2019 on the surface was a year of change. A new name that better reflects our mission was rolled out and along with that a new website and awareness campaign, AdaptNation. We took a leap of faith in changing our name, hoping we wouldn’t lose our identity. What we found was a renewed interest in who we are and what we do, an opportunity to share the heart of our mission with others. Not only does empower: abilities shift the focus to the intrinsic value of all people living with a disability, but aligns us with what is going on in our community and beyond.

Aside from an updated look and name, we remain a group of advocates; a team of passionate, dedicated individuals; a force for change. Our staff, leadership and board are all working together to increase opportunity and expand access. By educating legislators on the impact and effects of legislation, we create awareness and accountability. By working with community partners we expand inclusion and opportunity. By working with individuals we empower ability.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

Shannon Porter
CEO

MISSION:
To remove barriers and empower independent living for all people with disabilities.

VISION:
To assist all people with disabilities to live their fullest life and participate in an accessible world of social equality.
Restaurant Access Program (RAP)

We are launching our Restaurant Access Program, which sets out to increase accessibility for all in our community at our restaurants.

If you are interested in surveying local restaurants, we are looking for YOU! In order to survey, you must complete a training course through empower: abilities.

Training opportunities:
Friday, January 10th
9-10 am & 2-3 pm
empower: abilities
Community Room, Building B

"OUR VOICE" NEWSLETTER

If you have suggestions for stories or content you would like to see in the newsletter, please email cboyle@empowerabilities.org.
SURVIVING AN ACTIVE SHOOTER OR VIOLENT INTRUDER
ERIC SCHROEDER, CERTIFIED ACTIVE SHOOTER INSTRUCTOR

JANUARY 22, 2020 | 1:30PM - 5:00PM
EMPOWER: ABILITIES
BUILDING B COMMUNITY ROOM
1450 W. CAMBRIDGE STREET

Attendees will obtain insight into who an active shooter might be, how we respond during emergencies, methods to prepare and survive a tragedy in the workplace, and how to be prepared for ANY emergency, not just active shooters.

RSVP ARobertson@empowerabilities.org
Limited Transportation Reasonable Accommodations Available

VISIT
WWW.EMPOWERABILITIES.ORG
FOR ALL EVENTS

- January EVENTS -

All Amp'd Up
January 3, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Live and Thrive
January 8, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Social Club
Game Day
January 15, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Crafts and Sewing
Clocks
January 24, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Youth Social Club
Movie and Popcorn
January 9, 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Team Access
January 10, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Women Inventing Tomorrow
January 9, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM
AdaptNation

We had the honor of adding Hallmark CMO, Lindsey Roy and TV's Queer Eye star, Wesley Hamilton as the latest portraits and narrative to our project AdaptNation. We will be showing our full exhibit this spring which will now include a short film on the everyday of those living with disabilities. We can not wait to share the incredible stories of struggle and strength with the community and beyond. AdaptNation is not just about individuals with disabilities adapting their lives to their unique circumstances, but it is also about us as a society, adapting our thoughts, our views and our interactions to be more inclusive in a world that is oftentimes blind to the struggles of the largest minority group in the world.

Big things are coming! We will use this exhibit to share the voice of those with disabilities and inspire a MOVEMENT of inclusion, access, acceptance and love.
We held our first community fundraiser AdaptNation on October 23rd at Farmer's Park Pavilion. It was a special night that included guest host Sarah Jenkins from The Mystery Hour, delicious food from The Traveling Chef and musical guest Randall Shreve. The fundraiser was set to raise money for the area's first-ever open adaptive gym. This gym is designed to improve the overall health and long-term well-being of those who are unable to use conventional gym equipment. Thanks to our generous community, we raised almost $23,000. empower: abilities is teaming up with Shane Campbell of Training Day Sports and the gym is set to open sometime mid to late January.

Upon completion of this ground-breaking establishment empower: abilities has committed to providing memberships to individuals living with disabilities who qualify and are interested in actively participating in the program.
Meet Shane Campbell

Shane Campbell grew up in Southwest Missouri where he was active in sports and developed a love for the “game.” He attended Missouri State University for Athletic Training and spent the following 17 years working in physical therapy clinics and becoming a mobility specialists where he worked with individuals to gain back their mobility. Shane has spent the last 10 years working in Complex Rehabilitation where he specializes in custom mobility equipment for pediatrics and adults. Shane has taken his experience and his passion and co-founded ATOP Outdoors, a 501 (C) 3 non-profit that provides adaptive sporting and outdoor equipment for people with disabilities.

empower: abilities has teamed up with Shane to provide the area's first open adaptive gym. The adaptive gym will be located inside Shane's gym Training Day Sports, located at 3052 S. Clifton Ste. C500 in Springfield. The adaptive portion of his gym is set to open mid to late January. Look for more information to come!

Congress Passes the Renewal of Money Follows The Person (MFP)

Money Follows The Person officially expired in 2016 and has been teetering on collapse. States have received nearly $3.7 billion to transition more than 91,000 into the community since 2006 through this program. Under the new plan, the program will be funded at $450 million annually for the next 10 years.

This has been stated as one of the decade's most significant legislative victories for community inclusion and the providers who make it possible. The Transitions Program at empower: abilities is just one of the many services we offer. For more information, contact Steve Wright at swright@empowerabilities.org.

MFP is a Medicaid program that gives states funding to pay for employment supports, housing and other services so that people with disabilities can transition from nursing homes and other institutional facilities to homes in the community. Money Follows the Person officially expired in 2016 and has been teetering on collapse. States have received nearly $3.7 billion to transition more than 91,000 into the community since 2006 through this program. Under the new plan, the program will be funded at $450 million annually for the next 10 years.

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This is an important year for voters and voters who have a disability are a powerful voting bloc. In 2018, Missouri voters increased by 17.4%. Please help the trend continue and get out and VOTE!

If you need to register to vote or find more resources to become an educated voter, call us and we will help guide you.

Upcoming Election dates and registration deadlines:
https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/calendar/2019cal

Missouri Legislative Session

The 100th General Assembly begins their work at noon on January 8th. Priorities for empower abilities this year will be increasing Independent Living fund dollars, restoring cuts in hours to those who greatly need home and community based services and championing efforts to increase affordable housing and transportation in rural communities.

If you are interested in getting more involved, please call Shelby Butler at (417) 886-1188 ext. 214.
Restaurant Access Program (RAP) Cont.

We will be gathering the community together for a day of surveys on Tuesday, February 18th!

Who: Individuals who use mobility devices, such as a wheelchair, walker or cane. Each person must provide their own transportation to a local restaurant or be able to ride the city bus. Participating individuals will receive $10 to assist with the cost of their lunch. Each person will be paired with a student going through an Occupational Therapy program at Cox College. Together, students and consumers will survey a restaurant.