Nick’s notes

2014 Candidate/Town Hall Forums kick off

By Nick Wilke, Systems Advocate

In September the 2014 Candidate Forums kicked off across the state. MCIL got the chance to be a part of these forums. Staff rallied along with consumers in Shakopee, Anoka and even Duluth. All the events had an average attendance of about 20-30 people plus the candidates. Questions at these events ranged from the MA-spend down to giving the candidates the opportunity to discuss what they would do (if elected) to help people with disabilities. These events provided a much needed opportunity to get some face time with elected officials and hear their take on specific issues.

In December the state had additional opportunities for quality interaction as Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) rolled across the state again, this time offering five Town Hall Forums. Elected officials were in attendance, but this time their main objective was to listen to the concerns of their constituents. Constituents do this by providing testimony at the forum. There was an average of 10-15 testifiers per night. Around 70% of the testimony was given around the MA-spend down issue and all of these testifiers had the option to be recorded if they wished. It is our objective, along with MNCCD to share these stories throughout the session and continue to raise awareness on the spend-down. This issue has been on the minds of people with disabilities far too long and it is finally time to organize, rally, and do something about it.

MNCCD is still collecting personal stories from the communities that have been impacted by this issue.

Continued on next page
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 Robert Street North, St. Paul, MN 55104
651-603-2015 • 888-630-9793
www.adaminnesota.org
cindyt@mcil-mn.org

Welcome our new staff member

My name is Carolyn Davis and I am the Scheduling Specialist in the PAS Department. I love reading my bible and spending time with my family. I look forward to meeting you all soon. Happy New Year!

Find us on the web:
Website: www.mcil-mn.org
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/MCILMN

The Candidate Forums gave the candidates the opportunity to discuss what they would do (if elected) to help people with disabilities.

Should you want to share your story or a story please go to: www.mnccd.org and click on the Advocacy & Policy tab, there you will find a link to campaign materials.

If you are looking for ways to get involved in policy work, want to know more about who represents you, or even want to discuss your own concerns please contact the staff at MCIL. We would love to assist you in increasing your community impact and raising your awareness.

If you would like more details on, or more background please contact me at: nickw@mcil-mn.org or 651-603-2018.

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Looking for a knowledgeable PCA Agency that provides personalized choice services?

We offer Employees
* Holiday Incentives
* Competitive Wages
* Tuition Assistance
* Training Opportunities
* A chance for extra income with the On-call list

We offer Consumers

- Consumer Control over who you work with, what support you receive and staff schedules
- Assistance with creating and posting job ads, recruiting and screening.
- Handling payroll and Human Resource duties

www.pas.mcil-mn.org

For more information Call 651-646-8342

Metropolitan Center for Independent Living
1600 University Ave. West, Suite 16, Saint Paul, MN 55104
MCIL Ramp Program proves helpful again

Lawrence contacted the Ramp Project in October. His wife had been hospitalized for a while and the doctors refused to release her without a wheelchair ramp. Lawrence was a veteran therefore qualifying for Yellow Ribbon. The retired vets built the ramp free of charge and Deed paid for materials. The family is extremely happy and his wife has been released from the hospital.

The volunteers took a quick break for a photo op.

This was a huge ramp, as seen on the right, and may not have been completed without the help of MCIL’s Ramp Project.

Personal Assistance Services update

By Kat Gordon, PAS Services Manager

MCIL’s Personal Assistance Services Program (PAS) has added two additional services this year in addition to its PCA Services. We now provide services through the Alternative Care Waver in Ramsey County, as well as provide Home Making Services. This has allowed several consumers to receive combined services through our program, which makes managing staff even easier than in the past. Consumer’s no longer need to go through multiple agencies and can use the same staff member for several services.

We have continued to grow in the number of consumers we serve and have a growth plan in place to ensure further growth in 2015 by focusing on outreach and other marketing techniques. The greater community can now learn about the many services we provide.

We also work closely with consumers and DSPs to help ease the transition from the state Over Time laws, to the federal Over Time laws in 2015. This will cause DSPs to only be allowed to bill up to 40 hours in a week, instead of the previous 48 hours in a week.

To assist consumers with this transition, we are excited to announce that we have hired an additional staff member, Carolyn Davis, who is our Staffing Specialist. Carolyn will be assisting consumers to find staff through the creation and placement of ads, as well as acting as a liaison between current staff seeking hours and current consumers seeking staff.
The Independent Living/Vocational Rehabilitation program is an interagency collaboration between MCIL and Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR). IL/VR Specialists (MCIL employees) provide core Independent Living services such as information and referral, individual advocacy and independent living skills training to people enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Our services are meant to address immediate and long-term needs such as assistance with benefits, housing, transportation and soft skills necessary for successful employment.

The goal of this program is to address the many barriers to employment that VR participants experience and VR is not set up to address. How can someone focus on a job search when they don’t have health coverage and can’t access necessary medication, or they are currently homeless? What if someone can get jobs but always loses them due to poor conflict resolution skills, or bad hygiene? That’s where IL/VR Specialists come in.

What is Vocational Rehabilitation Services? Vocational Rehabilitation Services helps people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep a job, and live as independently as possible. VR offers a variety of counseling, training, job skills and job placement services. A vocational rehabilitation counselor works with a consumer to explore the choices and determine which are most appropriate, then together they develop a plan to reach those goals.

IL/VR Manager, Kelly Krantz, has recently completed the St. Thomas’s Mini MBA for Nonprofit Organizations series of workshops and classes.
MCIL workshops/classes and events

All events are free and accessible.

Location: Most of the following events are held at MCIL’s NEW location at 530 Robert Street N. 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!

Workshops and Classes

Shopping and cooking
10am -1pm • 1st & 3rd Mondays:
Jan 5, Feb 2 & 16, March 2 & 16
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.

Housing Lab
10am-1pm on Thursdays
Jan 8*, 15, 22* & 29; Feb 5*, 12, 19*, & 26;
March 5*, 12, 19* & 26
* Held at MCIL: 530 Robert St. N., St. Paul, MN 55101
>> Location May Vary <<
Please call for location if unsure.
Having a hard time finding affordable housing? Come to our housing workshop on Thursdays from 10am to 1pm to meet with our Housing Specialist. No appointments are necessary. Just stop by. The Housing Specialist can answer questions regarding Section 8 and Public Housing as well as help you in your search to find a place that fits your needs. Assistance with filling out applications can also be provided.

Drivers Education
Fridays from 12pm-2pm
Series 1: January 9, 16, 23 & 30
Series 2: February 6, 13, 20 & 27
Series 3: March 6, 13, 20 & 27
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 offered. *Must attend all four sessions to complete class.

Continued on next page
**Bus/ Lightrail Trainings**

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. 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 Orientation**

2pm – 4pm • 2nd Mondays: Jan 12, Feb 9, March 9

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, then 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.**

**Working Well**

10am-1pm • 2 & 4 Mondays

*This is a Two Part Class: Series One: Jan 12 & 26; Series Two: Feb 9 & 23; Series Three: March 9 & 23*

The Working Well with a Disability workshop looks to promote a healthy and independent life in and out of the workplace. This is a peer-facilitated and consumer-directed workshop that takes participants on a journey of empowerment through peer support, goal setting and problem solving. Time spent matches personal values, maintaining life balance, dealing with stress positively and stating one’s needs—Advocating! If you just starting on your journey to employment or employed and looking for balance between work and your personal life. This is for you.

**Social Events & Support Groups**

**Art and You**

12pm – 3pm • 3rd Fridays: Jan 16, Feb 20, March 20

Do you have a disability? Have you always wanted to find a space to be creative? Are you frustrated and need a creative release all the while making beautiful art? Well, that time has arrived. Come to this class and enjoy the opportunity to be creative. Whether it be painting or Mosaics’, you are invited to enjoy a safe and welcoming environment to express yourself and make new friends. You will also have the opportunity to sell your work at the next St. Paul Art Crawl in October, 2014.

**Crafting Disability - Writing Group**

12pm-3pm • 1st Tuesdays: Jan 6, Feb 3, March 3

*Location:* Rondo Library @ 61 N. Dale Street, St Paul, MN 55103. (Dale and University) in the multi-purpose room.

*Transit:* Green Line, Buses 16 & 65

Parking available.

How do you want to convey what it’s like to have a disability? In ‘Crafting Disability’, we will look at works of literature with disability as a central theme. Crafting Disability’, we will look at works of literature with disability as a central theme.” In each class we will try out “the moves” of writers with disabilities in our own writing. Alison Bergblom Johnson, an experienced writer and teaching artist, will lead the class and read up to two pages of student work each month. This drop in, cross-disability class, will meet monthly.

Continued on next page
**GLBT and Disability**
6pm – 8pm • 2nd Tuesdays: Jan 13, Feb 10, March 10
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) with disabilities (GLBT) is a support/social group that meets once a month 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.

**Mindful In Sobriety**
6pm-8pm • Last Fridays: Jan 30, Feb 27, March 27
The Mindfulness In Sobriety support group is a safe environment where people seeking a sober support network can come together to discuss their sobriety and any challenges that it might offer. **This is not an AA group and will not be led by a trained counselor.** An advocate will facilitate discussion, however, it is mostly a place to connect with other people seeking successful sobriety. Topics of discussion may include but are not limited to: how to remain mindful and positive during periods of stress, how to make lifestyle changes that make sobriety easier, what disability specific challenges to sobriety are and how to handle them, and relaxation techniques.

**Empowering Women**
6pm-8pm • Last Thursdays • Jan 29, Feb 26, March 26
“Empowering Women” is a support group for those who identify as women with disabilities. The group will provide a safe, warm and welcoming space to share stories and discuss the challenges women with disabilities face on a day to day basis. Come to join the conversation and connect with others who share similar life experiences. This group is facilitated by Jenna, whom has an education in family violence prevention.

**Parent Group**
6p-8pm • 3rd Wed: Jan 21, Feb 18, March 18
Families with a child who has a disability have special concerns and often need a great deal of information: information about the disability of their child, about school services, therapy, local policies, funding sources, transportation, medical facilities, and much more. Join our monthly support group and connect with other families seeking guidance in a safe and confidential sharing group.

**MCIL Peer Mentoring Training Workshops**

- **Initial Peer Mentor Training**
  Time/Dates: **To Be Determined**
  **FOR PEER MENTORS ONLY!**
  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.

- **Peer Mentor Group**
  4pm – 6pm • 1st & 3rd Tuesdays: Jan 6 & 13, Feb 3 & 17, March 3 & 17
  **FOR PEER MENTORS ONLY!**
  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.

- **Peer Mentee Group**
  4pm-6pm • 2nd & 4th Tues: Jan 13 & 27, Feb 10 & 24, March 10 & 24
  **FOR PEER MENTEES ONLY!**
# MCIL Independent Living Calendar

## January 2015

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## 2015 MARCH

### MCIL Independent Living Calendar

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All units designed for physically disabled persons. Great location near shopping, banks, parks, bus lines and entertainment. Two elevators with back-up emergency generator. Occupants pay 30% of their income as rent. Now accepting applications for the waiting list.

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Monday – Thursday from 9:30am – 12:30pm

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Scott Ruhsam ...................................... Chair Elect
Shelley Madore ...................................... Secretary
Ex-Officio ................................................................. Vacant

Members at Large ........................................... Jeff Bangsberg,
Tim Benjamin, Charles Braun, and Walt Seiberg

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**MCIL administration/program staff**

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<tr>
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<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bergman, Jenna</td>
<td>IL Specialist</td>
<td>651-603-2028</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jennab@mcil-mn.org">jennab@mcil-mn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Amber</td>
<td>Ramp Specialist</td>
<td>651-603-2029</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amberb@mcil-mn.org">amberb@mcil-mn.org</a></td>
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<td>Clark, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Case Manager</td>
<td>651-603-2003</td>
<td><a href="mailto:elizabethc@mcil-mn.org">elizabethc@mcil-mn.org</a></td>
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<td>Conway, Laura</td>
<td>Housing Specialist/IL Specialist</td>
<td>651-318-3646</td>
<td><a href="mailto:laurac@mcil-mn.org">laurac@mcil-mn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Davis, Carolyn</td>
<td>PAS Staffing Specialist</td>
<td>651-788-8424</td>
<td><a href="mailto:carolynd@mcil-mn.org">carolynd@mcil-mn.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>denDaas, Celeste</td>
<td>NHR Manager</td>
<td>651-603-2016</td>
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