

# Young Professional



AMANDA OWEN

Age: 28

*Executive Director of Puzzle Pieces*

## **Hometown**

Owensboro, KY

### **Civic or Volunteer Activities**

Growing up I supported and was involved with the Special Olympics due to my brother's involvement, however over the last year my life has been consumed with supporting and hosting events for Puzzle Pieces. In the year of 2009, I helped create and organize a new non-profit called Team Karlie centered around an individual with Cerebral Palsy in my classroom, Karlie Hempel. I am serving a Co-Vice Chair on Team Karlie, and have volunteered my time to host 2 Team Karlie 5Ks, and cheering on the team members at events. In the couple of months, since the opening of Puzzle Pieces, I have become involved in the Rob Lodgson's Non-profit committee group, We are Downtown, Inc., and Chamber of young professionals. Currently, I'm helping to support a larger fundraiser event coming in March of 2013 to Owensboro to benefit Wendell Foster Center, Buddy Ball, Green River Area Down Syndrome Association, Dream Riders of Ky, Team Karlie and Puzzle Pieces.

### **How long have you served in your current position?**

I have officially been the Executive Director of Puzzle Pieces since August of 2012, and we opened our doors Sept. 4, 2012. However, I worked for at least one and a half years prior to our opening to organize, write a business plan, and gather resources needed prior to our opening date.

### **What does your position entail?**

My position entails a little of everything. As the Executive Director/Founder I pretty much do everything but Payroll and Billing, because I'm fortunate to have a great partner that deals with that part. I present concerns/decisions/etc. to our Board to be discussed and voted on, I organize everyday routines/activities at center, on some days I'm actually one-on-one with clients, hire and train staff, collaborate with business manager on budget, communicate to parents, met with every parent to decide on goals for their child, make business decisions to further our mission, and most importantly I share with the community about "ability" awareness by connecting with business/individuals to spread the positive impact we are having on the lives of individuals with special needs.

### **What's the best part about your position?**

The best part about my position would definitely be observing the impact and difference our services are making not only with the individuals we are serving, but the families. With only 2 months of being in operation I become overwhelmed with the amount of positive feedback from the clients, families, and staff. The difference to some may be small, but sometimes the littlest things are what makes the greatest impact on a life. Not to mention I'm living my dream and giving back to our community a service that was needed and being able to provide families what I wish my parents had with my brother who has special needs years ago.

### **Why do you choose to live and work in the greater Owensboro area?**

Owensboro is where I was born and raised, and there is nothing more rewarding than giving back and know your supporting families who might know you, heard of you, or know someone that you are serving. Such a small town feel in such a growing and diverse city, is what I love the most about Owensboro.

### **What are other young professionals saying about the Owensboro area?**

Owensboro is growing and so much is available now for people to do and get involved in, so more and more are staying here or moving back here. Owensboro is a new and improved city, which continues to surprise everyone with what it has to offer!