

## **Missouri holds Housing Solutions Network Meeting**

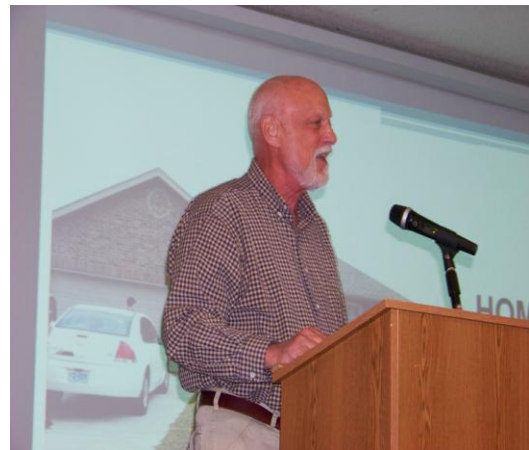
The Missouri Inclusive Housing Solutions Network meeting, held April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> at Stoney Creek Inn in Columbia, emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnership in the effort to increase affordable, accessible housing in Missouri. Sponsored by the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council, the Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation, and the Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the meeting brought together almost 200 professionals from the housing field, self-advocates and family members, professionals in the DD field, and other community partners.

Cassie Hicks, Coordinator for Housing Initiatives at the Institute for Disability Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, gave the keynote speech. Ms. Hicks spoke about how Mississippi has forged housing partnerships to assist over 500 individuals with disabilities to purchase their own homes.

The meeting highlighted individual housing success stories and provided breakout sessions on a number of housing topics including Universal Design, use of technology supports, accessible housing and assistive technology, housing and real estate terminology, disability funding for services and supports, tenant and home ownership rights, Missouri Housing Development Commission programs, and USDA rural development programs. The meeting also provided an opportunity for local housing teams coordinated by the Community Living Coordinators at each Regional Office to network and plan strategies for increasing housing options in their local communities, and for self-advocates and families to discuss how to create a path to accessible and affordable housing through self-determination.



Cassie Hicks presented information regarding the Home of Your Own program in Mississippi.



Dick Dixson, a parent from Bolivar, told the audience about how moving to a new home increased his daughter's independence and self-determination.