Independent Living Services
Personally tailored resources to fit your goals

News about:
Legislative advocacy
Voter registration
Upcoming events

Learn how to live in your own home—on your own terms!

Part-time caregivers are needed in all NW Missouri counties!
**News Briefs**

**Legislation we are keeping an eye on**

One of our five core services as mandated by the federal and state government is advocacy, particularly legislative advocacy. Because of this, we pay close attention to state budget legislation since it is the backbone of our Independent Living funding.

To review a little bit, the budget process in the 2017 Missouri General Assembly was extremely difficult since we lost roughly $90,000 (or nearly 42%) from the prior year. But through the work of advocates here and around the state, I am pleased to say that we have gotten nearly $80,000 of this funding restored. This is tremendous news since it will allow us to provide additional core services to our nine-county region.

The Missouri legislature has also approved a 1.5% provider rate increase for our CDS and In-Home programs. While not a huge percentage of our budget, this is certainly a step in the right direction.

On the federal level, MERIL has been watching two pieces of legislation that address funding for the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. The two bills, S.2227 and H.R.5306 (both are titled “EMPOWER Care Act”), are ways to keep the nursing-home transition program alive. If you want more information about these two bills, please contact me.

- Rob Honan, CEO / Executive Director

**MERIL now offers In-Home PCAs!**

In-Home Personal Care Attendants are now available in Andrew, Buchanan, and Nodaway counties. In-Home PCAs provide personal care services to participants who do not want to (or are unable to) hire a caregiver themselves. Participants who want to hire their own caregiver can do so through the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program.

Both In-Home PCAs and CDS caregivers perform personal care tasks—such as cleaning, cooking, shopping, and bathing—so that participants are able live safely and comfortably in their own homes.

**Voter registration deadlines approaching**

Make your voice heard in your local, state, and nationwide elections. Upcoming elections include:

- **August 7, 2018: Primary Election**
  - Registration deadline: July 11

- **November 6, 2018: General Election**
  - Registration deadline: October 10

These elections ask your input about important propositions in addition to elected officials. So, make sure to study the issues and vote in every election!

Remember to bring your identification to the polling place when you vote: [www.showit2vote.com](http://www.showit2vote.com).

Contact your county clerk’s office to find out more about registering to vote, to review sample ballots, and to learn about absentee voting. Also see: [http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections](http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections).

For more information about advocating for disability rights, contact MERIL!

**St. Joseph ADA Compliance Board**


Contact MERIL if you have questions about accessibility in homes, businesses, or public spaces. We provide on-site surveys and personalized advice.

**Sept. 6: Maryville Taco John’s fundraiser!**

Save the date for the Maryville chapter of People First fundraiser at Taco John’s in Maryville on September 6, 5:00—7:00 p.m. Half of your purchase amount will be donated! [www.missouripeoplefirst.org](http://www.missouripeoplefirst.org).

Stay up to date with the latest news, events, and resources: [Facebook.com/meril4u](http://Facebook.com/meril4u)  [Twitter.com/meril4u](http://Twitter.com/meril4u)
Independent Living Services

You can live comfortably, safely, and independently in your own home—on your own terms.

MERIL empowers people with disabilities to have as much control over their lives as possible; this is called Independent Living (IL). Because people with disabilities may face many types of barriers—such as mobility, communication, technology, building designs, social attitudes, etc.—that make independent living difficult, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) exist to help mitigate these barriers so that people with disabilities can achieve their IL goals.

IL goals can include staying in one’s own home, preparing for life after high school, or finding a particular piece of equipment or a resource. These are only a few examples. The important thing about IL is

Independent Living is not a one-size-fits-all process. We help people discover all of the options available to them so that they can find the resources and services that best fit their needs.
that the person sets their own goals. You know where and how you want to live; we are here to help you make it happen.

"Independent Living is about achieving your goals. We help you find the resources you need to be able to live life the way you want to."

The next step in the IL process is discovering what the person needs in order to achieve their goals. Needs vary widely, based on the nature of the goal, the nature of the person’s disability, and other aspects of the person’s life. We have programs based on the most common needs, but we often address needs outside of these categories.

Caregivers and Nurses

Many people in Northwest Missouri need the help of a caregiver in order to stay in their own homes instead of moving to a nursing home.

Following the IL philosophy, the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program puts as much control as possible into the hands of the person with a disability. They can hire their own caregiver (even a friend or family member), set their own work schedule, and change caregivers at any time. Caregivers are paid with Medicaid funds and perform personal care tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and bathing.

One of the main services we provide in the CDS program is helping people find caregivers. If someone does not know a caregiver they can hire, we help them find a caregiver who is looking for a part-time position. Another option is to use a MERIL caregiver through our In-Home program.

We also provide nurse visits for people who need help with medication set-ups, diabetic nail care, blood pressure monitoring, and similar services.

Technology Designed for You

Disabilities such as low hearing and low vision can make it difficult to use the phone, read the mail, etc. Assistive technology demonstrations allow people to try out different devices so they can find what works best for them.

Communication and Transitions

We have services dedicated to people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, including sign language and peer support activities. We also have a program focused on youth who are transitioning from school to life after school, and we have a program focused on people who are in nursing homes who want to transition back into a home of their own.

Skills Training and Self-Advocacy

Over half of our staff and board members have a disability, and we provide one-on-one mentoring throughout the IL process. This mentoring includes training in skills that are needed to accomplish IL goals. Some common skills include learning how to budget and learning how to make your home safe and accessible.

IL empowers people with disabilities to speak up for themselves and have their voices heard. Self-advocacy can include expressing your goals and needs, engaging in the political process to promote disability rights and services, and seeking out resources and support to help you achieve your goals.

As a Center for Independent Living, MERIL guides people with disabilities through the IL process so they can live life fully, in their own homes and communities. If you know someone who has a disability or a health condition, call MERIL to find out how we can help.
Let’s work together to make sure you live your life the way you want to live it!

Goals
What do you want to accomplish?
- Live in my own home
- Avoid a nursing home
- Prepare for life after school

Skills
What do you need to learn how to do?
- How to create a budget
- How to be safe at home
- How to apply for a job

Tools
What equipment will help you?
- Phones for low hearing
- Magnifiers for low vision
- Walkers, canes, and ramps

Support
We see the abilities people have.
- Socialize with peers
- Advocate for your rights
- Promote inclusion

Caregivers
An attendant or nurse can help you at home.
- Choose your own caregiver
- Help with cleaning, etc.
- Nurses set up meds, etc.

Guidance
We direct you to other community resources.
- One-on-one mentoring
- Information and referral
- Advice and encouragement
Our MERIL Community

MERIL’s Youth Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program in June taught high-school participants career preparation skills, including choosing a career path, creating a resume, and preparing for a job interview. Left photograph (from left to right): MOSILC Executive Director Adonis Brown, Clementine Kamga Brown, Will Vick, Sharon Haynes, Lisa Gabriel, and Rob Honan volunteered for the event. Right photograph: Program participants discuss creating a resume with MERIL’s Youth Services and Transitions Specialist Lisa Gabriel.

MERIL attended the Power Up conference to learn about assistive technology and independent living resources. Find out more about the conference here: http://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference.

Pictured (left to right): Russell Gilfillan, Angie Barba, Lauren Lynch, and Paul Bergonzoni.

MERIL educates members of the community about accessibility, advocacy, inclusion, and independent living. Contact us if you would like us to talk to your business or organization.

Pictured above is a Cub Scout group learning about assistive technology for people who are Blind.
We had a great turnout for our American Sign Language (ASL) movie night!

Participants play games during our “Silent Lunch” social for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Sharon Courter (center) and Rob Honan (right) entertain children at the Northwest Health Services Family Health Carnival. We met some great people!

The St. Joseph chapter of People First held a successful Bingo fundraiser at MERIL. Congratulations to the winners, and thank you to all who donated!

Thank you to everyone who attended our networking luncheons in Maryville (left) and Cameron (right). We value these opportunities to share information with fellow public service organizations.
Caregivers Are Amazing!

We help caregivers find part-time jobs!

In our Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program, people with disabilities can hire caregivers to help them with personal care tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, and bathing. Caregivers do not need any prior experience and the hours are flexible. Caregivers are especially needed in lower-population areas of Northwest Missouri.

Caregivers make a BIG difference in lives of people with disabilities, making it possible for them to live independently in their own homes and communities. By working for a MERIL participant, caregivers also support all of the other Independent Living (IL) services MERIL provides.

For providing care to our participants and for supporting our services, we appreciate the caregivers who partner with us to fulfill our IL mission. We try to show this appreciation in many ways. We recently provided tickets to a St. Joseph Mustangs game to some of our caregivers. And we love to feature CDS caregivers in our newsletter!

My friend became my CDS caregiver.

The Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program is popular because it allows people with disabilities to maintain as much control as possible over their lives. CDS participants can hire their own caregiver (even a friend or family member), set their own work schedule, and change caregivers at any time. As the employer, they are in control of their own care.

Without the help of caregivers, many people would not be able to live in their own homes and fully participate in their communities. By providing personal care tasks—such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, and bathing—caregivers provide the assistance needed for CDS participants to live independent, fulfilled lives.

When Herbert “JR” Shane needed a caregiver to help him around the house, he hired his friend Ron Fanning. Over the past five years, JR and Ron have formed a close bond, and JR said that Ron provides exceptional care.

JR said Ron is always there for him when he needs him, whether it’s cooking a meal, helping him get dressed, helping him avoid falling when he walks on stairs, or simply listening to him express his feelings.

We at MERIL are also thankful for Ron and the other amazing CDS caregivers who are part of the MERIL family!

Become a CDS Caregiver!

If you are responsible and have a passion for helping people with disabilities live independently in their homes, we want you to work for a MERIL CDS participant! Find out more at www.meril.org/cds.
We thank our donors and community partners for their support!

We are incredibly grateful for the contributions that so many people have made to support our mission of helping people with disabilities lead independent lives. There are many ways you can help us. Visit [www.meril.org/help](http://www.meril.org/help) to learn more.

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Recent donors:

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<tr>
<th>Wayne Crawford</th>
<th>Lisa Gabriel</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gerald Snodgrass</td>
<td>Will Vick</td>
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**Making a Difference**

Your contribution will help change lives!

Donations to MERIL help fund programs that assist people with disabilities in their goal to live a full life in their homes and community.

Please consider a financial gift to MERIL. You may send a check or use the PayPal link on our website:

![PayPal](https://www.paypal.com)

In addition to donating, you can help us immensely by spreading the word about our services. The more people who know about us, the more we can help.

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**We want to recognize three St. Joseph businesses — Hy-Vee, Church’s Chicken, and Chase Candy Company for donating food to our Youth Pre-ETS event in June. Their contributions helped to make the event a success!**

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**Pizza Hut** was kind enough to donate food for one of our “Silent Lunch” socials for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Thank you!

**Roger’s Green Hills** (on 5th Avenue in St. Joseph) has been a great partner by helping us distribute information about MERIL to their customers. This helps us a great deal with our outreach efforts!

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Mike (above) now lives in his own home with the help of our Independent Living Services and the Money Follows the Person program.

Visit [meril.org](http://meril.org) to read more about people who have benefited from our services.
Helping people with disabilities and people who are aging live independently in Northwest Missouri.

Northwest Missouri’s Center for Independent Living

Since 1994, MERIL has provided five core services for people with disabilities in our nine-county service area:

- Information and referral
- Independent Living skills training
- Transition services (youth and nursing home)
- Peer support
- Advocacy

Our vision is: A Barrier-Free Northwest Missouri.

More than half of our board members and staff have a disability. We use our personal experiences to see the abilities that people have, and we respect people for who they are.

We believe people with disabilities should have control over their own lives, achieve their own goals, and fully participate in their communities.

Learn more about Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Missouri at www.mosilc.org.

disability resources & referrals

Choose your own caregiver

help with cleaning, cooking, shopping, personal care

Phones & devices for low hearing, low vision

Nurse visits at home

medication, blood pressure, diabetes care

Independent Living Skills Training

Nursing home transition

Accessibility

www.meril.org 816-279-8558

Call us. Tell us about your health condition or disability. We’ll help you get the resources you need to live independently.

MERIL offers a wide variety of services and resources for people with disabilities.

Our most popular service is our Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program, which allows a person to hire a caregiver of their choice to perform personal care tasks in their home.

We help caregivers find part-time jobs!

MERIL helps the CDS participant (the person with a disability) find a potential employee (caregiver). Anyone who is interested in becoming a caregiver should contact MERIL to fill out an application. The hours are flexible and no experience is required.