

1ST QUARTER 2025

THE WILS WAY

W-ILS.org

855-945-7929



Removing Barriers to Recovery

Donnie recently had a below-the-knee amputation and he has faced challenges in accessing the supplies needed for proper wound care. During a monthly check-in with his WILS case manager, he was asked if there were any unmet needs with which WILS could help. Donnie shared that he was struggling to afford dressing supplies for daily changes while also paying for other necessities.

With the support of WILS and our partnership with the Jeremiah 29:11 Warehouse, his case manager was able to provide him with several boxes of wound dressing pads, rolls of gauze wrap, absorbent briefs, and bed protection pads—all at no cost.

Upon receiving the supplies, Donnie expressed his gratitude, saying, “Thank you, thank you, thank you! This is so helpful. Dressing supplies and adult diapers are so expensive, and you just saved me so much money!”

By working together, WILS continues to support individuals like Donnie in their journey toward healing and independence.

Your Right

At WILS, we believe that independent living is a choice, and we're here to offer the options you need to take control of your life. With the right support, you have the power to create change and live life on your own terms. Your goals and your future are in your hands—your life should be shaped by what you want, and we're here to help make that a reality. Together, we can guide you toward the independence you envision, empowering you to thrive in your home, your community, and beyond.

Deb's Desk

A NOTE FROM WILS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear WILS Consumers,
What a beautiful time of year! Spring is here, bringing with it the warmth of sunshine, the renewal of nature, and the energy of new beginnings. This season of rebirth is a wonderful reminder of the strength and resilience within each of you.

I have received so many inspiring stories of you out there living your best lives independently. These stories are a testament to the power of choice, determination, and the support of a community that believes in your abilities. Your journeys continue to motivate and reinforce the importance of the work we do together.

Advocacy remains a top priority at WILS. This month, we had the opportunity to visit legislators in Jefferson City to ensure your voices are heard and your needs are met. As we celebrate 35 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we reflect on the progress made and recognize the ongoing efforts needed to protect and expand accessibility and independence for all.

Thank you for being part of the WILS family. Your stories, strength, and advocacy make a difference every day. Let's continue to celebrate our independence and push for a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Wishing you a joyful and fulfilling spring!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Hobson". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "D" and "H".

Supporting a Veteran's Choice

BUD'S STORY OF SUPPORT, STRENGTH, AND STAYING ACTIVE

At 78 years old, Alfred, who proudly goes by "Bud", lives in the quiet countryside of rural Henry County. Bud faces multiple disabilities, yet he remains determined to stay active and independent in his community. Thanks to the support he receives through WILS and the Veteran Directed Care (VDC) Program, Bud continues to live at home and do what he enjoys, traveling to Sam's Club and browsing flea markets.

When asked about his experience with the VDC Program, Bud shared, "Yes, I think it works good, and I can keep living at home. I like to be able to go out and shop at Sam's Club and get out of the house."

Bud's family, including his son Alfred Jr, is deeply grateful for the VDC Program, which allows them to continue caring for Bud at home and support his desire to remain engaged in his community. Bud rated his overall satisfaction with the VDC Program as "Very Satisfied."

Despite the challenges his family has faced, Bud continues to live at home, surrounded by the support of his loved ones and the services he receives through WILS and the VDC Program. His story highlights the power of community resources in helping individuals with disabilities remain independent and connected to their communities.

"I don't know what we would do without a program like this."

ALFRED JR.





Volunteers

At WILS, volunteers play a vital role in supporting the community, and their dedication was on full display during a recent effort to assemble Community Care Bags. The energy in the room was inspiring as volunteers worked side by side, carefully packing each bag with thoughtfulness and care.

Together, We Make a Difference

ONE CARE BAG AT A TIME

WILS is committed to supporting individuals in rural communities. We recently partnered with Missouri Mobile Food Trucks and Manna Harvest's Jeremiah 29:11 program to provide much-needed support to residents in Deepwater (Henry County) and Holden (Johnson County). While the mobile food truck distributed fresh groceries to families, WILS staff handed out the Community Care Bags filled with hygiene and cleaning supplies for local adults.



Amy & Deb share smiles and care bags in Holden.



“I very much appreciate the program and could not live in my home without it.”

EDWARD



Partners in Independence

A WIN FOR EDWARD

When Edward’s daughter, Joni, noticed a reduction in his care hours after his annual assessment, she reached out to WILS for support. Edward, a WILS consumer since 2021, relies on these hours for daily assistance, and the decrease raised concerns about his well-being.



Kim, Edward’s Independent Living Case Manager, immediately stepped in. She reviewed his care plan, identified the changes, and worked with Joni to advocate for the support he needed. Together, they submitted a request to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) to restore his hours based on his medical needs.

Their teamwork paid off—Edward not only regained his original hours, but DHSS approved additional support to better meet his needs. This success shows the power of advocacy and collaboration in ensuring individuals receive the care they deserve. We’re better together!



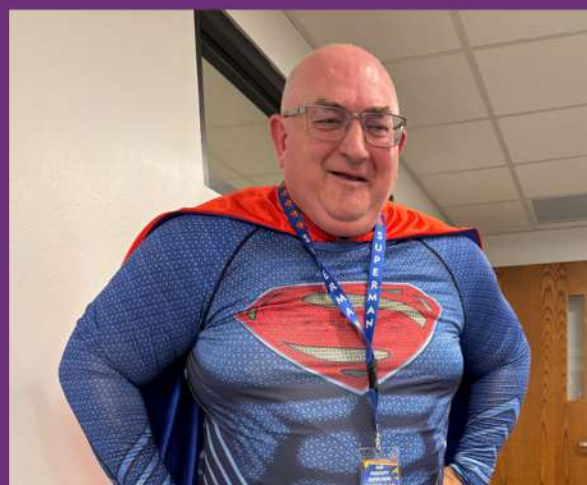
Sad Good-Byes.

In March, WILS bid a heartfelt farewell to two incredible team members, Steven and Angelica, as they set off on new journeys. Their dedication, passion, and commitment to our mission have left a lasting impact on our team and the individuals we serve. From advocating for independent living to ensuring our services reach those who need them most, their contributions have made a difference in countless lives.

Happy Hellos

- WILS is excited to welcome Brandy Cooper as the new Director of Home and Community-Based Services. Brandy brings a wealth of experience and passion for supporting individuals in maintaining their independence at home and in their communities.
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- Additionally, WILS is pleased to introduce Angie Cook as a part-time Project Coordinator. Angie's skills and dedication will play a key role in advancing various initiatives that support WILS' mission.

Super Dan Inspires WILS Team



There's no better way to lift our spirits than with Super Dan—our very own powerhouse of motivation and encouragement! With his signature energy and inspiring words, Super Dan reminded us that change is a launchpad to something new and exciting.



A New Sense of Freedom

JAMIE'S JOURNEY

When WILS Independent Living Case Manager Liz visited Jamie to check in on her experience with the electric wheelchair, Jamie had nothing but positive things to share.

"The electric wheelchair made me feel independent being able to get out of my apartment. WILS provided the wheelchair for me. I'm getting out more. The wheelchair has improved my mobility, I've used it 4 times already, to the gas station and to the mailbox. I feel more able to access activities and places like the Compass office, the mailbox, the gas station, and Dollar General. I went and played Bingo at the office. I've noticed changes in my health and comfort. I'm not panicking if I'm not breathing well because I'm not physically moving around as much because of the chair. My sense of self-esteem and confidence has been affected, I feel confident enough to leave the house. It's changed my outlook and daily mindset, I feel happy and have more freedom. It helped me cope with emotional challenges related to my mobility and disability."

For Jamie, something as simple as a wheelchair has made a life-changing difference—giving her the freedom to go where she wants, when she wants.

Fight for Fair Housing

ANNE'S ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Anne, a 57-year-old woman living with a degenerative disease and arthritis, has always prioritized her independence. With help from the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Program, she's been able to live at home with personal attendants. But when her apartment complex became a source of distress, she needed more than just daily living assistance.

Anne reached out to her Independent Living Case Manager, Liz, after facing mistreatment at her complex, where the property manager was denying accommodations, neglecting repairs, and discouraging tenants from filing complaints. After a verbal confrontation, Anne sought help for her rights under the ADA.

Her case manager provided resources, and Anne filed formal complaints with state and federal agencies. By March 2025, Anne had won a significant victory. The property management company had been fined for failing to provide accessibility features, including ramps, and was required to repair unsafe conditions in the complex. Additionally, her plumbing issues were finally addressed after months of neglect. Most importantly, Anne felt empowered and protected, knowing that retaliation against her for filing complaints was illegal.

Anne's story highlights the vital role of Independent Living Centers in advocating for people with disabilities, ensuring they have access to safe and fair housing. Empowering Independence, One Victory at a Time.

"Luke 1:37 says, 'The word of God will never fail.'"

ANNE





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Let's Chat

WILS is a consumer driven, non-residential, 501(c)3 nonprofit resource center that serves people with disabilities in Benton, Henry, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, and Saline counties.

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Independence Starts with You

WHERE THERE'S A WILS, THERE'S A WAY

If you or a loved one need support to live independently, WILS is here to help! Whether you're looking for mobility solutions, advocacy, or resources to enhance daily living, our team is ready to assist. Contact us at (855) 945-7929, visit w-ils.org, or stop by one of our offices to explore the services available to you. Independence is within reach—let's navigate the journey together!

