



>Moving Forward >>>

Annual Report Oct 2020 – Sept 2021





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Direction: Mission
& Vision

“Change never happens at the pace we think it should. It happens over years of people joining together, strategizing, sharing, and pulling all the levers they possibly can.”
-- Judith Heumann

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WILS's Story

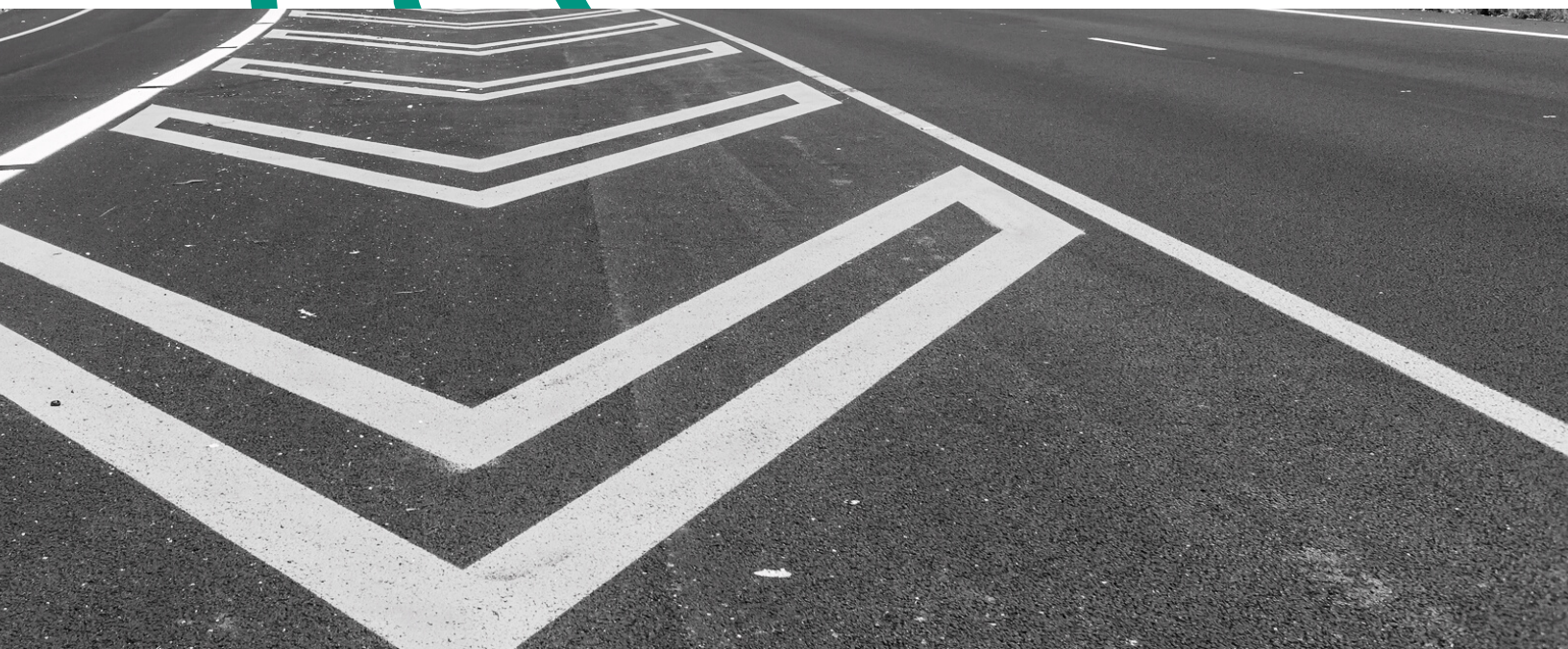
The 2021 Journey

Even the best road trips often have us asking, "Are we there yet?" After the roller coaster that was 2020, everyone was hopeful for a return to "normal" in 2021. Normal for 2021 still included COVID protocols, social distancing, and a lot of time spent outdoors . . . in parking lots. They provided the wide open spaces that we needed, and allowed us to see each other face to face again.

There were twists and turns, successes and struggles, but what helped us make it through it all was a great team working together to provide the best possible experiences and outcomes for the people that we serve in our communities.

WILS consumers, staff, board members, volunteers, and community partners were able to accomplish a lot of good things in 2021. The adventures that we had are worth sharing.

We hope that you enjoy reminiscing with us and we look forward to the next year as we continue making progress on the journey of independence.



»»» Determine Direction



Our Mission

WILS works to empower people with disabilities to achieve and maintain their independence.

CIL

Centers for Independent Living (CIL) are authorized and funded under Title VII, Chapter I, Part C of the Rehabilitation Act 1992 amendments. Missouri has 22 Centers for Independent Living. CILs provide programs, resources, and services for individuals with disabilities so they can remain or become independent within their community. In 1997, WILS became one of the 22 Missouri Centers for Independent Living. CILs must prepare and submit a report at the end of each fiscal year that shows compliance, ongoing monitoring, and oversight. For states to be eligible for CIL grants, they must develop and implement a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). CIL representation is a requirement of State Independent Living Centers (SILC) and CIL program activities must be consistent with the SPIL.

Our Vision

We envision a community where all individuals can participate fully, unencumbered by physical or attitudinal barriers.

"I don't
need easy.
I just need
possible."

-- Bethany Hamilton



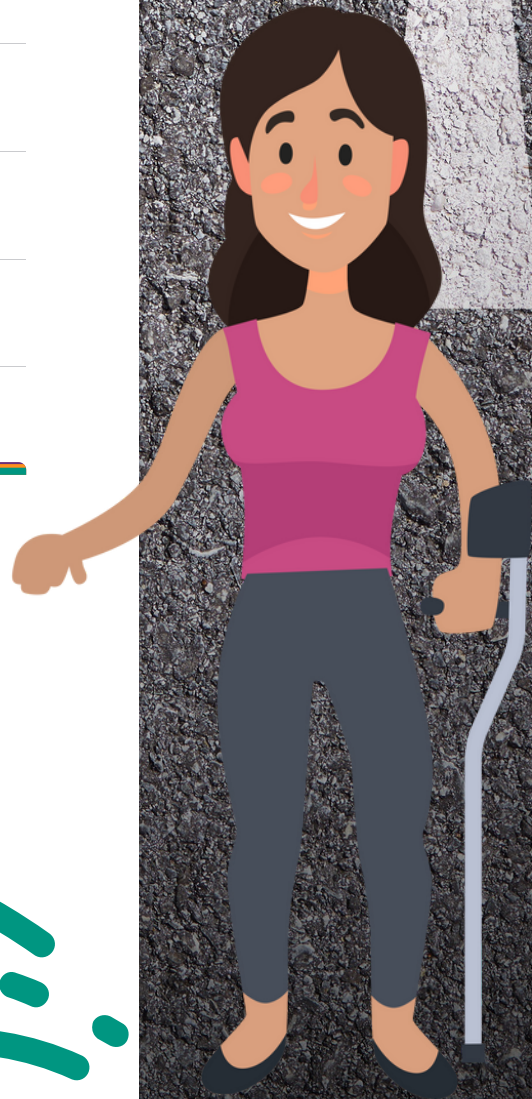
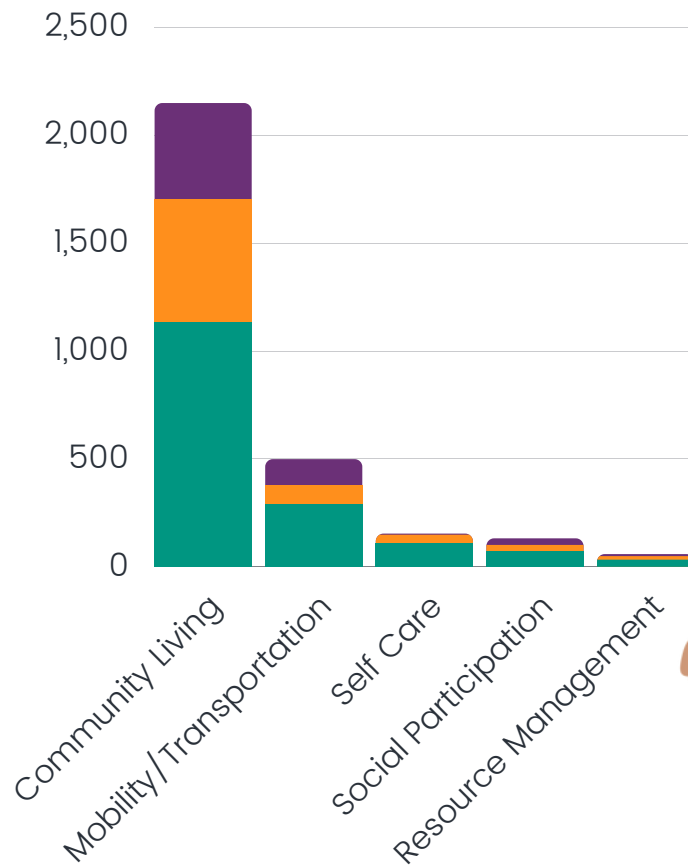
>>> Determine Direction

Goals

WILS consumers are driven to succeed. They set goals to increase independence so they can live the life they choose.

Here are the 2021 goals they:

Set ■ Met ■ Working Towards ■





SUCCESS

“My disability has
opened my eyes to
see my true abilities.”

— Robert M. Hensel

➤ Navigate ➤ ➤ ➤

5 Core Services

1 Impact

ADVOCACY

WILS provides tools that consumers can use to make an impact in their personal lives and in their communities. Using self-determination, individuals express their views and concerns drawing from learned skills that allow the consumer to use their voice to make a difference.

2 Share

PEER SUPPORT

WILS creates an environment for sharing relevant experiences and reflective listening. Peer support participants make a positive impact through the process of offering emotional support, sharing knowledge, teaching skills, and providing practical assistance.



» Navigate »»

3 Connect

INFORMATION & REFERRALS

WILS connects individuals with any information and/or referral to other agencies, community programs, services, and/or activities. Examples include healthcare agencies, food banks, transportation providers, recreation, public assistance facilities, and employers.

4 Empower

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TRAINING

WILS empowers individuals with disabilities by providing training and sharing techniques so they can participate fully in daily living. The heart and soul of Independent Living is being in control of your own life.

5 Guide

TRANSITIONS

Transitions in life can happen at anytime.

WILS acts as a guide by offering support, resources, and training. We focus on two different types of transition services: transitioning from an institution or nursing home to community living and transitioning youth from high school to continued education or the workplace.

Tyler's Story

5 Core Services

In 2019, 16-year old Tyler was a happy teen with Down syndrome and autism being raised by his grandparents, Debbie and Paul. Together, they chose to move from a large city to a rural community in order for Tyler to transition to a smaller school environment.

Unfortunately, the rural school district to which they moved told them that the school does not have staff trained to teach Tyler important **independent living skills** necessary for his **transition** into adulthood and recommended E.W. Thompson State School as an alternative learning environment. Since Tyler is able to verbally communicate and has no behavioral issues, his grandparents did not want Tyler going to the state school.

After several months of unsuccessfully **advocating** with the school district, Debbie and Paul asked WILS and another agency for assistance.

Advocacy meetings continued to be unsuccessful until WILS was able to provide **information and a referral** to Missouri Parents Act (MPact). Their involvement was a game changer!

In August, 2021, the school's Special Education Administrator contacted Tyler's grandparents and asked if Tyler wanted in-person or home schooling for the FY2021/22 school year.

The family consulted with Tyler's doctor. He felt it was in Tyler's best interest to continue homeschooling. Currently, Tyler is participating in classes remotely, but he looks forward to the day that he can participate in person.





“Your people are so fantastic!” They always have a smile. The whole organization has been so helpful and a pleasure to work with.”

-- Stanislaw, WILS Transportation Consumer

1

New
Accessible
Vehicle



A Picnic Story

5 Core Services

WILS typically provides disability Peer Support groups in a consumer-directed manner over the telephone, in person at any WILS office, or at a consumer's living site. Participants can offer wisdom gained through personal experiences to inspire hope, support personal responsibility, promote understanding, offer education, and promote self-advocacy and self-determination.

Due to COVID, in-person meetings had been suspended and Connect Crates and Zoom meetings were offered instead.

Connecting from a distance was better than not at all, but the group members craved the normalcy of meeting together face to face.

The consumers who gathered pre-COVID for the peer support artists group advocated for the return to in-person peer activities because they had been socially isolated for over 12 months due to COVID. After speaking with the WILS Executive Director, a parking lot picnic was approved. In June 2021, the group had a lovely time sharing a meal and catching up with old and new friends.



Map It Out >>>>

Where We Serve

WILS has three office locations supporting the six counties we serve.

WARRENSBURG

612 N. Ridgeview Dr.
Warrensburg, MO 64093
W-ILS.ORG

WARSAW

1330 Commercial St.
Suite 100B
Warsaw, MO 65355

SEDALIA

1800 W. Main St.
Sedalia, MO 65301
855-WILSWAY



Map It Out >>>

Our Team

As a Center for Independent Living, at least 51% of WILS Board members and employees must have a disability.

Here's how the numbers stacked up this past year:

85% Board members
90% Leadership
84% Staff

We are who we serve.

Our Family

We consider WILS consumers part of the WILS family. We keep in contact with them all and know them individually. As a WILS consumer, you are not just a number, but a name and a face.

Collectively, our WILS family in 2021 was:

47% ages 25-59
70% female
84% physical disability
15% minorities

Our Communities

WILS serves in 6 Missouri counties. Our consumers are from:

10% Saline
12% Henry
12% Lafayette
18% Johnson
22% Benton
26% Pettis

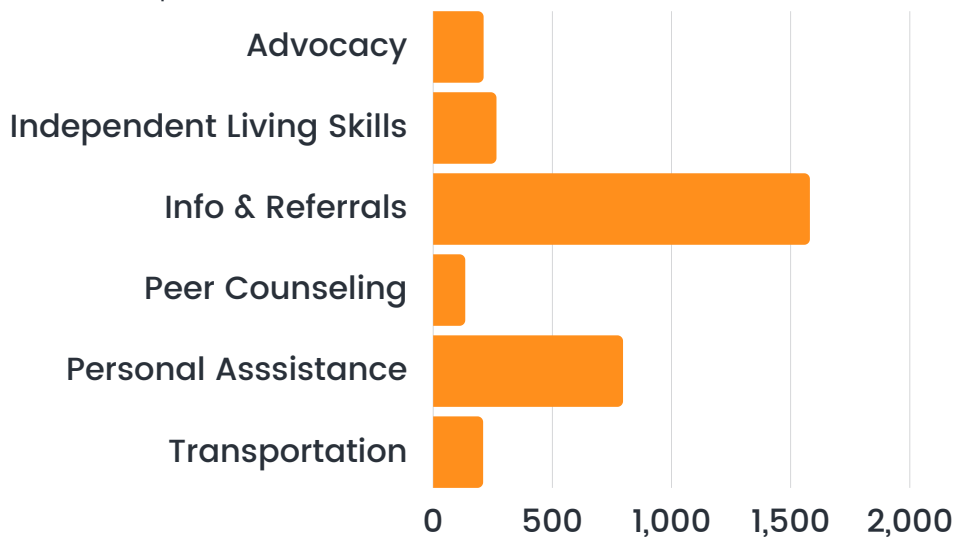
899

Consumers Served in FY2021

Map It Out >>>

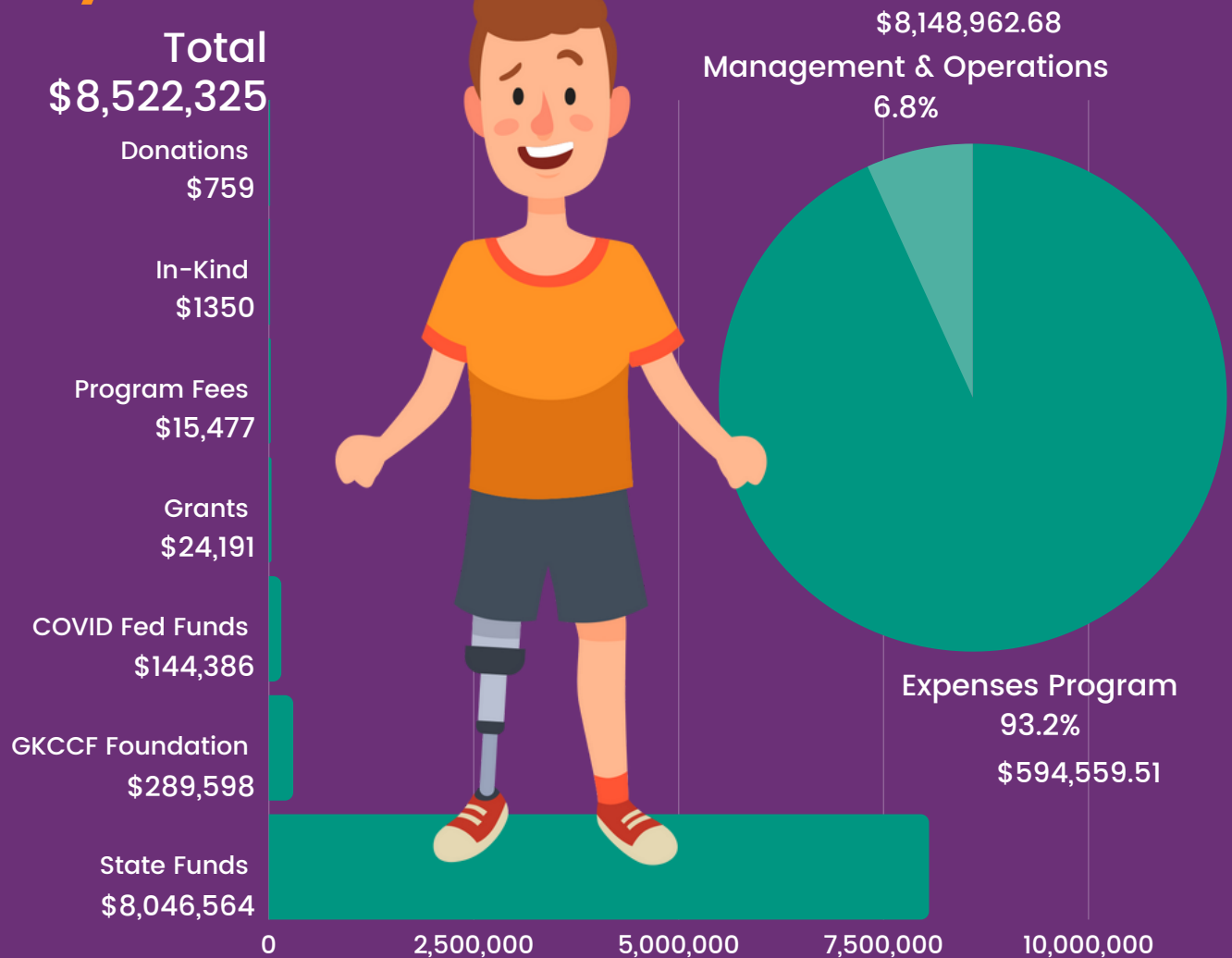
Living Independently

In addition to WILS 5 core services, WILS also offers programs like accessible transportation and Consumer Directed Services, which provides personal assistance. Here are consumers' top 6 requests as they navigated their independence in 2021.



Map It Out>>>

Revenue & Expenses by Amount





>>Paving the Way>

Teamwork

> Pass it On

Jeremiah 29:11

Manna Harvest, Jeremiah 29:11 Project collects merchandise from national retail outlets, businesses, and individuals for distribution to citizens in need. WILS is one of the many organizations that actively identifies areas of specific need and fulfills them through Jeremiah 29:11.

> Inclusion

Clinton Inclusive Playground

Clinton Inclusive Playground Project was able to open to the public after years of collaborative efforts with WILS and others in the community. WILS own Kathy Wyatt pictured far left at the groundbreaking ceremony in May 2021.

>>Paving the Way>

Partnerships

Outreach efforts included participating in virtual and in-person community and inter-agency meetings, health and wellness fairs, community connect events that connect individuals in need with community resources, services, and supports.

WILS engaged virtually with 2,941 individuals who represented over 50 government agencies and community partners.

Each organization with which we partner has a specialty, but we often serve overlapping populations. Working together allows the people we serve to benefit from our shared expertise and services.

A collaborative partnership with the University of Central Missouri, KMOS/PBS TV station provided an opportunity for 26.5 million PBS subscribers to learn about individuals with disabilities living in rural Missouri.



Allegri Chiropractic • Applied Self Direction • APRIL • Benton County Human Services Council • Care Connection for Aging Services • CauseVox • Center for Independent Living • City of Clinton • CLAIM • Clinton Senior Center • CVS Pharmacy • Department of Mental Health (DMH) • Fuller Center for Housing • Golden Valley Memorial Healthcare • Governor's Council on Disability • Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri • Henry County Health Center • Holden Chamber of Commerce • HUD • Johnson County Interagency Committee • Katy Trails Community Health • KMOS TV • Marshall Chamber of Commerce • Marshall Senior Center • Military Affairs Committee Meeting • Missouri Assistive Technology • Missouri DHSS • Missouri Legislators • MOCIL • MOSILC • No Wrong Door • Odessa Chamber of Commerce • Pettis County Community Partnership • Pettis County Interagency • Professionals In Aging • Project Community Connect • Recovery Lighthouse • Saline County Health Department • Saline County Interagency • Salvation Army • Sedalia Chamber of Commerce • Slater Chamber of Commerce • Slater Public Library • Summers Pharmacy • Trails Regional Library • United Way • University of Central Missouri • USDA Rural Development • Voc Rehab • WAEB Community Council • Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce • Warsaw Chamber of Commerce • Western Missouri Medical Center • WILS

587

**Hours spent
working
together**



“The ramp's really nice!
I'm just so excited about
having it. He did such a
good job!”

-- Deborah, WILS Ramp Consumer



7

Ramps
Built



Agency Stories

Collaboration

A partner organization contacted WILS regarding a diabetic, homeless gentleman who was experiencing non-emergency medical issues and was stranded in a small community that didn't have services that could help him. WILS provided the gentleman with transportation and connected him with, a nonprofit homeless shelter that also provides case management and assistance to individuals who are willing to "do the work" of finding employment, working towards more permanent housing solutions, and utilizing resources that will help the individual re-enter society.

The Robotic Pet Project was a collaborative partnership between Missouri No Wrong Door (NWD), Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT), Centers for Independent Living, Areas on Aging, and other direct service providers across Missouri. Twelve WILS consumers participated in the study, which was the maximum for participating

agencies. Two of WILS consumer participants made comments that most days they kept their pet by their side and slept with the pet because they were such a comfort.

Western Missouri Medical Center was fundraising to put together COVID care kits to help COVID patients keep their hands and minds busy while recovering from COVID since they could not have visitors. WILS donated 100 mini promo coloring books with colored pencils and shared WILS brochures.

**"Alone we
can do so
little;
together
we can do
so much."**

-- Helen Keller

>>>Discover



“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, & then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.” -- Christopher Reeve

CHOICE

Connie reached out to WILS for an AT Demo to find a reacher/grabber she could use with her limited mobility; the third option she tried was a perfect fit. Connie really enjoyed the nice square handle and how it comfortably fit in her hand. Connie said she liked the way the device used different muscles than the other styles she tried and is very happy with her choice.

CONTROL

Sherry received a text from her landlord that she had to vacate the home she was living in. Using self-determination and self-advocacy, Sherry was able to come to an agreement with the property owner's lawyer that allowed her enough time to make new living arrangements and get her belongings off the property.

CHANGE

WILS loaned Mari a portable aluminum wheelchair ramp, but Mari experienced additional mobility loss that required a more permanent solution. She couldn't afford to hire a contractor, so she filled out WILS Ramp/Home Modification request. Her application was approved. WILS built a permanent wooden ADA ramp so Mari could have safe access to her home and community.

A Success Story

Consumer Directed Services – CDS

Consumer Directed Services or CDS is a Home and Community Based Service program covered under Medicaid that helps people with significant disabilities obtain assistance with personal care.

The CDS program assists individuals with daily activities so they can maintain their independence at home and in the community by allowing them to hire a caregiver known as a Personal Care Attendant or PCA of their choosing— other than a guardian or spouse.



The Consumer Directed Services program plays a pivotal role in Missouri communities by allowing individuals who need assistance with daily living activities to live where and how they want.

For example, a husband and wife came to WILS to inquire about Consumer Directed Services together. A few short weeks later, the husband passed away from Congestive Heart Failure. The wife, who also has heart and respiratory issues, now lived alone in their home. She was able to hire a Personal Care Attendant through the Consumer Directed Services program.

The wife said, “I am so glad that I found someone that cleans like I do. Thank you WILS for all the help during this hard time.”

The CDS program helped this consumer stay independent in her own home. It allowed her to have a choice in at least one aspect of change in her life when so many others were out of her control.

Careers Stories

Employers

637

Consumers who are employers with disabilities

Attendants

777

Attendants were employed by WILS Consumers

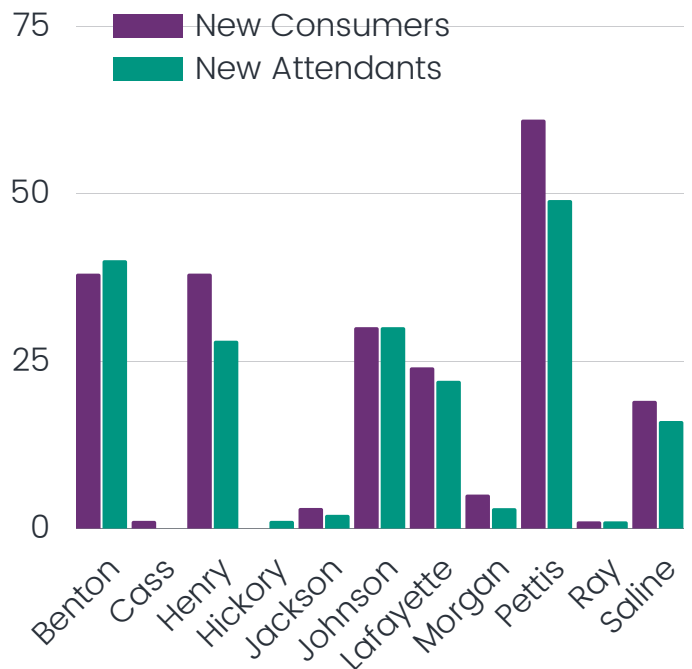
Annual Payroll

52 Pay periods processed

\$5,644,202.04 Gross attendant wages
+ \$471,402.53 Employer taxes

\$6,115,604.57 Paid out

1024 W-2s generated



◀◀◀Rearview

2021 Look Back

WILS made numerous contributions towards strengthening the delivery of the Five Core Services, Independent Living Philosophy, and commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities by working with consumers independently and with others in a variety of settings.

WILS provided IL Skills Training and employment readiness instruction to high school students with disabilities. Staff worked with consumers independently to determine the best possible solutions in providing instruction on problem-solving and decision-making processes in a variety of settings and formats that adhered to social distancing protocols.

WILS collaborated with schools and community-based organizations who have established activities and services. Following CDC COVID-19 guidelines and precautions, WILS continued to provide transportation to consumers. WILS drivers also made porch drops of food packets, personal protective items, cleaning supplies, and assistive technology.

137

Advocacy Hours

108

Youth and
Education Hours

376

Transportation
Trips



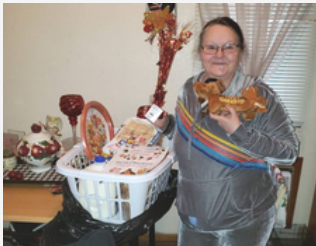
<<<Rearview

Memories



OCTOBER 2020

Awarded \$10,000 No Wrong Door Grant. Funds used on AT Demo room.



NOVEMBER 2020

Thanksgiving baskets were delivered to consumer winners.



DECEMBER 2020

Hosted four parking lot holiday parties for consumers.



JANUARY 2021

WILS consumers featured in KMOS American Portrait: A Story of Us



FEBRUARY 2021

Participated in CDS Day of Action to increase state funding for HCBS.



MARCH 2021

Co-sponsored KMOS Focus on Aging series.



APRIL 2021

Partnered with Trails Regional Library in Knob Noster.



MAY 2021

Hosted community event with Trails & John Knox Village.



JUNE 2021

Launched peer support iPad painting class.



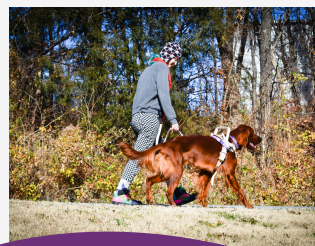
JULY 2021

Hosted pre-employment youth camp.



AUGUST 2021

Participated in Pettis county resource fair.



SEPTEMBER 2021

WILS connected with IL skills training participants.



Accelerate>>>

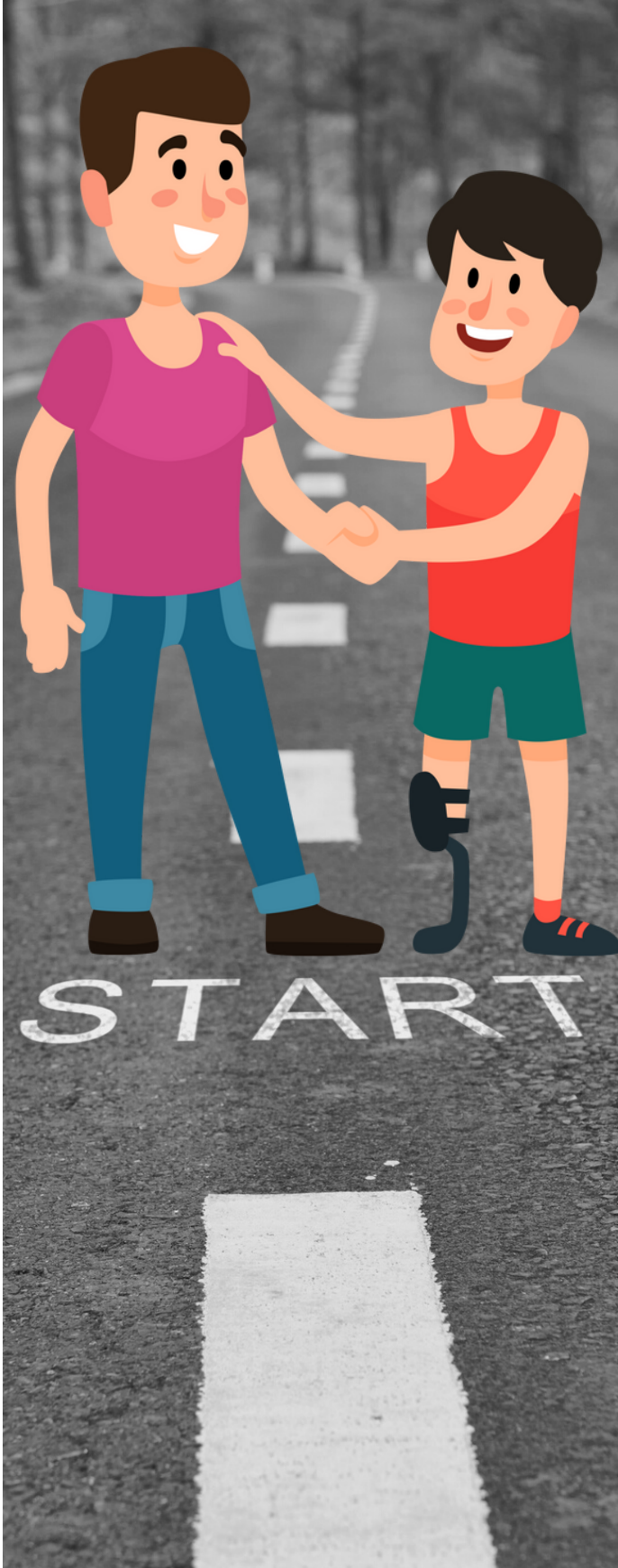
We have big goals for 2022 and we know that our consumers have even bigger goals. That is what inspires us to dream bigger.

What we've learned over the past year is that even when the world seems to hold still, life keeps moving forward and we must move with it. The obstacles we have faced are just a glimpse in-to the barriers that people with disabilities frequently encounter. Each and every challenge is a chance to learn more and do better because at the end of the day, the people we serve are counting on us.

We hope that we can count on you to stand beside us as we normalize equal access, inclusion, and opportunity for all services, all rates, all disabilities, and all ages.



Accelerate>>>



1 Your Voice

SPEAK UP

Don't be silent. Your voice can influence equal access to independent living. Missourians with disabilities want to remain independent in their own homes and our state lawmakers need to prioritize this funding. Share content from THEWILSWAY social media accounts. Send a note to your local representatives. Tell coworkers or clients about WILS. Let the people in your life know these issues are important to you. We are happy to follow up with a presentation about WILS programs and services for any organization.

2 Your Money

DONATE

Every time state funding is cut, our dollars are spread thinner. Your financial contributions allow us to continue to offer quality programs and services in our communities.

3 Your Time

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers multiply our efforts in a way that can not truly be measured. It is because of supporters like you that WILS is able to expand our reach.

We thank you for your ongoing support of WILS.

Acknowledgements

WILS impact within our six-county service area would not be possible without the contributions of the people who worked tirelessly on the projects mentioned and many others. It is the work behind the scenes that pulls it all together.

Thank you to our board of directors, our Executive Director, our staff, consumers, volunteers, and community supporters.

Teamwork makes the dream work!



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