



THE WILS WAY

WILS provides options that can make independent living a **choice**. WILS encourages participants to take **control** by setting and accomplishing their own personal goals. Learning to make informed decisions allows participants to **change** from unnecessary dependency to full inclusion in community life.

Deb's Desk

A note from WILS Executive Director

Dear WILS Friends,

I hope this message finds you well and celebrating the New Year!

Thanks to all who were able to join us at the WILS holiday parties! From the sparkle of cherry ginger ale to the intense excitement of bingo games and amazing prizes, your presence made these celebrations an overwhelming success. The warmth and camaraderie you brought to each gathering truly reflected the spirit of the season.

As we step into 2025, we will begin to take a look at the state legislative process and its impact on Independent Living and our programs. We will also continue to advocate passionately for our consumers. Your continued support and involvement will be crucial as we work toward this goal.

Stay tuned for more details in our newsletters and on social media as we share opportunities to help strengthen our initiatives. Additionally, we are expanding our resource lists to enhance our Information and Referral Services, ensuring we can better serve you and the community.

Thank you for being a part of WILS and for helping us make a difference. Together, we can achieve even greater things in the year ahead.

Warmly,
Deb Hobson
Executive Director





"Thank you so much for the Christmas party. What fun we had. Snacks were great and so much fun. Thank you for thinking of us all. Merry Christmas!" –Don & Judy

Strength in Adversity: Gregory's Story

Independent Living

Gregory, a former virologist with 23 publications, dedicated his career to studying neurological disorders. Diagnosed with Huntington's disease in 2022, he faced the same condition that claimed his mother's life. Despite the challenges, Gregory remains fiercely determined to live independently. He has adapted to his changing abilities, finding new ways to communicate and manage daily tasks. Gregory's resilience and caregiver support at home through WILS CDS program have allowed him to redefine what it means to live fully despite physical limitations. His determination has allowed him to overcome adversity, proving that independence is possible even in the face of significant obstacles.



Advocacy in Action: Sherry's Victory

Advocacy

Sherry, a 67-year-old from Pettis County, lives with COPD and must wear oxygen constantly due to a lung infection. She struggles with shortness of breath, dizziness, and falls. As a WILS CDS consumer, Sherry was devastated when her DHSS annual review determined she no longer met the nursing home level of care, ending her personal care services. Sherry, who was unsteady on her feet, recovering from a heart attack, and awaiting follow-up appointments, didn't understand how she was denied and felt she had no choice but to accept the decision. Panicked, Sherry called her WILS Independent Living Case Manager, Leslie. Together, they reviewed her new health concerns and completed an HCBS Pre-Assessment Tool. WILS advocated on her behalf, leading to a reassessment by DHSS. Sherry was approved again for the CDS Program and expressed relief and joy, saying, "I feel I have accomplished what I wanted so I could receive services again."



How WILS Transportation Helps Tony Restore the Past

Leonard “Tony” is always up for an adventure—especially if it involves a trip to the hardware store. As a passionate artist and furniture refinisher, Tony finds joy in breathing new life into forgotten pieces. His love for restoration not only keeps him active and engaged, but it also helps him connect to something greater—reviving furniture that would otherwise be overlooked or discarded. After a recent doctor’s appointment, WILS Transportation stepped in to take Tony on his latest supply run. This time, he was picking up materials for a particularly special project: a dresser with an attached mirror. Tony has a true “heart” for these vintage pieces, and his goal is simple: to restore them, honor their history, and give them a new purpose. Tony often donates his finished pieces back to the community, sharing his passion for restoration and his belief in second chances. He’s particularly proud of his work on this dresser, which he’s fairly certain dates back to the 1930s. He recognized the exact same design in a classic film from that era—talk about an eagle eye! Tony’s work is a beautiful reflection of how art can restore more than just objects; it can reinvigorate lives and inspire others to see potential in what may seem forgotten.

Independent Living

A Mother’s Relief: Betty’s Story of Care and Comfort

Betty, 62, from Pettis County, has managed diabetes for seven years and COPD for two decades. She also experienced skin cancer requiring the removal of her nose. While a prosthetic was made, she developed an allergy to the glue, leaving her unable to wear it.

Relying on oxygen, Betty finds mobility and household tasks

challenging due to the tubing creating a trip hazard. She shared, “With my oxygen on, it’s a pain to get around my house, and breathing while trying to do things is hard.”

Betty was relieved to discover she could receive help at home without hiring a stranger. Her daughter, who already assisted her, could now receive compensation

for her time. Betty explained, “I feel better having my daughter help me and less guilty now. She works another job too, and it means a lot to me that she can be paid for her support.”

To learn more about WILS Medicaid-based care at home program, visit W-ILS.org.

A Journey to Independence: Sharon’s Triumph Over Adversity with WILS

Independent Living

“Never let pride get in the way of asking for help when you’re in desperate need because you will miss a blessing from God. This was me in 2021...Prideful and Stubborn! That changed when a very pleasant young woman introduced me to WILS Transportation. I started receiving rides to

“Thanks guys for being my WILS family!”
– Sharon

my medical needs! However, WILS is much more than a transportation service. They are my family! Thanks to all their support in so many ways during my struggles with cancer, I never felt like a burden to them.” –Sharon

Sharon first came to WILS in August 2022, recovering from a stroke. At the time, she used a walker and was relearning to navigate steps with her physical therapist. Over time, she progressed from a walker to a cane and now walks unaided. Her recovery wasn’t without setbacks—another stroke and a surgery to remove jaw hardware delayed her progress. Despite these challenges, Sharon persevered. Now healthy and thriving, Sharon said she wouldn’t have come this far without WILS support.

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WHERE THERE'S A WILS

W-ILS.org

THERE'S A WAY.



Empowering Independence, Enriching Lives At WILS, we're dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities to live independently and thrive in their communities. Discover how WILS participants are breaking barriers, reducing stigmas, and conquering independence at home and in their communities. From exciting events to valuable resources, we're here to support your journey toward independence. Stay connected and see how WILS is building a brighter, more accessible future for all! Visit w-ils.org to learn more.

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