

## West-Central Independent Living Solutions

# The WILS Way



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News from West-Central Independent Living Solutions

Main Office  
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Warrensburg, MO 64093.

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### Board Member Search

WILS is recruiting members of the Board of Directors of West-Central Independent Living Solutions.

Potential Applicants should be interested in promoting independence for people who have disabilities.

If interested, submit a letter of interest to:

WILS Board of Directors  
610 N. Ridgeview, Suite B  
Warrensburg, MO 64093

## ADA Anniversary Celebration

Patriotic music filled the air as 165 program participants gathered for the WILS ADA 23rd Anniversary Celebration held at Liberty Park Convention Hall in Sedalia on July 23rd.

A lunch of grilled burgers and hotdogs, baked beans, potato salad and homemade cookies started things out, followed by an address by Barry Elbasani, Independent Living Supervisor with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation. Elbasani spoke of the accident that paralyzed him from the neck down and the path that brought him to his position with Vocational Rehabilitation. Following his address, those attending enjoyed bingo with tons of prizes, followed by prize drawings for five lucky WILS

program participants.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a landmark bill signed into law by George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990 which prohibits discrimination based on disability.

Elbasani said some believe the ADA is “the Emancipation Proclamation for those who are disabled, giving us an equal opportunity toward self-sufficiency.”

As more barriers come down, more opportunities open up for people who have disabilities.



Barry Elbasani

## Independent Living—What It Is

Independent living is being able to live just like everyone else—having the opportunity to make decisions that affect your life, being able to pursue activities of your own choosing, and being limited only in the same ways that your non-disabled neighbors are.

Many Americans take for granted opportunities regarding living arrangements, employment, transportation, social and recreational activities, and other aspects of daily life. In many cases, Americans with disabilities face barriers in their communities that take away or severely limit their choices.

People with disabilities not only have to deal with the effects of their disabling conditions; they also have to deal with both physical and attitudinal barriers. Otherwise, their lives may be limited to dependency and low personal satisfaction.

These barriers may be obvious, such as a lack of accessible entrances for people who use wheelchairs, or a lack of Braille or taped copies of printed materials for people who have visual

impairments.

Other barriers—often less obvious—can be even more limiting to efforts by people with disabilities to live independently. They are caused by misunderstandings and prejudices about disability. These barriers can result in lowered expectations about what those who have disabilities can achieve.

Millions of people with disabilities have established independent lives, fulfilling many different roles in their communities, from employers and employees to marriage partners, parents, students, athletes—the list is unlimited. In many cases, it isn't that all barriers have been removed, but that the people themselves have been successful in overcoming or dealing with them.

Independent living also has to do with self-determination. It is having the right and the opportunity to pursue a course of action. And, it is having the freedom to fail and to learn from one's failures just as non-disabled people do.

*“The essence of Independent Living is the freedom to make decisions about your own life and to participate fully in your community.”*

*John Evans, Disability Rights and Diversity Consultant*



Kathy Kay, Executive Director

## From the Desk of Kathy Kay

As a Center for Independent Living, WILS promotes the full and equal participation of men, women and children with disabilities in all aspects of life. We advocate for public policy that ensures self-determination, independence, empowerment, and inclusion for people with disabilities in areas such as accessibility, education, healthcare, housing, and voting rights.

On this 23rd anniversary celebrating the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I would like everyone to take the time to recognize that in addition to the rights individuals with disabilities are given under that law of the land, they also deserve respect and compassion by the law of human rights.

Please take the time to learn about this ever growing population and learn some common courtesies for engaging people with disabilities.

1. Personal Questions – Avoid asking personal questions about someone’s disability. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect. Do not probe if the person declines to discuss it.
2. Patience – It may take extra time for a person with a disability to do or say something.
3. Offering Assistance – Be polite and friendly when offering assistance and wait until your offer is accepted. Listen or ask for specific instructions.
4. Meetings & Events – Create an environment that is welcoming and accessible to everyone. Anticipate specific accommodations that a person or group with a disability might need and contact them for information on how to best meet their needs.

These common courtesies will go a long way in not only making people with disabilities feel valued and an important part of society; but also change the regard in which they are held by society as their personalities and abilities—and not just their disabilities—are brought into focus.

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## Why We Do What We Do!

*"WILS is the best service I have ever had. They work so hard to take care of your every need. I truly would recommend them to everyone. I thank each of you for everything you did for me. THANKS SO MUCH!"*  
E. Kirkpatrick

*I have a ramp that is better than getting a million dollars. I can get in my house without hurting. Thank You Very Much.*

## IL Summit 2013—Igniting the Fire!

“Igniting the Fire” was the theme of the 2013 Independent Living Summit and that’s just what the sessions were designed to do as CIL staff members from all over Missouri met at the St. Charles Convention Center in St. Charles, MO June 23 through 24.

25 staff members from WILS’ four offices attended and participated in training sessions that will help them provide even better service to those who take part in WILS programs. Sessions included instruction on such things as taxes, reporting processes and advocacy, as well

as presentations on things such as healing with horses, learning styles and training service dogs to assist on farms.

The Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council (MOSILC) was organized to develop and monitor the State Plan for Independent Living, review and evaluate implementation of the Plan, support the Centers for Independent Living and advocate for disability rights and related issues. MOSILC established a network of 22 Centers and sponsors ongoing training for CIL staff and board members. More information on MOSILC is available at [www.mosilc.org](http://www.mosilc.org).



WILS staff between sessions.

## Do You Need Someone to Talk To?

Not everyone with a disability has access to the support they need from family, friends, church or other organizations. Peer support can become a valuable tool for both those who receive support and those who can give support.

WILS is currently conducting a study to see how many of those who participate in our programs would be interested in forming a peer to peer network.

Within this network, people would be matched to each other by one of several categories: type of disability, age, gender, or location, for instance. WILS will create the match, then the matched peers control when and how they contact each other. It is possible to withdraw from the network at any time.

The role of a peer support partner is to listen and provide information.

A Peer Support person:

- Provides a listening ear and allows the other person to express honest emotions.
- Listens with acceptance, remaining open-minded and non-judgmental.
- Offers encouragement, emotional

support, and information.

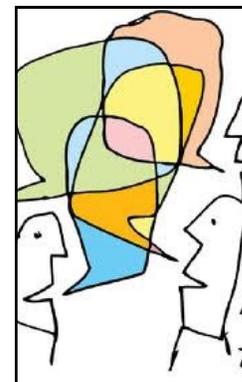
- Guides the person needing support in learning how to make informed and responsible choices.
- Offers guidance and direction as needed, but allows the person to make his or her own decisions.
- Respects the confidentiality of the relationship.

There may be times when one partner will ask more of the other than he or she can or should do.

The following list will help clarify what a Peer Support partner is NOT expected to do.

- Does not give out medical advice.
- Does not act as a psychologist, social worker, or crisis counselor.
- Does NOT provide personal services (babysitting, transportation, etc.), money or tangible items such as food, clothing etc.
- Does not discuss topics that might make himself or the other person feel uncomfortable.

If you participate in WILS programs and think you would be interested in being part of a new Peer to Peer Network, please let



One of WILS’ four core services is peer support.

Peer to Peer Support is encouragement and assistance provided by someone who has experienced similar difficulties.

Through Peer to Peer Support, people with disabilities can share their concerns and solve problems about everyday issues that affect their lives.

Contact Us!

Warrensburg  
610 N Ridgeview, Suite B  
(660) 422-7883  
(800) 236-5175

Sedalia  
1800 W Main, Suite A  
(660) 829-1980  
(866) 558-5588

Lexington  
821 Business Hwy 13  
(660) 259-3060  
(877) 234 0655

Warsaw  
225 W Main St  
(660) 438-0016  
(888) 840-6987

*West-Central Independent Living Solutions is a non-profit Center for Independent Living that works to help people with disabilities by offering services and programs to help them achieve and maintain their independence.*

*WILS' four core services are information and referral, independent living skills training, advocacy and peer support.*

*For individuals, WILS offers supportive programs including accessible ramp construction, low cost accessible transportation, Consumer Directed Services, assistive technology, and help to transition from an institution to independent community living. We can also assist eligible participants to obtain adaptive telephone and computer equipment through Missouri's Telecommunications Access Program.*

*In addition, WILS staff can guide businesses and organizations through the process of performing accessibility surveys and implementing transition plans to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.*

**Where there's a WILS, there's a WAY!**

[www.wilshelps.org](http://www.wilshelps.org)



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*Empowering people with disabilities to achieve and maintain their independence.*