



Maximizing the independence of people with disabilities through advocacy, peer support, training, transportation and community education.



Building Bridges...Touching Lives Summer 2017



Did you know?

According to an old saying by a man named Edward V. Roberts (often referred to as the father of the independent living movement), when asked, what is a Center for Independent Living (CIL), he replied "it's advocacy, advocacy and advocacy, but not necessarily in that order." CIL's are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities, to do just what Roberts said - advocate for people with disabilities through an array of services.

The Independent Living philosophy was born in the 1960's era alongside deinstitutionalization, as people with significant disabilities were gradually released from institutions to return to their communities where treatment, support and advocacy were to be available. This philosophy was fueled in the midst of massive civil rights movements, with intentional exploration of changing values, objectives and social norms, in which independent living activists carried out some of the most daring protests in American civil rights history.

"In its broadest implications, the independent living movement is the civil rights movement of millions of Americans with disabilities. It is the wave of protest against segregation and discrimination and an affirmation of the rights and ability of persons with

Gabe Goes to Washington!

Independence, Inc. sponsors youth for advocacy conference in DC



If you were to ask Gabriel Mullen where he sees himself in 5 years, he might say

something like on the steps of Washington, or writing for an advocacy publication that supports the rights of individuals with disabilities. But more importantly, Gabe, who says he wants to fully embrace his autism, has a more broad vision in mind. "I see myself being in a sure state of what I want to do with my life" including a stable job and a future in which he has the tools to live independently, "living a dream that is all mine" he says, regarding his future career, where he will live, and with whom he surrounds himself.

Progressing and maturing as a young adult with autism is of central importance to Gabe. "I want to come out of my shell a little bit more and (to be) more open to the world around me. I care deeply about the well-being of others and I often think about how the world could be made into a better place. If the few years of young adulthood Gabe has already logged give any indication, you can bet he'll be doing whatever he sets his mind to. But for right now, Gabe is on his way to Washington.

Gabe, a Lawrence High School graduate and current KU student, is part of **Independence, Inc.**'s Youth Employment Program (YEP!), which matches local youth with members of the business community for job skill development and work experience. And this summer, **Independence, Inc.** is sending him to Capital Hill for the 2017 Annual Conference on Independent Living - "Revolution, a Global Independent Movement". The goal of the conference is to mentor, train and equip future leaders and advocates for disability rights. This year's conference will focus on the global picture and the need for international allies amidst a "rising tide of discrimination that confronts people with disabilities every day" (source 2017 NCIL conference guide) and on uniting advocates who will create a world in which people with disabilities are

disabilities to share fully in the responsibilities and joys of our society." - Ed Roberts.

Late night bull sessions between Roberts and fellow University of California Berkley students in 1967, lead to strategizing about breaking down barriers that were keeping people with disabilities out of classrooms. This self advocacy group sparked UC's Physically Disabled Students Program, which would eventually grow into the nation's first independent living center. This desire to change the disability culture and build a community of inclusivity and support for all people is what led to the formation of **Independence, Inc.**, founded in 1978 to help ensure the rights of people with disabilities are protected and that living independently is encouraged and promoted. Our vision is to work together in transforming our communities to be the best places in which people with disabilities can live, learn, and work. **To learn more about the history of Independent Living, follow this link <http://cilnfc.org/cil-history/>**

Special funding provides ramps for consumers



Local consumers have found the help they need making accessible modifications to their homes through The Accessible Housing Program (AHP). The AHP is a combined effort between **Independence, Inc.** and the City of Lawrence Development Services Division, to assist people with disabilities make accessibility modifications in their rented housing.

One consumer who has difficulty walking up and down stairs found the relief and help needed for he and his wife with a new ramp to their front door. Another, needed a new wheelchair ramp for their daughter to get safely in and out of the house on her own. **(pictured above: Madyson Locke enjoying her new ramp)**

Both found the support and help needed to get these projects accomplished. An applicant must live in a rental property or a mobile home where the lot is rented, in Lawrence, KS. To qualify, the consumer must have a disability and meet income guidelines. Financial

valued equally and participate fully in all aspects of life. Gabe's enthusiasm and interest in advocacy, leadership, problem solving and writing are among the many things that set him on this path to DC.

"This conference, I believe, is the perfect opportunity to indulge in my personal interests, and to lobby for change in Washington for people like me who work with their own disabilities day in and day out and who deserve fair treatment under the law." - Gabriel Mullen

Among Gabe's many achievements and experiences are the Dole Institute of Politics Student Advisory Board, Kansas Youth Leadership Forum, staff writing for the LHS newspaper "The Budget", KU Audio-Reader volunteer (pictured above), volunteering for the Kansas Gubernatorial Campaign, and his recent work through the YEP program.

"Gabe is an incredibly bright young man and has caught on quickly to the task assigned to him. I feel he is going to greatly benefit from this work experience" said Justin Smith, Gabe's YEP employment supervisor at Heartland Works. "This week we put him to work assisting in workshops and learning more about the hands on services that we provide. He is learning how to manage client caseloads and upload documentation this week. He'll have the opportunity to sit with customers one on one and do "Welcome Survey" evaluations with them." If knowledge is power, and experience the catapult, Gabe Mullen will continue strong and land far. We here at **Independence, Inc.** look forward to his journey to Washington and beyond, and the ways he will put his gained knowledge and skills to work for the good of the disabled community. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to hear more about his upcoming experience in Washington.



We couldn't do this without you!

Success stories like the ones you read here are made possible through collaboration between the strength and initiative of the consumer, the knowledge, guidance, services and support of Independence, Inc., and the generous financial support of people like you! Contributing to Independence, Inc. and its vision of working together to transform our communities to be the best places for people with disabilities to live, learn, and work, helps change lives. Every dollar counts towards providing the services that allow people to lead dignified and productive lives. Thank you for your thoughtful gifts. We appreciate your support and are honored with the chance to continue making a difference in our community.

Donate Now!

Welcome new board member!

Carrie Stineman is a psychologist, having graduated from KU in 2002 with a Ph.D in Counseling Psychology. Carrie works with veterans with combat-related PTSD. She joined the board in April, 2017. Welcome Carrie!



KU Study on

assistance is based on the availability of funds at the time of the request. These new ramps were completed in June and are serving these families well!



**Above: Before the ramp
Below: The new ramp!**



**Pictured below: the new
Independence, Inc. accessible van**



Volunteerism -

Participants Needed!

Research participants needed for a KU study on volunteerism! Who can participate? Anyone age 50 + who has volunteered in the past year and has difficulty walking or climbing stairs due to a health condition or disability. The purpose of this study is to "develop a more comprehensive understanding of participation in volunteer activities of people with mobility-limiting impairments". The process will consist of a 60 min. interview and \$40 compensation will be provided. Interested? Contact Alicia Sellon aliciasellon@ku.edu or 785-864-4778



Upcoming Event: Jerry White Family Care Clinic

Independence, Inc. will be at hosting a booth at the Jerry White Family Care Clinic, a primary care clinic for the uninsured, July 24th at the Jefferson County Health Department, 1212 Walnut, Oskaloosa, KS.

The Clinic is a joint effort between the Jefferson County Alliance of Service Council and the Jefferson County Health Department. The mission of the Jefferson County Alliance is to "improve quality comprehensiveness, and accountability of the local human service delivery system, by strengthening the collaboration, effectiveness and efficiency of all its members through the sharing of services, information, resources, and appropriate funding"

Transportation Department Serves Douglas County Community With New Accessible Van

Did you know that **Independence, Inc.** has offered transportation services in Douglas County to all community members for over 30 years? Our accessible vehicles are an important part of our organization as we continue to work towards making Lawrence the best place for people with disabilities to live, work and play! Our new van, pictured at left, will aid us greatly in our mission to help our community members who are unable to drive, get where they need to go - work, educational programs, medical appointments, recreational activities and more. Need a ride? call 785-843-5576 Monday-Friday 8:00-4:00 to schedule an appointment.

In the Spotlight..

27th Anniversary of ADA Brings Opportunity to Shed Light on Ongoing Need for Advocacy

The 27th Anniversary of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be commemorated Tuesday, July 18th at 6 p.m. during the Lawrence City Commission meeting, with the reading and signing of the ADA anniversary proclamation by Mayor Soden. **Independence, Inc.** Access Task Force members will be in attendance to not only honor the event, but to say a few words, thanking the city and the community for its' support of the ADA mission and to use their time at the mic to remind community members to communicate their views about the Better Care Reconciliation Act currently being considered in the U.S. Senate.

Did you know?

The Better Care Reconciliation Act cuts and caps Medicaid and will likely cause states to:

- stop covering certain children, such as those covered under waivers (e.g., autism waivers)
- cut or reduce school therapies for children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- stop covering certain services (e.g., private duty nursing, physical therapy, dental care)
- reduce the extent of services (e.g., number of therapy visits)

- reduce payments to health care providers, thus reducing access to care

The proposed legislation would also cut the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in ways that would:

- weaken or eliminate protections for people with pre-existing conditions, allowing insurance companies to charge them much more for coverage
 - allow insurance companies to impose annual or lifetime coverage limits
 - allow insurance companies to stop offering essential health benefits
 - reduce subsidies to buy insurance and pay for health care
 - phase out the ACA Medicaid expansion (i.e., Medicaid coverage for childless adults)
- (Source: [Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund](#))

The Senate bill repeals the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, which has enabled millions of adults and children with behavioral health conditions to gain health insurance, including coverage of mental health and substance use disorder services. If the expansion is repealed, those millions will lose their insurance. Combined with the cuts to Medicaid, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the BCRA will cause 15 million Americans living in poverty to lose their Medicaid coverage, including millions of people with disabilities. It doesn't matter if the Expansion is repealed next year or funding is slowly decreased over ten years, these people will still lose their health insurance. (Source: [Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law](#))

For additional information and actions you can take including contacting your Senator, visit one of the following links.

[National Council on Independent Living](#)
[Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law](#)
[Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund](#)
[American Association of People with Disabilities](#)



Creating Community Through Movement and Sound!

KU, the Lawrence Public Library and **Independence, Inc.** have joined forces on an exciting and unique all-abilities musical experience using Adaptive Use Musical Instruments (AUMI) where participants use computers that enable them to play sounds and musical phrases through movement and gestures. This Jam Session is held once a month at the library. Interested? Contact Ranita to RSVP or for more information rwilks@independenceinc.org

Special Events Coming up:

- Tuesday July 25 4:30-6:30 pm – All-ages jam and recording session, Sound + Vision Studio, lower level, Lawrence Public Library. Visit <http://aumi.ku.edu> for more information
- Workshop with Canadian percussionist, Jesse Stewart, founder of "We Are All Musicians (WAAM)" August 7-11, 3:30-5:00 pm, with two performances August 11 & 12. contact improv@ku.edu



Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living Awarded National Grant

Independence, Inc.'s State Association, Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living (KACIL) was one of only 4 organizations nationwide, to receive the 2017 Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation Nursing Home Transition Grant. Here at **Independence, Inc.** we are celebrating with fellow Kansas Centers for Independent Living, all of whom will benefit from the grant, as we look forward to serving our communities. Jill Enyart, co-director at **Independence, Inc.**, was the grant writer and was notified in June of the award. The NHT grant will be used to assist individuals in nursing homes or other institutions, wishing to transition into the community and live independently. The grant can assist with costs such as rental deposits, assistive technology and equipment, essential home furnishings, home modification and utility deposits. For more information or to apply for funding in Douglas, Franklin and Jefferson Counties, contact Ranita, rwilks@independenceinc.org or 785-841-0333 ext. 115

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is Just Around the Corner!

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and it is fast approaching! Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is a nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, a program that began in 1999 with fewer than three-dozen student participants as part of a White House initiative to bolster activity in and increase the profile of National

Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Here at **Independence, Inc.**, our sights are set on one of our biggest events of the year, our own DMD program, as we gear up for the planning and coordinating process where students with disabilities (mentees) are matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. Mentees experience a typical day on the job and learn how to prepare to enter the world of work. Employers gain an increased awareness of the fact that people with disabilities represent an overlooked talent pool. (source: Office of Disability Employment Policy)

Last year **Independence, Inc.** had 48 youth participate in DMD bringing the total number of youth served through our program to 682!

Get Involved! This year's event is October 24th. How can you support this effort?

We are always looking for business and workplace mentors to be matched with a youth for the day and offer job shadowing and a real workday experience. This is as beneficial to the business as it is for the youth as horizons are expanded and employers are introduced to the talent, energy and work ethic that so many of these youth possess. Interested? For more information please contact Ranita Wilks, DMD coordinator 785/841-0333, ext. 115 or RWilks@independenceinc.org We also welcome any donations! Your gift can go directly towards sponsorship of our Youth Employment Program and Disability Mentoring Day activities.

[Donate now, your gift is appreciated!](#)

[Visit our website](#)