



Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter. We plan to use this space to keep you up to date on our activities, on changes in state and national programs, and on opportunities for you to advocate for our community.

The WILL Center has had another remarkable year supporting people with disabilities. We worked alongside 284 people to assist in the achievement of the goals they have chosen.

Center staff made an impact throughout the community in schools, on boards and committees, voicing the transportation, housing, health care and personal needs and goals of people with disabilities.

In May 2020, The WILL Center will be 20 years old. We're looking forward to the opportunity to expand our reach and our services.

Independent Living

Our Independent Living Coordinators work with consumers based on the needs and goals defined by the consumer. Coordinators assist in developing an independent living plan to achieve those goals. Our mission is to empower people with disabilities to ensure that they have access to community resources in order to gain, promote and enhance their independence. Our IL Coordinators are Ada Ruth Short, Denise Morgan, Jared Price, Danny Grissom and the IL Program Manager, Gloria Stamper.

Medicare Corner

January 1 – March 31 is Medicare Open Enrollment Period (OEP). This period allows participants to make one plan change. OEP allows individuals enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan (MA), including newly eligible individuals, to make a one-time election to go to another MA plan or Original Medicare. Individuals using the OEP to make a change may make

a coordinating change to add or drop Part D coverage. At this time you can also drop your MA and return to Original Medicare. If you drop an Advantage Plan during this time, you have until March 31 to also join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. Your drug coverage will be effective the first day of the month after the plan gets your enrollment form.

Initial Coverage Elections Period - If you are new to Medicare you can join a Medicare Advantage plan when you first become eligible for Medicare. This is a seven month period of time that begins three months before your Medicare eligibility begins, and ends three months after the month your Medicare eligibility begins. This is true where your eligibility is due to age (turning 65) or disability.

Special Election Period – You may be able to join or switch Medicare Advantage Plans under special circumstances that grant a Special Election Period. For example, if you move out of your plan’s service area, or if your plan decides to leave the Medicare program or reduce its service area at the end of the year, there are special rules that allow enrollment in a different MA, or Original Medicare. There are also special “Trial Rights” for a Special Election Period available if you joined a MA for the first time. You can drop your MA and return to Original Medicare anytime within the first 12 months of your MA coverage. You would be eligible for this trial right if you either:

- Joined an MA where you were first eligible for Medicare at 65,

OR

- Were in Original Medicare and dropped a Medigap policy to join an MA for the first time.

To leave a MA, you should write to your MA provider and let them know you want to leave the plan. When you leave a plan you will automatically return to Original Medicare, unless you join another MA. Yes, it’s complicated. If you have any questions, call us. If we don’t have the answer, we’ll get it for you.

Craft-ability

Our group meets at The Will Center on the second Monday of every month (except December) from 1:30pm to 3:00pm. The group has a lot of fun and really enjoys socializing while making crafts! Anyone is welcome and you don’t have to be good at crafts to participate. The group makes all different types of crafts. Most of them are donated to other community organizations. We would like to see some new faces and if you’re looking for fun and fellowship, please come join us at The WILL Center for our monthly craft group!

For any questions please contact Dee Dodd: 812-298-9455 ext. 206

Energy Assistance

Winter is here. With this season come larger heating bills no matter how you heat your residence. One of the ways to help with this expense is to complete an Energy Assistance Application. The process takes usually less than an hour. Dollars will be applied to your account from Duke and Vectren. Ada Ruth will be happy to help you with this application. **The Energy Assistance Application is open until May 2020.** Give Ada Ruth a call today at 812-298-9455 to set up an appointment. It will be the best use of your time to help stay warm.

The Low Vision Program

The WILL Center offers a **FREE** program assisting seniors north of 55 years old in the Wabash Valley **with any type of vision loss.** We provide independent living skills training, mobility training, living with low vision peer group meetings, and low vision aids.

The WILL Center has helped more than 900 sight challenged seniors **since our foundation in 2000.** Our goal is to assist our neighbors maintain their independence and their dignity.

We provide services in the following counties: Vigo, Clay, Putnam, Vermillion, Parke, and Owen. The focus of the program is to meet with individuals and determine what they find are daily living challenges. The staff of The WILL Center will assist these individuals in achieving their independent living goals, such as identifying and marking operation buttons on appliances, living with low vision group meetings, personal record keeping, mobility training and public transportation resources.

If you are younger than 55, we can help you, too.

For more information, visit the centers web site or contact our Low Vision staff are Danny Wayne Beemer or Dee Dodd can be **reached** at (877) 915-9455 or via email at dannywayne@thewillcenter.org or dee@thewillcenter.org.

The Ramps for Freedom Program

State of the Program

2019 proved to be another successful year for our ramp program. **We built 38 ramps this past year in Vigo, Putnam, Clay and Owen counties.** We also built a ramp for the Sisters of Providence. Our partnership with SAWs, (Servants At Work, Inc.) has proven to be one of our most valuable assets.

Seeing the impact a ramp has on the individual and their families is worth every minute of the time it takes to plan and construct it.

We are deeply grateful for all the support we've enjoyed: Our team leaders, Larry Ridge, Dave Piper, Steve Mead, Chuck Macy and John Anderson, just to mention a few. Our many faith based organizations: The Bridge Church, Maryland Community Church, Eastside Church of Christ, Mt. Pleasant Church, Prairie Creek Baptist Church and Cory Community Church of the Nazarene. To all who helped in this work, thank you.

We would also like to recognize other organizations for their contributions: The Wabash Valley Community Foundation, Westfield Steel Company for their donation of steel plates, Vectren, Duke Energy, Wabash Valley Correctional Facility for prefabbing our ramps, Teen Challenge, and Rose Hulman Institute of Technology.

Without these generous donations of time, effort and funds from our volunteers we could not provide freedom to those persons who are trapped inside their homes.

We always welcome volunteers of all ages both men and women alike. No experience is needed and we supply the materials for the builds. If you, or someone you know, have been looking for a worthwhile project to donate your time to, please consider joining our volunteer pool. We always have a need for volunteers, team leaders, surveyors and persons who can draft drawings once the site surveys have been completed. This year, in 2020, we would like to be able to put together a volunteer group who can build during the week. Many of our volunteers have full time jobs and are only able to work on Saturdays, but if you are interested in providing assistance with our builds during the week, please give me a call at 812-298-9455, ext. 211.

This program relies on grant funding and personal donations. Generous corporations and private individuals make it possible for us to provide quality ramps at no cost to many of the people we serve. Please visit our website at www.thewillcenter.org/donate and help support us in our efforts to continue this worthy cause.

The Youth Transition Program

Youth Empowerment with Jared Price

Hello, my name is Jared Price. I am the Youth Empowerment Services Coordinator at The WILL Center. I am an individual with multiple disabilities and am a product of the Vigo County School Corporation. I went to Indiana State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in History. I have never stopped learning!



I began working for The WILL Center in March of 2015. My position with The WILL Center has afforded me some great opportunities to expand my knowledge base. In September of 2015, I went to a conference in California that spoke about the importance of mentoring youth and helping them to develop their leadership skills. Following that conference I joined Western Indiana Community Action Agency's board and am still actively serving. I have attended a number of trainings and conferences hosted by Indiana Youth Institute, I am actively involved with The Governor's Council for People with Disabilities and graduated from their Partners In Policy Making Academy in May of 2017.

I have designed my own program. The Youth Empowerment Services Program focusses on assisting young adults with disabilities and their parents between the ages of 14 to 24 in the following areas:

- Educational Advocacy
- High School to College Transition
- Independent Skills Training
- Advocacy
- Peer Support
- Information Referral

I will meet with individuals one-on-one or in small groups. **We will focus on your interests, dreams, and goals to craft a plan specific to you and meets your needs.**

Ways to Help

- Visit www.thewillcenter.org and click on the Donate link at the top of the page.
- Visit www.kroger.com and log into your Kroger account and search for The Wabash Independent Living & Learning Center or SW256. Click on enroll. It will ask some basic questions, but will then earmark a portion of your purchases to be donated to us!
- Amazon Smile – The WILL Center is now also registered with Amazon Smile. If you use Amazon, please consider making us your charity of choice. Go to your Amazon Smile account and follow the directions to be generous to us!
- Donate to the Wabash Valley Community Foundation. We now have a fund specific to The WILL Center. Money donated to it will gather interest and become an invaluable resource for us in the years ahead. For more information contact the Foundation at (812) 232-2234.

We appreciate any help you can provide whether it be by volunteering, donating or simply spreading the word about us. Please join us in telling the world how to improve our community for everybody.

Nothing about us without us,

The WILL Center Team