

1ST QUARTER 2026

# THE WILS WAY

W-ILS.org

855-945-7929



## The Power of Being Heard

Curtis is the kind of person who keeps pushing forward, even when his body is making everyday life harder.

Curtis is 43 and lives with diabetes, neuropathy, a frozen shoulder, vision challenges, and developmental disabilities. When he completed his initial assessment with the state, he was told he didn't meet the level of care needed for services. But Curtis didn't give up—and he didn't stay silent about what life really looks like day to day.

Curtis spoke up about the reality: most days, he can only make it to the gas station for food. Managing diabetes isn't just "eating something"—it takes a plan, the right groceries, and help preparing meals that keep his blood sugar under control. He also shared that his frozen shoulder makes dressing and personal hygiene difficult, and the neuropathy in his feet leaves him unsteady and at risk of falling.

Because Curtis clearly explained his needs (and with WILS backing him up), the assessor took another look. This time, Curtis was approved as meeting the level of care.

Now Curtis is starting services with WILS, with his brother stepping in as his attendant—support that will help him stay safe, take better care of his health, and keep building independence at home.

Curtis didn't just "get approved." He advocated for himself—and that courage is changing what's possible for his future.

# Deb's Desk

A NOTE FROM WILS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we move further into 2026, I continue to be reminded that independence looks different for every person we serve.

Sometimes it's transportation to an important event. Sometimes it's having the right assistive technology, support at home, or simply someone willing to advocate alongside you when barriers arise.

This quarter's stories are powerful reminders of why the work of WILS matters. They highlight courage, persistence, compassion, and the importance of community connection. From consumers advocating for themselves during difficult assessments to staff helping solve complicated service barriers behind the scenes, every success story reflects what can happen when people are supported, heard, and empowered. I'm especially proud of the many ways our staff continue to go above and beyond for consumers every day.

Thank you for continuing to trust WILS to walk alongside you on your journey toward independence. We are honored to serve our communities and remain committed to breaking barriers, building connections, and helping people live life on their own terms.



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

## The Right Tool at the Right Time

Independence often starts with something simple—like feeling steady on your feet. Diana reached out to WILS after struggling with balance and mobility. Living with blindness and severe arm pain, she found that a traditional cane was no longer safe or effective.

"I need a cane for stability." Through partnership resources, WILS was able to provide a 4-prong cane designed for greater support. The difference was immediate. "Yes, it's working quite well and I'm getting around better."

"With this cane it has the four feet so I'm not leaning like I was." With the right assistive technology, Diana gained more than stability—she gained confidence and independence.

## A Place to Call Home

At WILS, independence means having a place to call your own. Vivian began her journey in a nursing facility—but she was determined to return to independent living.

After being referred to the Show-Me Home program, she stayed focused on her goal. Her persistence paid off when she moved into her own apartment in January 2026.

Starting over wasn't easy—she had no household items to begin with. Through grants, donations, and careful coordination, WILS helped turn an empty space into a home. Today, her life is filled with the moments that matter most—especially time with family.

She shared: "Prayed to God. Didn't worry. Brought WILS." Her grandchildren now visit regularly, turning her apartment into a place of connection, joy, and belonging. This is what independence looks like.

# Supporting Independence Every Day

## A VETERAN'S VOICE

Independence looks different for everyone—but for many, it means having the support to stay in their home and access essential care.

Timothy Nelson III, a Post-Vietnam War Veteran, shared what the Veteran Directed Care program means to him: "I need it not only to assist me at home but assist me to the doctors."

As his health changes, the program provides critical support. "My health is deteriorating and I'm having a breathing situation."

Transportation, daily needs, and peace of mind all play a role. "This program helps me since I can't drive and I can't afford to pay for transportation."

But the impact goes beyond logistics. "I don't have psychological and mental stress to get to the doctor."

"If I didn't have this program, I would probably have a breakdown..." "It helps with everything like food and mobility. It keeps me from being depressed."

Stories like Timothy's show how the right support doesn't just meet needs—it protects independence and well-being.





## Going the Extra Mile

### CARE BEYOND THE RIDE

Every ride tells a story—and sometimes, it's the little moments along the way that make the biggest difference.

After a medical trip to Osage Beach, one rider shared their experience with WILS Transportation: "Thank you so much for the comfortable ride yesterday and especially for your exceptional service!"

Even during a long trip with challenges, compassion and patience stood out. "My temperature issues had to about drive you out of the van!"

But the experience didn't stop at transportation—it became something more personal. "And the \$2 bill history lesson was remarkable as well." "Thank you for going the extra mile for me."

At WILS, we believe service isn't just about the destination—it's about how you feel along the journey.

# A Final Memory of Joy

## A MOMENT THAT MEANT EVERYTHING



At WILS, we often talk about independence in terms of services and support—but sometimes, it's about something much deeper: connection, comfort, and meaningful moments.

One WILS staff member shared a personal story about her mother that perfectly captures this. "I know my mom was not a consumer and was not in our coverage area but in my eyes WILS made her a success story."

After moving into a nursing home, her mother had to say goodbye to her beloved dog, Sweet Pea. When she saw another resident with a companion pet, she immediately lit up at the idea of having one of her own.

WILS was able to loan a companion dog—and what followed became a moment that will never be forgotten. "When I arrived with it at the nursing home I watched her eyes light up with excitement as she held it and pet it."

"She was so excited when it would bark at her and turn it's head towards her when she talked to it." What some might see as a simple item became something much more. "She found pure enjoyment in what most people would just call a toy. She showed everyone that walked by."

That visit became their last shared memory. "WILS made it possible for me to have the last happy core memory with my mom." "This was my last visit I got to see my mom smile, laugh and talk to me." Her mother passed just days later.

"For this I can't THANK WILS enough as my mom passed on April 4th." Moments like these remind us that independence also means dignity, joy, and connection—right when it matters most.



**“Joe was so nice and helpful. I really appreciate it.”**

## **Making Life's Moments Accessible**

At WILS, transportation is about more than getting somewhere—it's about making sure no one misses the moments that matter most.

Recently, WILS Transportation helped make it possible for a rider to attend a wedding without barriers.

Without accessible transportation, attending would have required transferring into a non-accessible vehicle and managing a wheelchair trailer—an exhausting and complicated process. Instead, WILS made it simple.

"WILS made it easier for him to attend without him having to transfer to a non accessible vehicle and load his wheelchair on a trailer." With accessible transportation, everything changed.

"He was able to load and unload in a accessible vehicle with no issues. This made it easy for everyone." The impact was clear.

"Thank you so much. Without WILS giving me a ride I would never have made it to my friend's wedding."

Because of WILS, a moment that could have been missed became a memory that will last a lifetime.

# Advocacy That Made a Difference

At WILS, advocacy often happens behind the scenes—but it can make a life-changing difference for consumers.

Recently, one consumer experienced CDS/EVV compliance issues because laundry services were authorized in the home, even though the consumer did not have laundry facilities at the residence. Since EVV GPS requirements verify where services are delivered, completing laundry off-site caused both the consumer and attendant to appear non-compliant.

WILS staff conducted multiple follow-up calls and advocacy discussions with DHSS employees and supervisors to help resolve the issue. A revised Pcare plan was submitted requesting authorization for off-site laundry services.

With the correction approved, the consumer and attendant were restored to compliance, helping ensure the consumer could continue receiving services while maintaining independence in the community.

## The Power of Connection

Sometimes, making a difference starts with a simple question—and the willingness to find an answer. When a community partner reached out about a family in need, WILS stepped in to help explore solutions.

A 9-year-old child with Cerebral Palsy had a wheelchair-accessible van, but when the lift motor failed, repair costs were overwhelming. The family had already tried multiple resources without success.

WILS staff researched options and connected the family with additional resources, including Kids Assistive Technology (KAT). The outcome made all the difference.

"YES, KAT did fix the lift with the hand crank version."

Through collaboration and persistence, the family gained a workable solution—restoring mobility and independence. This story is a reminder that even when WILS isn't the direct provider, being a connector can still change lives.



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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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## Stability That Changes Everything

Independence often starts with something simple—like feeling steady on your feet. Diana Bary, 76, reached out to WILS after struggling with balance and mobility. Living with blindness and severe arm pain, she found that a traditional cane was no longer safe or effective.

"I need a cane for stability."

Through partnership resources, WILS was able to provide a 4-prong cane designed for greater support.

The difference was immediate. "Yes, it's working quite well and I'm getting around better."

"With this cane it has the four feet so I'm not leaning like I was."

With the right assistive technology, Diana gained more than stability—she gained confidence and independence.