We’ve moved to a new location!

Beginning with a simple conversation at a meeting of the board of directors in November 2010, and after considerable planning, searching, selecting, construction and preparation, we have finally moved into our new home. **MCIL is now located at 530 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.**

The new MCIL location’s Robert Street entrance. Watch for the blue awnings!

**Come relax and sit for a while in the warm and inviting front lobby of MCIL’s new building.**

With this move, we have added more than 3500 square feet of additional instructional, program and administrative space. It is quite a change for us. We are excited and look forward to serving you in our new home.

Please watch the mail and your email; we will be

**Continued on next page**

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Lots of work will be accomplished in MCIL’s new board room this year.

Above is a side view of our new location. Stop by and check us out.

The new IL kitchen will be a great resource for learning how to plan and prepare healthy meals.

Our new informal meeting space will be a great spot to brainstorm new ideas and programs for MCIL.

Stay informed!
Visit MCIL on Facebook.

Our new, bright work spaces will make the staff’s jobs even more rewarding.
Welcome our new staff members

My name is Erin Henry and I am the new IL/Transition Specialist. I have been in this position since August 2013. I will be splitting my time between working with IL consumers and students in the transition high schools around the area. Prior to working for MCIL; I worked in Marshall, MN at the Southwestern Center for Independent Living as an Independent Living Services Associate. I have a Bachelors Degree in Sociology. In my free time I love going to country music concerts, traveling and spending time with my family and friends.

My name is Abigail Helget and I am excited to be joining the MCIL/DLL staff as an Options Counselor. I have worked in social services for over five years in the areas of adult foster care, children’s and adult mental health, waivered services, housing and homeless outreach. In my spare time I like to spend time with my family, watch PBS, organize my closet and do crossword puzzles. The pride and joy of my life is my miniature poodle, Timmy, he is really cute and hilarious (even if he doesn’t sleep through the night). I look forward to learning new things at MCIL and meeting many new people.

My name is Mari Plaster and for the last year, I have been working with an amazing group of people at the Disability Linkage Line. Before arriving at MCIL I was a pastry chef. Most of you at MCIL know I still love to bake and you guys get to be my taste testers! I am excited to take the knowledge gained from DLL and implement it into the Nursing Home Relocation program. It will be an honor to assist consumers who would like to relocate into the community. I would like to thank the crew of DLL for the friendship, their willingness to share their knowledge and the shoulders to lean on when days were tough. I look forward to working with Pamela and Elizabeth and creating a new working relationship.

ADA Minnesota provides you and your organization with assistance to implement the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It provides the following services:
• Technical assistance & information about what the ADA covers & what is required for compliance.
• Education, trainings & presentations
• Publications with information on employment, accessibility, reasonable accommodations & more.
• Connections to a network of local & national agencies.
• Resources on accessible information & electronic technology in education centers.

Contact us! We can help.

ADA Minnesota’s NEW address:
530 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55104
651-603-2015 • 888-630-9793
www.adaminnesota.org
cindyt@mcil-mn.org
Nick’s notes

By Nick Wilkie

As you have read by now, MCIL has gone through some significant changes in recent months. Our work with youth remains consistent, however as our organization changes, we must grow too. Read on for some of the ways we are taking on new challenges for transition age youth.

Three years ago we initiated change by taking our services to area Transition Schools. This approach has allowed us more constant contact with the students attending these programs. We serve as a resources for the school staff and have been able to build relationships allowing us to be seen as an invaluable tool within the school.

In the fall we began this approach within similar programs and added two more staff. These new staff members help us reach more schools and ultimately increase our ability to provide quality service across the metro area. We are actively involved with programs in St. Paul, West St. Paul, Minneapolis, Apple Valley, Robinsdale and St. Louis Park in January of 2014.

Another change that was made this year is the use of a referral form. We use this form to start the process of working with a student and setting up appropriate goals. Staff can refer to us for all kinds of topics related to Independent Living. Some of these topics include: benefits, budgeting, recreation, communication, and transportation just to name a few.

We are excited about all of the changes around here and hope that this snapshot helps you get to know a few ways that we are serving youth. Should you have a suggestion or feedback, please contact me at: nickw@mcil-mn.org or 651-603-2018 I look forward to hearing from you.
**PCA Choice May Be Right for You!**

Does your PCA agency listen to YOUR needs?
Can YOU schedule your DSPs when you need them?
Do YOU choose who will work with you?

MCIL Offers Direct Support Professionals DSPs

- Paid Holidays
- Competitive Wages
- Additional hours

- Medical Assistance, or Private Pay
- You make hiring & firing decisions, and set your own schedule
- We provide assistance finding emergency coverage on the weekends
- We provide all processing, payroll and co-supervisory supports.

To arrange an in-home visit please call 651.788.8424

www.pas.mcil-mn.org
TTY: 651.788.8424
Accessible parking, entrances & scent-free office.
IL/VR update

By Kelly Krantz, IL/VR Manager

We’ve been doing very well in the IL/VR program this year. If you’re not already aware, IL/VR is a program that puts IL Specialists into metro area Vocational Rehabilitation Services offices. When job seekers with disabilities are in need of advocacy, IL skills training, or information and referral services, the counselors refer them to an IL/VR Specialist. We help with many issues, some of which include helping people get medical insurance, housing, transportation, benefits, and more. The unique part about this collaboration is the co-location aspect. There’s no other program outside of Minnesota that unites VR and IL in this way.

In 2012, we served a little over 900 consumers. As of August 2013, we had already served almost 900 people, so we are certain to surpass previous years! Many of these consumers are people whom would not have contact with MCIL if not for this program. Sometimes that is because the consumer lives far from our center in St. Paul. Other times it is because they would not have heard of MCIL if not for their counselor making the referral. We are happy to help MCIL extend its services all over the metro area.

When people work with IL/VR, they are much more likely to exit Vocational Rehabilitation Services with successful employment. The truth is, people often need employment in order to achieve independence, thus increasing IL skills helps achieve employment. Our services in the IL world and the VR world are complementary, which is one reason that IL/VR has been so successful.

I’ll end with some success stories from our team from the past year.

“A consumer reached out to VRS when he found himself yet again unemployed last summer. This consumer had a long history of working and then facing unemployment due to limitations from his disability. Seeing this pattern, his VRS counselor referred him to IL/VR services to assist him in finding financial resources and applying for SSDI. The consumer was very pessimistic about his chances of being approved for SSDI and yet because he was so discouraged about his situation he was willing to apply. We applied for SSDI, his second time applying, and he was approved in the initial application phase. In the meantime, working with VRS he was able to eventually find a part-time job. With his new SS benefits and his part-time job, he is now able to provide for all of his family’s financial needs.”

“I helped a consumer fill out a combined application form for county services. The consumer’s sister emailed to say that he was approved for Medical Assistance and food support. This was a great relief to the family, as they were paying over $500 a month for COBRA, and buying all his food. Now the consumer has access to medical care and food independent of what his family can provide for him.”

“I met with a consumer to discuss his budget, as he was not making enough money to cover his expenses. He had a $4,000.00 medical bill that he was paying down, and needed additional medical treatment in addition. He had debt collectors calling him, and he was worried about not being able to access care. Together, we called the clinic’s billing office to discuss the possibility of getting the fee waived. We filled out a Financial Assistance Application, and within 2 months, he was approved for the waiver. He was even provided with a refund for the 2 months he paid while his application was in process. He was also approved for a program at the clinic which allows him to be able to get necessary medical treatment free of charge for one year. He can reapply if he is still experiencing financial hardship.”

“I had a consumer who was initially referred for lack of medical insurance. I learned that he had stopped taking his medication as he could not afford to see a doctor and obtain his meds. He was afraid that he would end up in jail due to his anger. He had received his last unemployment check and he had no income, and had just spent his last $15 on food. Together, we filled out a combined application form. He was able to get on Medical Assistance, was back on his medications, got some dental work taken care of, was receiving cash assistance, and was getting food support each month.”
The case management program is growing at MCIL. As of last spring we had 32 consumers and we now support 44 people within this program. MCIL Case Manager, Elizabeth Clark, has been very busy doing reassessments and intakes, setting up services, finding people suitable housing, and a variety of other tasks and issues that come up. She is learning valuable information regarding navigating Medicare, MA renewals, and having appropriate supports when dealing with chemical dependency issues. We hope to continue to grow and to provide quality case management to CADI waivered clients.

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IL classes and workshops are back better than ever!

By Corbett Laubignat

Hello MCIL community! It’s great to be back and in a brand new place. We are excited to show you the new features of the building including the new teaching kitchen and the new and improved classroom. The Core Services are back in full force and ready to bring you updated and brand new set of workshops/classes and activities. We took some time to examine the requests from consumer and professionals and matched that with the skills sets needed to live an independent life. We have worked hard to develop incredibly innovative and entertaining way to provide you with skill development and the opportunity to work with peers to achieve your wildest dreams and goals.

We are also introducing a MCIL Orientation which will be offered to all of our consumers and interested community members as well as professionals every other week. This gives participants the opportunity to learn about what MCIL has to offer and how to get involved with our programs and or classes/workshops/events.

So now that you are interested in participating, let’s talk about how you can reserve your spot. We ask that you do the following:

1. Call the front desk and tell them the class or activity you want to attend.
2. Give your name and contact info including your phone number and address.
3. Let us know if you need an accommodation like large font or an electronic version.
4. Attend the activity/class that you signed up for. This is key to benefit from the information or experiences provided.

We invite you to come check us out and see how you can become involved.
for the NHR program for 2014

By Pamela Johnson

We are happy to announce our new business contracts with Health Partners and Medica for Transitional Services. What does this mean for Nursing Home Relocation (NHR)? It means that those consumers who have Medica and Health Partners as their provider, and are eligible for the Transitional Services, will be eligible for NEW furniture, household items, movers, damage deposits, application fees and delivery to their new home on their move day. We look forward to working with Medica and Health Partners in the coming year and know that we will be providing great service to great people.

Thank you to David Hancox for his expertise, time, training and most importantly advice while attending meetings for processing the contracts too.

The NHR Program had another successful year in both programs. The NHR moved approximately 20 individuals and over 175 individuals for Transitional Services. I cannot THANK my NHR Staff enough for the successful year for they are truly the ones who do all of the hard work. I am very proud of my staff.

We are so happy to be in our NEW Building as well as our new location. We are expecting great things for 2014. Stay tuned for further updates.

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MCIL workshops/classes and events

New classes in 2014! All events are free and accessible.

Location: Most of the following events are held at MCIL’s NEW location at 530 N. Robert Street in St. Paul. We are located on the bus line, so please check bus schedules for exact drop off locations. Or call Metro Transit for trip planning assistance.

Please RSVP at least 2 days PRIOR to activity. Unless otherwise specified, all activities will be held at MCIL. If you are interested in learning more about these and other events, please visit our website at www.mcil-mn.org or RSVP at 651-603-2030.

- Interpreter or alternative formatted materials must be requested at least two weeks prior to the scheduled activity.
- Classes will be cancelled if less than two people are registered.
- Check our website www.mcil-mn.org for the E-Calendar or come in and get the most current calendar of events at our front desk.
- Meeting dates are subject to change due to weather or unforeseen problems.

MCIL events attempt to be scent-free: Please remember to avoid wearing scented personal and hygiene items such as soaps, deodorants, shampoos, hair gels, lotions, “natural” fragrances and cologne/shaving products to MCIL events. This way everyone can have equal access to the services provided by MCIL. The Staff and Consumers Thank You!

We look forward to seeing you soon! Continued on next page
Regular (ongoing) events

**Consumerism and food safety**
We will look into being savvy consumers and what that means. We will review ways to stretch your dollar while out shopping, what to look for on your shopping receipt, and other savvy consumer tips. We will also learn about safety in the kitchen. This will include food safety and kitchen safety; which are important steps in preparing a meal. This is part 1 and 3 of a 4 part series that includes shopping and cooking as part 2 and 4. FIRST AND THIRD MONDAY’S 10 AM – 12 NOON: (MUST ALSO SIGN UP FOR “SHOPPING AND COOKING” CLASS)

**Shopping and cooking**
We will plan a meal from start to finish. Come learn how to meal plan, shop, cook, set a table, and clean up afterwards. This will be a hands on class where everyone will get to try their skills at different aspects of meal planning and cooking. We will have a sit down meal and clean up afterwards. This is also a great time to meet your peers who have similar goals. This is part 2 and 4 of a 4 part ongoing series that includes consumerism and food safety as part 1 and 3. SECOND AND FOURTH MONDAY’S 10AM- 12 NOON: (MUST HAVE FIRST ATTENDED “CONSUMERISM AND FOOD SAFETY” CLASS)

**Glbt and disability: Every Tue. evening**
6pm-8pm Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) with disabilities (GLBT) is a support/social group that meets once a week to discuss topics related to being a part of the GLBT community and living with a disability. It’s a great place to meet new people who understand and can provide support and a social outlet. No need to call or register as this is a drop in class.

**Peer mentor group**
5pm – 7pm. Are you a mentor who is looking to improve and/or maintain your skills like listening, problem solving, disability adjustment and much more? This is an ongoing group for people with disabilities who are interested in lifelong learning and want to maintain their mentoring status and improve or expand their skills. Offered on: January 9, February 13 & 27, March 6 & 20 (ONGOING): 5PM-7PM

**Book group**
Do you have an interest in storytelling and finding like minded people who share your love of literature or wish to just brush up on your reading skills? Then this monthly event is for you. Come and socialize and make friends in the process. Call for more details.

**DB101 (disability benefits): 2pm-4pm**
This class is great for individuals who want to learn the ins and outs of disability benefits. Individuals will learn the necessary tools and information regarding health coverage, benefits and employment through the exploration of the DB101 website. THURSDAYS, JANUARY 9 AND JANUARY 23 (ONLY NEED TO ATTEND ONE)

**Open lab**
MCIL offers you the opportunity to meet with a staff one on one to address immediate concerns, get assistance filling out paperwork, or to address other needs. Please call for specific dates and times.

Continued on next page
Leadership: 1pm-3pm
What does leadership mean to you? Are you a natural leader or do you wish to become one? This class will explore the many facets of what makes great leaders while others prefer to follow, and the benefits of both. January 8, 15, 22 and 29. *Must attend all four sessions to complete class.

Transportation: 1pm-3pm
This class will explore a variety of different transportation services individuals with disabilities can use in the metro area. A strong focus will be centered on riding the Metro Transit Bus and Lightrail System. JANUARY 16, JANUARY 30 (ONLY NEED TO ATTEND ONE)

IL Orientation: 2pm-4pm
Are you new to MCIL? Do you have questions about our services and how to get involved? Are you a professional or a member of the community and would like to learn how to get people you work with involved in our services? If so, than join us in exploring the services and opportunities at MCIL. During this one part workshop, we will also look at the Independent Living movement and how it has shaped the way people with disabilities have changed history. Please note that this is a 1 part, repeating workshop.
Offered: January 13 & 27, Feb 10 & 24, March 10 & 24

Self advocacy: 1pm-3pm
What is advocacy to you? Are you looking to develop skills that will assist you in asking for what you need or want effectively? Join others with disabilities in exploring what advocacy looks like, what techniques work, and learn where your advocacy strengths lie. Use your voice and be heard!
Offered on: February 5, 12, 19 & 26

Living well with a disability: 5pm-7pm
Are you looking for more balance in your life? Living with a disability can be a winding road. This workshop will provide participants with a toolbox of techniques and resources that will keep them on the path to living well.
Living Well workshop provides opportunities to:
• Discover how lifestyle affects disability.
• Discover how creating meaningful life goals can help develop healthy lifestyle.
• Discover how healthy living can create new possibilities
This workshop includes ten, 2-hour, weekly sessions that focus on healthy lifestyle topics. The Living Well workshop helps people lead healthier lives that reduce limitation and increase living fully. Join others with disabilities that are going through similar experiences and are looking for ways to improve their situation and live a life that they want to live.
Offered on: March 5, 12t 19, 26 & April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & March 7

Goal setting: 10am-12pm
What’s your dream? Maybe you want to start a new job or get your own place. Maybe you are interested in what gets in your way when attempting to accomplish a goal. Join others with disabilities in exploring what it means to set a goal and see it through. This four-part workshop will take you on a journey of discovery and at the end you will have a tool box of skills and techniques to help you accomplish your goals in the future. *Must attend all four sessions to complete course.
Offered on: February 3, 10 17 & 24

Meet Up group: 1pm-3pm
We will explore the “Meetup” group website. We will look at how to sign up, what to put in your information section, how to search and join groups. We will also learn internet safety tips that will come in handy when joining the “Meetup” website. This is also a great way to connect with peers who may have the same interests as you. January 10, 17, 23 and 30.

Continued on next page
Drivers education: 9am-11am
This class will be run as a study session to learn the laws and regulations of driving in Minnesota, in preparation to obtain a driving permit. We will breakdown the Minnesota Driver’s Education manual, including practice quizzes, review videos, and use flash cards to cover the material in the driver’s manual. This is a four part series. Feb 4, 11, 18 and 25. *Must attend all four sessions to complete class.

High school to college transition class: 10am-12pm
This class will help those in high school learn about the process of transitioning from high school to college. How to prepare, and what you can start doing now in preparation for the new journey. This is a great way to get answers to questions about transitioning, and to meet with peers who are going through a similar situation as you. March 6 and 13.

Community resources: 1pm-3pm
This class provides numerous resources individuals with disabilities can access in their local community. The resources covered will focus on basic needs, including housing, employment, food and more. How to access these resources will also be covered. Feb 4, 11, 18 and 25. *Must attend all four sessions to complete class.

Parent group: 6pm-8pm
The Parents with Disabilities Group is designed for parents who have disabilities to attend and learn through sharing experiences with other parents who have been there. This group will also foster self-advocacy skills and discuss the foundations of the Independent Living model and how parents can incorporate those practices in their lives and the lives of their children. Four part series held on Feb 6, 11, 20 and 27. Please try to make all four classes.

Relationships: 5pm-7pm
This class is geared towards those seeking to enhance their interpersonal skills as it relates to individual relationships or community relationships. Learn what are healthy boundaries and how to achieve them. Four part series held on March 4, 11, 18 and 25. *Must attend all four sessions to complete class.

Self Discovery: 10am-12pm
The class is designed for anyone that would like to learn more about themselves and their disability. How increasing confidence can lead to changes in attitude; and finally how writing a mission statement can help provide the drive to achieve significant life goals. Four part series held Feb 7, 14, 21 and 28. *Must attend all four sessions to complete class.

Hygiene: 10am-12pm
Are you looking increase your personal care skills and step up your efforts to put your best foot forward? This class will assist you in looking and feeling your best. Whether you are thinking of going back to work or just making new impressions, what you say to your world about your appearance says a lot about how you feel. March 12 and March 26 10am-12pm

Bus Trainings: *Available UPON REQUEST
Have some fun and increase your understanding and experience with Metro Transit the public bus line and light rail. This will be your chance to expand beyond Metro Mobility. Many options and more freedom will be opened to you. Join us for a trip from MCIL to the Mall of America. We will eat lunch, do a little shopping and return to MCIL. We also provide training to people who would like to learn a certain route(s). We assist with identifying some safety concerns and assist people in working towards traveling. Call to schedule an appointment.
MCIL peer mentoring training workshops

**PEER MENTOR TRAINING: 10am -3pm**

This is a mandatory training for all mentors who are new to the program. This training is intended to provide information on the rights, responsibilities and expectations of our mentors. We will also discuss the Independent Living movement, advocacy and confidentiality. This is intended to prepare mentors for their mentoring experience. After attending this training, mentors will be well versed in basic mentoring skills and the IL philosophy.

Offered: January 14, March 4, May 13, June 10, Aug 12

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**SOCIAL EVENTS**

**The weekenders**

Are you sick of sitting home all weekend? Do you see fun activities and wish you had someone to do them with? Do you find yourself wanting someone to talk to? Well, this is the group for you. Come meet other people who share your interests and want someone to hang out with. We will meet once a month to share, talk, plan, do activities or outings throughout the month. Guests are welcome and encouraged! Call for details.

**Peer mentor appreciation night: 5pm-7pm**

Are you a mentor or a mentee who would like to thank those who have assisted you on your journey? Join us for a night of thanks and camaraderie. Please join us in celebrating you, the mentors of MCIL. Offered: January 23

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**MCIL’s Independent Living calendars**

Please RSVP at least 2 days before the event

**RSVP Events:** By calling 651-603-2030 or Check our website www.mcil-mn.org and click on “Classes Groups and Sessions” for updated information or to print this calendar. Please give 2 weeks notice if alternative format or other accommodations are needed. Events are free, accessible and mostly scent-free. Most events meet @ MCIL. MCIL is located at 503 N. Robert Street. St Paul, MN 55101

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<td>DRIVERS EDUCATION: ERIN 9AM-11AM</td>
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<td>PEER MENTOR GROUP: CORBETT 5-7</td>
<td>SELF DISCOVERY (4 WEEKS): NICK 10AM-12PM</td>
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