Supporting Disability Employment!

THE RIGHT TALENT, RIGHT NOW

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
#NDEAM | dol.gov/odep

News about:
State Plan for Independent Living
Utility Bill Assistance

Join us for free food and fun at our Halloween Bash resource fair on October 17!

Part-time caregivers needed in all NW Missouri counties!
State Plan for Independent Living

In order for the state of Missouri to draw down federal funds to assist the statewide network of Centers for Independent Living, the state must provide a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) to the federal Administration on Community Living. The major purpose of the SPIL is to outline goals and activities that the state hopes to achieve in a three-year period.

The State Independent Living Council (SILC), along with all of the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the designated state units (Vocational Rehabilitation and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind), develops the three-year plan in conjunction with CIL program participants and other stakeholders.

The current SPIL (2017-19) has been extended one year, and advocates are gearing up for the next SPIL, which will cover 2021-23. The 2021-23 SPIL committee has already been formed, and members are currently working with those interested in the next three-year SPIL to compose something that works for Missouri.

The current SPIL can be found at the Missouri SILC website: www.mosilc.org. You may direct questions to me or the SILC executive director, Adonis Brown: adonistbrown@mosilc.org, 573-415-8775.

Remembering Marca Bristo, Disability Rights Advocate

As with any successful social movement, there are usually leaders who provide a “face” to the cause and explain the “why it is necessary” to the broader population. These individuals are usually extraordinarily talented, articulate, possess political and media savvy, and are just plain “stars.”

The disability-rights movement has had several of these individuals, some of whom are well-known and others not so well-known. Most everyone has heard of Helen Keller, but not everyone has heard of Justin Dart, the father of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or Ed Roberts, the father of the Independent Living movement. A third such person recently passed away, and her name is Marca Bristo.

Marca was the CEO and president of Access Living, a center for independent living in Chicago. Even though I did not know her personally, I was aware of her work and her dedication in making sure that the lives of persons with disabilities are valued and that the civil rights and inclusion of disabled persons is front and center in an advanced and civilized society.

Through her life, she fought the successful fight to get the ADA passed by Congress and signed into law by President George H W Bush, served as the chair of the National Council on Disability, was the president of the United States International Council on Disabilities, and was awarded countless other awards and leadership roles in the disability rights movement.

She was also one of the co-founders of the National Council on Independent Living, a national disability-rights organization that is still going strong today. She was an extremely important person in the national disability-rights movement and is someone you should become familiar with.

- Rob Honan, MERIL CEO

Winter Utility Bill Assistance

To save money this winter, you should consider using low-wattage LED lights, washing your clothes with cold water, and opening your curtains during daylight hours. Low-income households may qualify for energy bill assistance. Your energy bills do not need to be in threat of disconnection to qualify for assistance. Visit http://dss.mo.gov/fsd/energy-assistance or call 855-373-4636.

How LIHEAP can help pay for home heating and cooling bills

https://youtu.be/FN2wRoWYGj0

Stay up to date with the latest news, events, and resources: Facebook.com/meril4u Twitter.com/meril4u
FREE FOR ALL AGES!

MERIL HALLOWEEN BASH!

RESOURCE FAIR

- Enjoy hot dogs, popcorn & snow cones!
- Wear your costume & trick-or-treat!
- Make slime with the Ghostbusters!
- Learn about community services!
- ... And much more!

RAIN DATE
THURS., OCT. 24

VISIT
MERIL.ORG

THURSDAY
OCT 17
3:30 - 5:30

FREE FOOD • CANDY GAMES • CRAFTS

MERIL PARKING LOT: 4420 S 40TH ST., ST. JOE
(NEAR THE FORT, HARLEY-DAVIDSON & MENARD’S)
As a Center for Independent Living, more than half of MERIL’s board members and staff have a disability. We know the importance of inclusion in the workplace, and we have seen many examples of how simple workplace accommodations can allow an employee’s abilities to emerge, letting them fully contribute to their company.

MERIL provides information about ADA compliance, workplace accommodations, disability etiquette, career preparation for youth with disabilities, and self-advocacy support for employees with disabilities.

Workplaces are stronger when they include people with disabilities.

About NDEAM and workplace inclusion

Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a nationwide campaign that celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities throughout American history, and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all Americans have access to the services and supports to enable them to work.

Take a few moments to browse the NDEAM website: www.dol.gov/ndeam. It’s full of valuable information.

“As with any customer segment, one of the best ways to tap into the disability market is to ensure it is represented in your workforce. Employees with disabilities can help businesses understand and meet the needs of this important and expanding customer base. What’s more, research shows that consumers both with and without disabilities favor businesses that employ people with disabilities, and that people with disabilities can provide your business with the flexible, innovative thinking required for a competitive edge in the 21st century.”


Missouri’s Vocational Rehabilitation is a great resource for persons with a disability who are seeking employment: http://dese.mo.gov/adult-learning-rehabilitation-services/vocational-rehabilitation

America works best when everybody works.

Learn more about the value and talent people with disabilities add to America’s employers and economy.

www.WhatCanYouDoCampaign.org
State promotes employment for people with disabilities

The state of Missouri has taken the lead to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in state government and beyond. Governor Mike Parson recently signed Executive Order 19-16, which establishes Missouri as a “model employer.”

More information about the “model employer” initiative can be found on [http://disability.mo.gov/model-employer.htm](http://disability.mo.gov/model-employer.htm).

Below is an excerpt from the governor’s office press release:

The Model Employer classification is an emerging trend supported by the federal Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy to help more people with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment.

“Being a Model Employer is critical to developing and maintaining a talented state workforce that reflects the rich diversity of Missourians,” Governor Parson said. “We are committed to doing everything we can, both through this initiative and other efforts, to eliminate barriers to employment and expand job offers to individuals of all abilities.”

Currently, 79.8 percent of working age individuals in Missouri without a disability are employed while only 37.1 percent of working age individuals with a disability are employed. Governor Parson’s Executive Order aims to reduce this disparity by directing Missouri state government to serve as a Model Employer of individuals with disabilities through improved recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies.

Through the initiative, the state will set annual goals for continuing to increase the percentage of individuals with disabilities in the state workforce and evaluate its progress in achieving those goals each year. The Office of Administration will also designate a State Disability Employment Coordinator or Coordinators to advise and support state agencies with the initiative, helping to ensure its success.

To assist with the launch of the initiative, a Missouri as a Model Employer Talent Showcase will take place at the State Capitol on October 10, 2019.

The Talent Showcase event is a reverse career fair that provides individuals with physical, mental health, or cognitive disabilities to showcase their talents and achievements through display or presentation. State agencies and private employers will have the opportunity to circulate the booths, introduce themselves, and learn about the individuals' skills and abilities that may meet their hiring needs.

MERIL’s Rob Honan was interviewed about the model employer initiative

You can read the news article, “Gov. Parson signs executive order making Missouri a 'Model Employer' State,” on the KQ2 website:


This video explains more about the model employer initiative:

[https://youtu.be/9YQmGTQ8Hfg](https://youtu.be/9YQmGTQ8Hfg)
Our MERIL Community

Members of People First attended the annual Real Voices Real Choices self-advocacy conference.

Jean Boyer (left) and Amber King (right) at the Stay Fall Free event in St. Joseph.

Visit meril.org/resources to see the information shared during our networking luncheon in Albany.

Left to right: Rob Honan, Paul Bergonzoni, Deann Young, and Ashley Tucker at the MOCIL meeting.

Participants in MERIL’s youth services club playing miniature golf.

Thank you to everyone who attended the People First bingo fundraiser. We had a great turnout!
Did you know that MERIL has a satellite office in Maryville? The satellite office has been in operation for about 16 years. Our current office (2416 South Main St.) is within the Nodaway County Health Department building, located south of Mosaic Medical Center, across from Orscheln Farm & Home supply store.

At the Maryville office, we offer information and referral for services and resources in the area, accept applications for CDS attendant and In-Home PCA job positions, conduct assistive technology demonstrations of amplified phones and low vision equipment, and host the People First of Maryville support group monthly meetings.
We help caregivers find part-time jobs!

MERIL accepts applications for caregivers to work for a Consumer Directed Services (CDS) participant, and/or to work for participants in MERIL’s In-Home Services program. Caregivers help people with disabilities with personal care tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, and bathing. Caregivers do not need any prior experience and the hours are flexible. Visit meril.org/caregivers to learn more.

Caregivers make a big difference in the 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.

We appreciate the caregivers who partner with us to fulfill our IL mission, and we try to show this appreciation in many ways. Recently, we celebrated the one-year anniversaries of two of our In-Home Personal Care Attendants (PCAs), pictured below: Kathy Kretzer (left) and Vicki Young (right)!

Caregivers are needed in all nine counties!

Caregivers Needed!

CDS Attendants

In the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program, people with disabilities hire caregivers to help them with personal care tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, and bathing. The CDS participant may hire someone they know—such as a friend or relative—to be their attendant, or they can choose an attendant from a list of caregivers who are looking for employment. MERIL keeps an updated list of caregivers that participants can choose from. If you are interested in being added to this list, please fill out an application in our office. CDS participants are looking to hire attendants in all nine counties in Northwest Missouri.

In-Home PCAs

Some people with disabilities receive caregiver services from an In-Home Personal Care Attendant (PCA). PCAs provide the same type of services as the CDS attendants, but for those who live in their own homes. If you are interested in learning more about becoming an In-Home PCA, please visit meril.org/caregivers.

Download or print our “Caregivers Needed” handout and share it with anyone who might be interested!

Caregiver jobs are also posted on Facebook.com/MERIL4U

Apply in our St. Joseph or Maryville office to become a 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 participant! Visit www.meril.org/caregivers to learn more.
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 communities.

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

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.

Visit www.meril.org/help to read more about people who have benefited from our services.

Thank you to our recent donors

♦ Kenny Sisk  ♦ Rob Honan

We also want to thank the many people who donate equipment to us. We accept donations of assistive technology devices and durable medical equipment.

We thank the many businesses who have contributed to the People First bingo fundraiser and to the MERIL Halloween Bash resource fair:

♦ Hy-Vee
♦ Price Chopper
♦ McDonald’s
♦ Wendy’s
♦ The Human Bean
♦ Texas Roadhouse
♦ Crumbly Burger
♦ McAlister’s Deli
♦ Dairy Queen
♦ Target
♦ San Jose Steakhouse
♦ St. Joseph Mustangs
♦ Boudreaux’s
♦ Papa Murphy’s

Transitioning out of a nursing home with MFP and assistive technology!

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.

MERIL’s Lisa Gabriel helped coordinate Gary Holland’s transition to independent living in the community, with funding from the MFP program and assistance from Vocational Rehabilitation and Missouri Assistive Technology.

Pictured here is Gary with his newly modified vehicle that allows him to drive with a prosthetic leg. Gary also received a rollator and a shower chair that enable him to meet his personal care needs in his own home.

“Since I came out of the nursing home, I can take care of my own needs,” Gary said. “MERIL got me back to being a person, enjoying life, and [increasing my] quality of life and independence!”

Since moving out of the nursing home, Gary’s mobility has improved, allowing him to be more active, lose weight, and better control his diabetes symptoms.
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.

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.