

## West-Central Independent Living Solutions

# The WILS Way



### The WILS Way

News from West-Central Independent Living Solutions

Main Office  
610 N. Ridgeview Drive  
Warrensburg, MO 64093.

Questions, suggestions and story ideas can be directed to  
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### Board Member Search

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

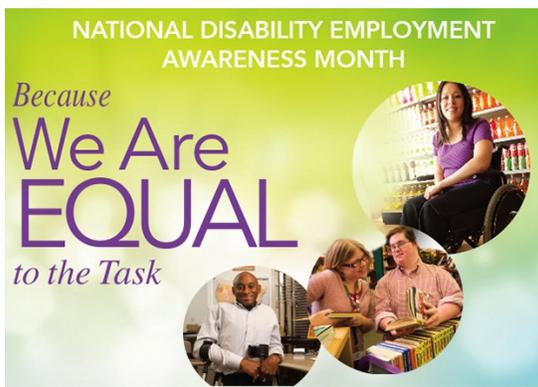
Potential applicants should be interested in promoting independence for people who have disabilities.

If interested, submit a letter of interest to:

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

## Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month!



"Because We are EQUAL to the Task" has been chosen as this year's theme to reflect the reality that people with disabilities have the education, training, experience and desire to be successful in the workplace. Work is an important part of our lives. It means so much more than a

paycheck — offering purpose and the opportunity to lead an independent, self-directed life for all people, including people with disabilities.

People who have disabilities have the skills and talents to pursue meaningful careers and play an important role in our country's educational and economic success. Organizations exist that can help them seek employment, prepare for employment, and understand their right to be evaluated on their ability, not their disability.

WILS supports hiring people with disabilities by providing information and referral for their program participants interested in employment. Additionally, 51% of those employed at WILS have a significant disability.

## WILS Has Gone Green

Over the years, WILS and Johnson County Board of Services have partnered for outings for the Day Program, as well as in support of the cardboard recycling efforts at the Sheltered Workshop.

Julie Steele, Human Resources Administrator, announced that the existing partnership has been taken to a new level.

WILS Executive Director Kathy Kay became concerned with the amount of recyclables that were being thrown away at the office and wanted to do more to not only help the environment, but to help JCBS as well.

Even though WILS had already partnered

with the sheltered workshop for cardboard recycling for years, Kay felt that more could be done.

Working with Erin Underwood, Qualified Developmental Disability Professional with JCBS, Steele and Kay have initiated a new, more comprehensive recycling program.

Collection containers provided by JCBS for all manner of recyclables are located throughout the office and are picked up each Thursday by workers from the Day Program.

Filled containers each Thursday attest to the popularity of the program.





Kathy Kay, Executive Director

## From the Desk of Kathy Kay

WILS will again be participating in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October, whose purpose is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

This year, the National Disability Employment Awareness Month theme is "Because We Are EQUAL to the Task." Reflecting this year's theme, throughout the month, WILS will be engaging in a variety of activities to educate its employees, consumers and the community on disability employment issues and the role they play in fostering a disability-friendly work culture. These efforts include participation in National Disability Awareness Week activities at the University of Central Missouri, a front-page article in this newsletter, and appearances and presentations at several high school transitions fairs throughout WILS' 6-county service area that includes Benton, Henry, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline counties.

WILS is proud to be a part of this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month. We want to spread the important message that a strong workforce is one inclusive of the skills and talents of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities. WILS is more concerned with what a person can do, rather than what they cannot. As an organization, WILS embodies this concept: 51% of our staff and Board of Directors has a significant disability. All are contributing, capable members of the workforce and society.

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages – during October and throughout the year – by visiting the ODEP website at [www.dol.gov/odep/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/). Information is also available on the WILS website: [www.w-ils.org](http://www.w-ils.org) or [www.wilshelps.org](http://www.wilshelps.org).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Kay".

WILS is more concerned with what a person can do, rather than what they cannot.

## Mobility Assist Program for New Vehicles

Joining the ranks of such automotive manufacturers as Ford, Chrysler, GM, Honda, Hyundai, Toyota and Volvo, Nissan recently announced the introduction of Nissan Mobility Assist for new leased or purchased vehicles.

This program reflects those of the other manufacturers in offering up to \$1000 reimbursement to have qualifying adaptive equipment installed on new vehicles to accommodate a physically disabled driver or passenger. Qualifying equipment includes hand controls, wheelchair/scooter lifts, left foot accelerator and others. While each program is slightly different, according to the manufacturer, all offer financial assistance to install equipment that will make it easier for a person with physical disabilities to drive or be transported in a vehicle.

WILS applauds automobile manufacturers for taking these steps to empower people with disabilities to become more independent!

## Using Your ABILITY

Have a disability or medical condition? You are not alone. More than 54 million people in the United States alone have some type of disability. Having a disability does not mean, however, that you can't lead a full, successful life.

People with disabilities have contributed and continue to contribute to society in many ways. These include actors, actresses, celebrities, singers, world leaders, and many other people—both famous and those leading lives out of the spotlight. There are millions of people worldwide who are not famous in the sense society deems famous, but live with and overcome their disabilities every single day of their lives.

It's important to remember that a person is not their disability. Sharon may use a wheelchair, but is also a gifted painter and successful computer programmer. John is blind and enjoys a career as a criminal litigator. Disabilities do not have to mean that a person cannot be a contributing member of society.

Following is a list of some more famous people with disabilities and their contributions:

Franklin D. Roosevelt—President of the United States, 1932–1948. Roosevelt

contracted polio as a young man, which left him unable to walk on his own.

Stephen Hawking—Physicist, Author. Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Chris Burke—Actor, Author, Editor. Chris was the first person with Down Syndrome to star in a weekly TV series, *Life Goes On*.

Ludwig Van Beethoven—Composer. Beethoven created many of his finest works after he began losing his hearing as a young man.

Helen Keller—Author, Political Activist, Lecturer. Born deaf and blind, Keller was the first deaf and blind person to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Henry Winkler—Actor, Producer, Author. Known as "Fonzie" on the TV sitcom, *Happy Days*, Winkler is dyslexic.

Daryl Hannah—Actress in more than 80 films, including *Splash* and *Blade Runner* has Asperger's Syndrome.

Howard Hughes—Aviator, Engineer, Film Producer, Industrialist. Despite living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Hughes became one of the wealthiest men in the world.

Ability means much more than disability.



F. D. Roosevelt



Chris Burke



Helen Keller



Daryl Hannah

## WILS Had a Birthday!

On September 11, 1996, the bylaws were accepted and signed and Warrensburg Independent Living Services was born. A not for profit, non-residential center for independent living, WILS was established to assist people with disabilities by providing the tools for them to become more independent. WILS later changed its name to West-Central Independent Living Solutions to better reflect their service area.

WILS has been providing programs and services to people with disabilities for 17 years. Many people may not be aware of all the options available to help them live more independently. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) such as WILS can help them find solutions to challenges they may be facing.

To accomplish their mission of empowering people with disabilities to achieve and maintain their independence, WILS collaborates with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Care Connections for Aging and other agencies and organizations throughout their 6 county service area.



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 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.*