



Helping people with disabilities and people who are aging **live independently** in Northwest Missouri.



Nurse visits at home!
Our nurses help with medication setups, vital sign checks, diabetic nail care, and skin monitoring.
Call us to learn more.

January 2018

A new year at MERIL: A letter from Executive Director Rob Honan



As we begin the new year, MERIL continues to serve individuals with disabilities in Northwest

Missouri, to provide participants, family members, and the community the resources to live in the community of their choice.

I see a great 2018 shaping up, where we not only continue to provide services but increase options through our assistive technology and consumer assistance fund programs.

The new year also gives rise to the new Missouri General Assembly. The MO legislature began its yearly session on January 3rd, and it will end on May 18th.

Because much of what we do depends on funding from the General Assembly, we pay close attention to appropriations (HB 2) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), which funds the Independent Living Grant, and HB 10, which is the core funding for the Consumer Directed Services program. These two bills are key funding bills that are essential to our

participants.

As part of our efforts at advocacy, we are inviting you to the March 13th Legislative Day at the Capitol. This advocacy event will showcase speakers from all over the state and highlight issues pertinent to this year's session.

As a precursor to this event, MERIL is offering a training on March 8th at our St. Joseph office. Contact Rob Honan for more information about the Legislative Day itself and the advocacy training on March 8th.

We wish all of you a great year!

Happy 85th Birthday!



Twyla Morgan was MERIL's first board president. We wish Twyla and her family a joyful year in 2018!

Save the date for our fundraiser on April 15!

MERIL will host a fundraiser at D&G Pub & Grub in St. Joseph on Sunday, April 15. There will be a spaghetti dinner and an acoustic rock 'n' roll performance from two local bands.

More details will be available soon. In the meantime, be sure to mark your calendars. This will be a great way to spend an evening and to support our mission of helping people with disabilities live independently in Northwest Missouri. We'll see you there!

In addition to our fundraisers, there are many other ways you can support MERIL and those we serve. Please take some time to review the opportunities listed here, and visit www.meril.org/help for more!



Donate: We are thankful for any amount of money you can contribute. You can send a check to our office or use our PayPal account by clicking on the link above.



You shop. Amazon gives.

Amazon Smile: With no extra charge to you, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to MERIL! Use the link above whenever you shop on Amazon.



Money Follows the Person: Transitioning to independent living

Money Follows the Person (MFP) is a program that provides funding for people with disabilities who want to live in their own homes instead of in a nursing home or residential care facility. MERIL provides information and personalized guidance to those who participate in the program.

One year ago, Jessica Zielinski contacted MERIL to learn about resources for people with disabilities in Northwest Missouri. Jessica was living in a nursing home in Maryville, recovering from a brain tumor surgery. She had experienced stroke-like symptoms and had limited ability of her left leg. She had been in the nursing home for about a year, and was now ready to move into a place of her own.

Because she was eligible for MFP assistance, Jessica began discussing the process with Lisa Gabriel at MERIL. Jessica said she had never lived by herself, but she was comforted by Lisa's guidance.

"My apprehensiveness grew to excitement when Lisa said that she could help me," she said.

Jessica searched for an apartment that would work for her. With the financial assistance from MFP and the support from MERIL, Jessica moved into her apartment in December 2016.

A year after her successful transition, Jessica said she loves independent living.

"I am so happy to be living on my own, to have freedom to decide my own schedule, and I can have my children and family over when I want," she said. "I just had my daughter and niece over for a slumber party last week. I now feel like I have freedom and control over my life, and my quality of life has improved."



Jessica in her own apartment in December 2017, a year after using MFP to move out of a nursing home.

Contact MERIL for more information about the MFP program. You can also visit <http://dss.mo.gov/mhd/general/pages/mfp.htm> to learn more.

Paul Bergonzoni discusses assistive technology on KQ2's Live at Five



If you want to learn more about technology that can help people with low vision, low hearing, or other types of disabilities, call MERIL to schedule an appointment. We have a demonstration site at our office that is free and open to the public. You can try out various devices to help you make an informed decision about what is right for you.

[Click here](#) to see Paul discuss a few popular assistive devices.

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