of at least 20 hours per week; and three are managing their own small businesses. Seven are interviewing for positions and one is in the final rounds of a multi-tier interview process.

For some individuals, technology competency opened the door to applying for jobs uniquely suited for them. For example, a woman in Wichita is now employed as a Spanish translator with the Sedgwick County Health Department. She started work a few days after she completed the iPad training class. Sedgwick County only accepts on-line applications so she used the knowledge she gained in class to find and complete the on-line application. She is working 20 to 30 hours per week and has been on the job for almost three months now. Another participant has a traumatic brain injury and is a licensed barber but was not working due to memory and organization issues. Since attending the iPad training workshops, he learned to schedule appointments and track contacts with his iPad. He leased a booth at a local beauty shop in

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PRESENTATIONS, POSTERS, & TRAINING

Bishop, C. (2014, June). *Embedded instruction within a tiered framework.* Presentation at the KITS 2014 Summer Institute, Manhattan, KS.

Cummings, C., Hayashi, Y., Saunders, K., & Williams, D.C. (2013, May). *Preparing children with multiple disabilities to take a hearing test: A technology-transfer project.* Poster presented at the 40th Annual convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis, Chicago, IL.


Keilty, B. (2014, June). *Planning for success: Creating successful teaching plans for infants, toddlers and preschoolers of all abilities.* Presentation at the KITS 2014 Summer Institute, Manhattan, KS.


Kemp, P. (2014, May). *Routines based interview.* Workshop presentation to Kansas tiny-k program staff of Hays Area Children’s Center and Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center tiny-k program staff, Hays, KS.


Rinkel, P. (2014, April). *Using the AEPS with fidelity.* Workshop presentation at USD 428, Great Bend, KS.

PRESENTATIONS continued


Yates, T. (2014, June). *Giving new meaning to "setting up the environment. "* Presentation at the KITS 2014 Summer Institute, Manhattan, KS.

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**Meet Dr. Susan Loveall**

An update on the post-doc translational research training program co-directed by Kate Saunders.

Trainee Dr. Susan Loveall, a cognitive-developmental psychologist, is working with Dr. Saunders and Carol Cummings, research graduate assistant, on reading interventions for children with and without disabilities. The work centers on students, kindergarten through first grade, learning phonemic-awareness skills by selecting the correct spelling for the word. Being able to hear sounds within syllables has value to pre-readers of any age. Learning spoken-word-to-print relations requires the student to respond to the sounds within the word by selecting the corresponding letters. These reading foundation skills are taught via a computer with a touch-sensitive monitor, which provides immediate feedback. The difficulty level is adjusted to the child’s current skill level.

The study is an extension of Saunders’ work with adults with developmental disabilities at Parsons.

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**HR News: Important News from Healthquest**

Employees who have not yet qualified for the incentive discount on their 2015 health insurance premium now have more time to participate! The deadline has been extended to November 15, 2014. Those who complete the required health assessment questionnaire (worth 10 credits) and earn an additional 20 credits (for a total of 30 credits) by November 15, 2014, will qualify for a $480 premium incentive discount for plan year 2015. Employees can confirm their discount status by logging into their account at [http://www.KansasHealthQuest.com](http://www.KansasHealthQuest.com) and clicking on the “My Printable Credits Summary” link from the left menu.
Emcee Laura Hanigan (above, standing, left) introduced the four honorees at the Employee Recognition for Years of Service to KU reception on July 16 at the Life Span Institute at Parsons’ research conference room in her own humorous and inimitable style.

Laura reminded those gathered that Cynthia Huebner, Information Specialist I (pictured above, standing, right), began her career at LSI/Parsons on March 29, 1984 as a clerk steno and now, as she receives her 30-year pin and framed print, she wears many hats including webmaster.

In the picture left, Laura presents Misty Goosen, KITS Coordinator, her 20-year pin and commemorative paperweight. Misty serves the KITS statewide program from her office in Lawrence. Dr. Jerry Rea, (right) Superintendent of the Parsons State Hospital and Training Center as well as KU graduate and Principal Investigator of the Family Care Treatment Program received his 15-year pin at a later date.

Peggy Gentry (pictured on page 7) was the recipient of her 10-year pin and to many of her colleagues, it just seemed more like 8 years since she accepted a position with the Family Care Treatment Program in September, 2006, but we were wrong. Here’s how Peggy explains it:

My connection with PSH&TC and the KU Life Span Institute at Parsons began in 1970, has covered a span of 40 years, and seen me progress from using a manual typewriter to a laptop computer! My story started in January of 1970 while I was attending Pittsburg State University and working nights in the Title I Project on Walnut B cottage with seven boys with severe and multiple disabilities. After graduation my job was to develop and manage self-help programs for the young boys in the Chestnut Basement day

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Years of Service from page 6
In 1970, I began working at Parsons State Hospital and Training Center (PSH&TC) as an associate vocational instructor. The program. Later moving to Hickory Cottage, I participated in training a KU affiliated language research program in addition to the self-help programs for young clients. Vocational instructor and classroom teacher came next with the Special Purpose School. My classroom was part of several research studies conducted by staff from the KU Life Span. After nine years affiliated with PSH&TC, I took a position with the University of Oregon in 1979 and Tom Bellamy’s project in Eugene. For three years we worked on creating vocational packages that were published, teaching moderately challenged individuals how to use hand tools and woodworking equipment. And yes, I did take a high school wood working class and came out with a great little table!

I returned to Parsons in 1982 to work at the KU Research Building with Dr. Charles Spellman and Dr. John Aiken. Our focus revolved around teaching clients from PSH&TC to work on jobs within industries in the community. The job entailed my actual working on assembly lines in companies and developing the task analysis of each job, breaking the skills down into teachable steps. I then trained Special Purpose School staff on how to train and supervise clients on these same jobs. I completed various graduate hours through the University of Kansas and Pittsburg State University to obtain certifications in Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation K-12. I was asked to teach classes at PSU in the Vocational Ed Department on task analysis, but declined the offer. Guess those skills I developed analyzing job sites paid off! All the foreign students in my analysis class thought I was a genius! HA! HA!

Our project developed into working with multiple trainers on multiple sites in seven communities and the project was moved to the Southeast Kansas Education Service Center under the direction of Dr. John Aiken. During the thirteen years with the Service Center I also worked in the Media Center taking a traveling show to schools to offer instruction on how to use the latest laser disc and cd technology for the classroom as well as teaching beginning computer skills to educational staff. For two years I worked with students with learning disabilities through the Science Center teaching horticulture and history. I presented evening programs to students from the community on the constellations.

For the next eight years starting as part of a Parsons community grant and later as a part of the Education Service Center, I coordinated YouthFriends, an in-school mentoring program that covered four school districts (Parsons, Altamont, Oswego, Chetopa) in Southeast Kansas. I recruited and trained qualified/screened mentors to work with students grade K through 12 during the school day and at lunch. Our mentors ranged from a chef, to a lawyer, to business owners, to housewives and retired persons. The entire Parsons City Fire Department was recruited into the YouthFriends program to volunteer as mentors called “Lunch Buddies”. We were proudly the only Fire Department in Kansas and Missouri to do so.

In 2006, I once again returned to work for the KU Life Span, this time as the recruiter/caller with the Southeast Kansas Family Care Treatment Program. With Dr. Katie Hine as my coordinator, our project works with families with children with challenging behaviors. This has been a very successful project and I can truly say it has made a positive difference in the lives of many families in Southeast Kansas.

Throughout my life I have always been involved with teaching on some level, working in education, and with the public. Grant work has been very enjoyable in that it provides you the opportunity to change projects every few years and learn new skill sets while working with a variety of interesting people. At times it can be challenging however, not knowing where your next job is coming from, but also very exciting at all the possibilities that lie before you.

As we are approaching our project’s end in December, and I am approaching retirement age, I look back at all the projects I have worked on, people I have called co-workers and friends, and Continued on page 8
Years of Service, continued from page 7

children and families whose lives have been positively impacted by these projects. I have been lucky and I am grateful to have been a part of the KU Life Span family. I hope that new and interesting projects will continue to come this way and the KU Life Span will continue to positively impact lives for years to come. It makes me smile and it makes me proud to be a JayHawk. ROCK CHALK!

KITS 2014 Summer Institute

The Teaching Toolbox: Matching Strategies to Individual and Group Needs

Fifty-four early childhood professionals gathered at Kansas State University’s Alumni Center in Manhattan the first week of June to participate in the 21st annual Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS) Summer Institute: The Teaching Toolbox: Matching Strategies to Individual and Group Needs.

This year’s Summer Institute focused on intentional planning as a part of the teaching process, reviewing evidence-based strategies and interventions, and determining how and what should be implemented at a given time, with specific children, and with fidelity. The information was applicable to both home and classroom environments, and valuable to those who work with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

KITS Director, Dr. David Lindeman said, “Adults working with young children including those with disabilities have to be intentional about instruction. We spent this summer institute talking about careful planning, deliberate and focused instruction, and evaluation of that instruction — so our work with children and families will result in positive outcomes.”

During the four-day seminar, nationally recognized experts described how teaching plans could be created based on the philosophy that learning opportunities move from less to more intensive, from emergent to explicit, and those that are more often reserved for special circumstances. Additionally, information was shared regarding instructional methods that fit within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), those that improve outcomes for dual language learners, as well as young children with special needs. Educators learned how to create effective teaching plans, and strategies for the implementation of teaching practices they may choose to implement as a result of their attendance at the KITS Summer Institute.

The KITS Summer Institute is open to all people working with children in Kansas; but priority is given to those professionals working with children, birth to eight, who have disabilities. To attend the Summer Institute, participants must submit an online registration and enroll for college credit with one of the six partnering universities: Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Kansas State University, Pittsburg State University, Wichita State University, and University of Kansas. (In the picture: Vicki Comstok (on left) and Wendy Trout, 2014 workshop participants)

Submitted by Karen Rowland (Lawson), KITS Program Assistant.

ATK’s iPad Training continues from page 3

Topeka and is working again while continuing his cognitive therapy.

Other participants were able to expand their hours and increase their business due to access to technology. A young woman in Wichita is conducting product demonstrations at Target. She receives an "invitation" to a demonstration job via email and she can either accept or reject the job. Since getting the iPad, she is able to monitor her email frequently so she has been accepting far more jobs. She is averaging eight to ten jobs a month - previously she was only receiving two or three. Being able to check her email frequently has enabled her to work more hours. She is using the iPad to apply for other jobs too since she wants full-time employment.

A handy man in Topeka is managing his business on Craig’s List while continuing to seek full-time employment. He is doing everything from cutting and hauling wood, to cleaning gutters, building fences, etc. Despite a traumatic brain injury, he is able to schedule appointments, track to-dos for jobs, and promote his services using his device.

Still other participants are embarking on a new employment front by developing a small business plan. A Parsons’ participant is a veteran of the Gulf Wars and is starting an agribusiness. She has experience as a florist and is using the iPad to maintain financial records through QuickBooks, research organic growing strategies, and plan her social media product promotion, and has also applied for an accessible greenhouse through a high tunnel initiative.

Another participant completed an online application and demonstrated the technology skills to serve as an office assistant for a large community service organization. One of the participants who has mental health issues is working two part-time jobs to make ends meet and uses his iPad to track activities on his calendar and relies on apps for stress management. Three other individuals have reached the “final rounds” of interviews and have not been hired yet, but report increased self-confidence after mastering the new technology skills.


Visit the KU Life Span Institute (LSI) at Parsons website at http://www.parsons.lsi.ku.edu/newsletters

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