



The WILL Center

Monthly Newsletter for October 2020

The Center's News

Note from the Director:

We hope you are staying safe.

The WILL Center continues to work to help you gain the tools and support you need to be independent, safe, and prosperous as we work through the pandemic. Cases are on the rise nationwide and in Indiana. None of us can afford to relax.

With that looming, we have decided to postpone our annual holiday celebration. It just is not prudent to bring groups together. Our event was always well attended. In this environment, it would be dangerous to do so in an enclosed space.

We are not sure what form we will use to celebrate but stay tuned. We will find a way.

Living with Low Vision

November is Diabetes awareness month

According to the webpage WEBMD.org, there are approximately 425 million people in the world living with diabetes. This number is projected to grow to 629 million by the year 2045. The WILL Center low vision program has detected a significant increase of diabetic retinopathy in the Wabash Valley in the previous eight years. Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and Glaucoma were once at the forefront as we worked with individuals. Diabetic Retinopathy

has been indicated by persons at a younger age. Out of all people living with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, 80% of diabetic patients will eventually develop some stage of diabetic retinopathy. The longer a person has diabetes, the more likely they are to develop diabetic retinopathy.

What Is Diabetic Retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes. It occurs when high blood sugar levels damage tiny blood vessels in the retina, causing them to leak or hemorrhage, ultimately distorting vision, causing vision loss and even blindness. The WILL Center can provide large print Diabetic logs for tracking your health. The center staff can introduce you to audible devices to help in the monitoring of your sugar.

Diabetic macular edema (DME) is the buildup of fluid in the macula. DME is a consequence of diabetic retinopathy and is responsible for about 50% of vision loss associated with diabetic retinopathy.

There Are No Early Symptoms!

There are typically no symptoms in the early stages of diabetic retinopathy, allowing the disease to progress until it affects vision. Once symptoms appear, vision loss may be permanent, even with treatment. Symptoms that indicate advanced stages of diabetic retinopathy include:

- Blurry vision
- Halos around lights
- Loss of central and color vision
- Floaters

Early Detection Is Key

The typical standard of care for diabetic patients is to receive an annual diabetic retinal exam with an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Unfortunately, only about half of patients with diabetes visit the eye specialist for annual retinal exams. To help increase compliance, new technology has been developed to bring diabetic retinal exams into primary care settings.

The WILL Center can connect you with peer groups for persons who wish to meet others with Diabetic Retinopathy.

The center can be reached at (812) 298-9455

Here are some additional resources for individuals who are Diabetic:

Diabetes Education Center

(812) 238-7577

Valley Professionals

(812) 238-7631

Wabash Valley Health Center

(812) 232-7447

The Youth Transition Program

October is Disability Employment Month nationwide.

Governor Eric Holcomb has been instrumental helping to ensure Indiana's workforce is ready to compete. He wants to ensure Indiana has a diverse workforce which includes Hoosiers with disabilities.

In 2017, Indiana passed a law that states, "Employment in the community is the first and preferred outcome of all services for people with disabilities." This means that everyone has a right to work in the community and earn a living wage, regardless of disability. Like everyone else, individuals with disabilities need supports to be successful, and state funded services should focus on helping people become employed in the community.

The Work to Include Coalition is part of the national Employment First movement. Funded by the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, the goal is to design a system of employment services and supports that ensures competitive integrated employment for all Hoosiers with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities. The coalition consists of individuals with disabilities and their families and other advocates.

The WILL Center has worked closely with individuals with disabilities and their family members, and with community partners to build a robust Terre Haute Chapter. Our partners include: Arc of Vigo County, Hamilton Center, Mosaic, Vigo County School Corporation, and Vocational Rehabilitation. The coalition is working on several projects for the month of October. We have decided to focus on radio advertisements and sharing printed materials with

local businesses and the Terre Haute Chamber to educate them about Work to Include and Employment First.

The campaign during the month of October is “EVERYONE WINS WHEN EVERYONE'S IN.” There is a wealth of information to explore! There is a free “Employer Toolkit” which can be downloaded. You are encouraged to get involved with our campaign or find out more information, please visit www.worktoinclude.org



Jared Price met with Terre Haute Mayor, Duke Bennett on October 5, 2020. I shared information about Work to Include as well as the importance of the Employment First movement. The Mayor has agreed to look at the Terre Haute City’s hiring practices, and he agreed to issue a proclamation to ensure Terre Haute is a model employer with a diverse workforce

Independent Living Program

Griffin Bike Park

On October 17, 2020, friends and colleagues gathered at the Griffin Bike Park to celebrate the ribbon cutting of their new “Freedom Trail.” A four-mile long adventure trail for hiking and biking, it is designed with accessibility as a key component. The park is also acquiring assistive technology that will allow everyone to access the trails.



The WILL Center's Board President Don Rogers has served as the chair of the advisory committee that has guided this effort. Huge shout out to Vigo County Parks and to Gene Griffin and his team for making such a fine attraction open to everyone.