



*Serving Kansans with disabilities*

## Westar Energy's Project Deserve

Project DESERVE helps pay the Westar Energy electric bills of people with a disability (children or adults meeting Social Security disability criteria) and older adults (people 60 years or older).

Eligible households may receive one-time annual payments of up to \$100 to be applied toward their Westar Energy electric bills.

If you think you might be eligible for one of the ways Project DESERVE can help, please contact the American Red Cross at (316) 219-4000 or call Westar Energy at (800) 383-1183.

## The Kansas Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

LIEAP is a federally-funded program that helps households that qualify pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit. The application period for LIEAP is January 20<sup>th</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for purchasing heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or to the fuel vendor.
2. Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating company.
3. The combined gross income, before deductions, of all persons living at the address may not exceed 130% of the federal poverty level.
4. Benefit levels vary according to household income, number of persons living at the address, type of dwelling, type of heating fuel, and utility rates. Please contact your local RCIL office or SRS office for more information.

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The 2009 Disability Caucus will be held in Topeka on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> of 2009. The Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas will be sending out more information this spring.

## RCIL Staff Raises Awareness at Local SRS Offices

By Kathy Cooper, Legislative Advocate

On Wednesday, January 14, 2009, 27 RCIL staff members braved the single digit weather and peacefully rallied at 9 SRS offices across the state of Kansas to support the Stop the Freeze! movement. Staff gathered at SRS locations including El Dorado, Emporia, Ft. Scott, Garnett, Iola, Lyndon, Osawatomie, Wellington, and Winfield to hand out flyers and educate the public of what the stopthefreeze.com movement is and how it affects persons with disabilities. If you have questions or would like more information, you may visit [www.stopthefreeze.com](http://www.stopthefreeze.com) or call your local RCIL office.



## 2009 Kansas Budget Update

By Kathy Cooper, Legislative Advocate

The last month has been full of ups and downs, with the fiscal year 2009 budget being at the center of attention! The Governor put her '09 rescission budget out there and then the Senate came up with their version of the budget, and finally the House of Representatives came up with their own version of what was best for Kansans. All the legislators agreed that the number 1 priority needed to be Kansas' most vulnerable citizens, meaning people with disabilities and children. There was a big struggle between legislators; some wanted to cut K-12 spending and saw that as the only way to help consumers using the Home and Community Based Services. Negotiations broke down completely between the Senate and the House of Representatives and both sides walked away from the table without a compromise. This hasn't happened in the state of Kansas in 32 years! I believe that grassroots efforts made the difference and got the head of the Senate and the head of the House back together and a compromise was made on the '09 budget. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, a two for one rolling waiting list was funded and SRS has been told to figure out how to keep it going through June 2010. This is great news for consumers who are trying to obtain services on the Physically Disabled waiver. A two for one rolling waiting list means that when two people come off of the waiver, one person on the waiting list can go on the waiver. We as consumers, advocates and citizens of Kansas can't stop here though. We have to continue to form relationships with our legislators and let them know how important it is to continue to make Home and Community Based Services in Kansas a priority for funding. What we truly want is for the HCBS waivers to be an entitlement program like nursing homes are now, instead of an optional program. If you don't know who your legislator is or how to contact them, or maybe just want a little coaching on what to say email me, Kathy Cooper, at [cooper@rcilinc.org](mailto:cooper@rcilinc.org), give me a call at 1-877-439-2847, or call your local RCIL office. Keep up the good work! We still need to get through the 2010 budget and the only way to do that is to stay involved!

## Gift of Warmth

Gift of Warmth is a non-profit program managed by The Salvation Army and is funded by Kansas Gas Service customers and the ONEOK Foundation. It helps Kansans facing financial emergencies to pay their home heating costs and stay warm through the winter. It's available to Kansans in the 78 counties served by Kansas Gas Service, but the applicant is not required to be a Kansas Gas Service customer.

The program is primarily designed to help people who cannot cover their home heating expenses. All applications for aid are processed through the Salvation Army network of facilities and caseworkers. The Salvation Army makes payments directly to the utility or fuel supplier on behalf of the person chosen to receive the aid.

Although Kansas Gas Service was the utility that founded this program, Gift of Warmth helps people regardless of how they heat their home. Funds distributed exclusively by The Salvation Army are used to pay for natural gas, electricity, propane, firewood, or fuel oil payments. Grants are distributed each winter from mid November through mid April, as long as funds are available.

For more information call us at 1-800-794-4780. Or contact The Salvation Army at 1-877-566-2769, Ext. 402.



If you move or your mailing address changes, please contact your local RCIL office so that we may update our records and you can continue to receive our newsletter!

## Changes in Coffeyville

As of February 27, 2009, RCIL will no longer have an office at 811 Maple in Coffeyville. **RCIL is not closing.**

RCIL Targeted Case Managers will continue to provide the services you have received from us in the past.

Please call us toll free at 1-877-231-4655 for more information.

## What is the Homestead Refund?

The Homestead Refund is a rebate of a portion of the property taxes paid on a Kansas resident's homestead. Your refund percentage is based on your total household income. If you own your home, the refund is a percentage of your general property tax. If you rent your home, 15% of the rent you paid for occupancy is used as the property tax amount. The maximum refund is \$700. The value of the furniture, appliances, utilities, or services furnished by your landlord must be deducted from the total rent you paid during the year.

### Who may qualify?

The Homestead Refund Program is for homeowners and renters who were residents of Kansas all of 2008. As a Kansas resident the entire year, you are eligible if your total household income is \$29,700 or less and you:

- were born before January 1, 1953, or
- were blind or totally and permanently disabled all of 2008, or
- have a dependent child who lived with you the entire year who was born before January 1, 2008, and was under the age of 18 all of 2008.

This refund can be submitted until April 15th, 2009.

## Why Work?

By Rosie Cooper, Director of Independent Living Services

For me, the best part is money, but that's not the only reason. My best friends are all people I met at work. Today I work at RCIL but if I were to leave, many of my co-workers would be lifelong friends. RCIL is my work family. I also have a feeling of purpose and I'm lucky enough to get to do a job that helps other people succeed. As long as you believe in what you are doing, every job has a purpose. For example, I have a mountain of papers that need shredding at home. If someone opened a shredding business, it would have great value to me. I would pay for that service to protect my identity.

Money, relationships, and purpose are reasons to work. Working can also enable you to reduce your client obligation for HCBS Waiver services. If you pay over \$100.00 per month for your client obligation, you can keep your PCA and switch to the Work Opportunities Reward Kansas (WORK) program by going to work. Once you are on the WORK program, you will be required to earn more than \$65.00 and you will pay a monthly premium that is a fraction of your client obligation. As a bonus, you will also get wages, relationships and purpose. If you would like more information, please call your local RCIL office.

**Did you know?** A recent report showed that 46% of the people enrolled in the WORK program had fewer Medicaid claims than those who weren't enrolled.



## Survey Opportunity for Persons with Mobility or Sensory Impairments

KU has partnered with Washington University in St. Louis to conduct an online survey of people with sensory or mobility related disabilities. Eligible participants will receive a \$50.00 incentive for taking the survey.

### Eligibility Requirements:

- ✚ Are between the ages of 18 and 75
- ✚ Live in the community
- ✚ Have access to a computer
- ✚ Can enter responses into a web-based survey OR direct another person to enter your responses into a web-based survey
- ✚ Have a mobility impairment, visual impairment, or a hearing impairment

The survey can be found online at: <http://emc.wustl.edu/NCMRRstudyAd.htm>

If you do not have a computer with internet access at home or need assistance entering your responses to the survey, you may use the Resource Library in your local RCIL office.

# 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

## MAKING RCIL's DREAMS COME TRUE

Chad A. Wilkins, Executive Director

*Dare to live the life you have dreamed for yourself. Go forward and make your dreams come true.* - **Ralph Waldo Emerson**



RESOURCE CENTER  
*for independent living*

1984-2009: A Quarter Century of Supporting Choice



Our focus for 2008 was to keep moving forward. As we moved forward we created our vision and discovered our dreams through completion of the strategic planning process. The focus of 2009 will be to make our dreams come true by working toward and realizing the goals in our strategic plan.

As with all best laid plans, we have already encountered challenges. On December 1, 2008, Kansas Social & Rehabilitation Services announced a “hard freeze” on the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Physical Disability (PD) waiver. No new consumers could be added to receive services. We immediately started putting people on a waiting list and began to fear that many would be forced to move into nursing facilities because they had no other choice.

As of March 2, 2009, a rolling waiting list on the PD Waiver was announced to move people on to the PD waiver as others end their services, but the threat of another freeze in the future still remains. Advocacy efforts are needed to inform people with disabilities, the legislators, and community members about the freeze/waiting list and its’ inevitable consequences. We hope that through our advocacy efforts legislators and others will champion our mission and do what is right for Kansans with disabilities.



These challenges will not stop us from continuing to provide quality services and celebrating our accomplishments. We have started new programs and we will continue our efforts to provide additional and enhanced services for individuals with disabilities. Using our Consumer Survey, we asked what kinds of programs and services people want. We found that transportation, recreation, and independent skills training were very important. Raising awareness and supporting equal access to employment, health care, and housing will also receive extra emphasis. Our resource libraries and assistive technology services have been instrumental in providing resources for consumers and increasing independence.

We will also continue efforts to increase consumer involvement in our organization by developing inventive ways to increase involvement and feedback. The RCIL Friends groups provide us with an awesome opportunity for people with disabilities to drive the organization and become members of the organization. It is from our membership that people are elected to the RCIL Board of Directors.

September 21, 2009 marks RCIL’s 25th year of providing programs and services. Our slogan for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, as submitted by our own Adam Burnett, is “1984 – 2009: A Quarter Century of Supporting Choice”. In the last 25 years the foundation of this great organization was set. Now it is our turn to build on that foundation and to raise the bar for Independent Living Standards and become one of the greatest Independent Living Centers in the United States.

## Who are we? A Brief Description of Services

Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc. (RCIL) is committed to working with individuals, families and communities to promote independent living and individual choice to persons with disabilities. RCIL is one of thirteen independent living centers delivering services to individuals with disabilities in the state of Kansas. RCIL has ten offices located in Eastern Kansas.

The history of independent living and our agency's foundation is based on the independent living philosophy. This philosophy is based on the principal that people with all types of disabilities should have the same civil rights, options, and control over choices in their own lives as do people without disabilities. RCIL programs and services include:

**Individual Advocacy** is a process of empowering consumers to take control of their lives and may include assistance in obtaining access to benefits, services, and programs to which a consumer may be entitled. **Systems Advocacy** includes efforts to implement local, state, and/or federal policy changes to make facilities, services and opportunities available and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Peer Counseling** is information sharing and similar kinds of contact provided to consumers by individuals with disabilities.

**Independent Living Skills Training** involves efforts to develop skills in areas such as personal care, coping, social skills, household management, and financial management. It may also include education or training necessary for living and participating in the community and more.

**Information and Referral** can include providing information on disability topics, issues, and other resources available. In addition, we may refer individuals to other organizations depending on needs requested. This is the only core service that may be provided to all individuals, whether the individual has a disability or not.

**Deinstitutionalization** includes assisting individuals who live in a facility or are at risk of entering a facility to realize their community living options and choices.

RCIL is a provider for several different **Home and Community Based Services Waiver Programs**. HCBS Waiver Programs are the community based living option equivalent for individuals meeting the long term care threshold for institutional placement. We have served as an HCBS provider since 1997 and have developed a solid reputation with our delivery of HCBS Services.

We provide **Targeted Case Management and self directed payroll services** for the Physically Disabled and Traumatic Brain Injury Waivers. Our Targeted Case Managers determine eligibility for these two waivers and work with individuals to develop plans of care to meet their needs in order to achieve and maintain community based living.

In addition, we are a provider of self directed payroll services for various services through the **Frail and Elderly Waiver, Developmental Disability Waiver, and Senior Care Act programs**. We also have a **Private Pay** contract service available for people with disabilities to manage payroll services for personal care workers that are paid with private funds. RCIL also works closely with Kansas Rehabilitation Services through Provider Agreements to specifically serve individuals with disabilities seeking employment. New programs at RCIL include the **Peer Specialist Employment Mentoring** program, and the **Build A Ramp** program. RCIL also has a **Durable Medical Equipment Loan** program available free of charge.

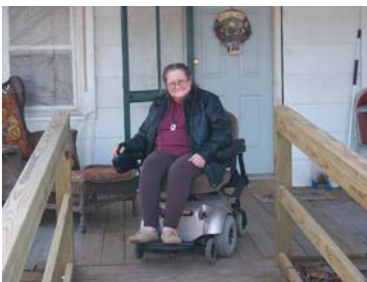
## 2008 Highlights



2008 was a big year for **Advocacy**. On May 8<sup>th</sup> Centers for Independent Living called people with disabilities and their advocates into action. Over 100 people made a fast, last minute trip up to the Capital building in Topeka to raise awareness about the importance of funding the Home and Community Based Services and assistive technology. In July, 1700 voter registration cards were sent to people with disabilities, along with easy to follow instructions on how to get registered to vote. Voting is essential to advocacy!

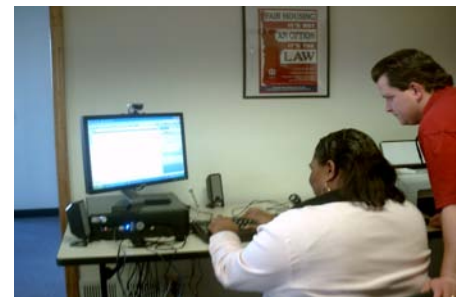
### Build A Ramp Program

RCIL successfully launched the Build A Ramp Program and built three ramps, in Hillsboro, Council Grove and Osage City. Plans for the Build A Ramp program include raising funds to build additional ramps through a direct-mail campaign and during the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration events. Keep watching the RCIL newsletter for announcements of when new applications for ramps will be accepted. Here are pictures of the ramps built by the RCIL Build a Ramp program.....



### Resource Libraries & Assistive Technology

RCIL Assistive Technology Specialist Mikel McCary is shown here assisting Laridda W. to learn new job skills using Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software. Assistive Technology is hardware and software solutions designed to help people with learning, communication, and access challenges to lead more independent lives.



RCIL offices in Topeka, Overland Park, Emporia, Iola, Osage City and El Dorado have Resource Libraries that house new computers with specialized hardware and software available for people with disabilities to use to learn computer skills, conduct job searches and research disability related issues. Professor Smart software was recently added and is a tutorial program that allows an individual to learn Word, Excel, Access, Power Point, and web search at their own pace. The Resource Libraries also contain numerous materials on topics from advocacy to youth services. New or expanded Resource Libraries will be installed in our Fort Scott and Arkansas City offices in 2009. Please stop by during office hours to check them out!

## Employment and Independence

RCIL made improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities a priority in 2008. New programs and services were added to support people while they work to achieve their employment goals. RCIL was awarded a Quantitative Use of Independent Living Title VIIB (QUILT) grant that partially funds our Peer Specialist program and adds a new employment mentoring component to it. RCIL also received funding from the Kansas Health Policy Authority to build our infrastructure to provide the Peer Specialist and Employment Mentoring program and to develop them into programs that can be replicated by other Centers for Independent Living or service providers.

RCIL also began to accept referrals from Kansas Rehabilitation Services and providing employment services for the "Payment for Performance" service that was launched on July 1, 2008. RCIL provides the following:

- ◆ *Independent Living and Community Based Work Assessment*
- ◆ *Job Preparation*
- ◆ *Guided & Customized Job Placement*
- ◆ *Short-term Job Coaching and*
- ◆ *Assistive Technology Specialist services including assessment, evaluation, and training are available.*



*Director of Independent Living Quality Assurance Adam Burnett is pictured here using a computer in the Resource Library in the Osage City office.*



### Peer Support

RCIL is especially proud of the growth of the RCIL Friends groups. RCIL Friends brings together Kansans with disabilities for regularly scheduled opportunities for fun, friendship, and new learning experiences. Meetings are held monthly in the El Dorado, Eureka, Emporia, Fort Scott, Iola, Osage City, Overland Park, and Topeka areas and have an average attendance of 90 people. Groups in Arkansas City and Carbondale are in the beginning stages of development. Plans for 2009 include starting Friends Groups in Burlington, Ottawa, Wyandotte County, and an on-line group. Come and join the fun and friendship.

*Pictured above: Iola RCIL Staff enjoying some Peer Support during a Friends Group meeting.*

### Planning for the future...

RCIL started a planning and goal setting process in 2007. We knew we were doing well but wanted to make a plan that guided our efforts to make sure that we are all working in unison and making the most of our resources. Part of the process included a week-long review of the Center. Our peers (staff from five other Centers for Independent Living in Kansas) reviewed our files and interviewed consumers, staff and members from our board of directors. We took their recommendations and finalized our Strategic Plan. We enclosed a copy for you to review!



## Important Facts and Numbers

*RCIL served 2,047  
unduplicated  
consumers in  
48 Kansas Counties  
from 10/1/07 -  
9/30/08.*

RCIL receives grant money from the State of Kansas in the amount of \$220,000 per year. We use that money to employ Independent Living Specialists whose primary responsibilities are to provide the Core Services.

- 1,733 individuals received Advocacy services
- 200 individuals received IL Skills Training
- 344 individuals received Peer Counseling
- 1,293 individuals received Information and Referral Services
- 14 individuals received deinstitutionalization services
- 175 individuals utilized our Durable Medical Equipment/Assistive Technology Loan Program
- 5 individuals were served through the WORK Program, a new service for this fiscal year
- 57 individuals were served through Payment for Performance referrals from Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS)

RCIL is also a provider for several Home and Community Based Services Waiver programs.

1,392 individuals were served with the HCBS PD Waiver and 13 individuals were served through the HCBS TBI Waiver. RCIL provided payroll agent services for 228 individuals through the FE, MRDD, and the Senior Care Act.



RCIL received funding from United Way of Bourbon County, United Way of El Dorado and United Way of Winfield in 2008. Thank you United Way and United Way contributors!



Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc. (RCIL) is proud of its membership and participation with the Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living (KACIL), the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and also, the Kansas Non-Profit Association and numerous Chambers of Commerce. RCIL is honored to sponsor the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum, Fishing Has No Boundaries, Miss Wheelchair Kansas, Disability Mentoring Day and numerous local events.

RCIL is a non-profit, federal tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your tax deductible contributions are greatly appreciated.

RCIL is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors that meets on the fourth Monday of each month. Members of the 2009 RCIL Board of Directors include: Donald Lawton, Jr. - Chairperson of the Board, Anita Casey - Vice Chairperson of the Board, Ruth Mounkes - Finance Committee Chairperson, Karen Barezinsky, Sandy Bullock, Linda Huffman, Dana Pinkston, Phyllis Satterfield, and Jeanette Swarts.



1984-2009: A Quarter Century  
of Supporting Choice

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## Satellite Office Locations:

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126 E. Washington  
620-442-0775

El Dorado  
615 ½ N. Main  
316-322-7853

Fort Scott  
710 W. 8<sup>th</sup>, Suite 201  
620-223-5670

Ottawa  
1302 S. Main, Suite 8  
785-242-1805

Topeka  
519 SW 37<sup>th</sup> Street  
785-267-1717

Burlington  
410 Cumberland  
620-364-2263

Emporia  
625 Merchant, Suite 238  
620-342-1648

Iola  
726 W. Patterson Ave.  
620-365-8144

Overland Park  
10200 W. 75th, Suite 100  
913-362-6618

We're on the Web!  
Visit us at:  
[www.rcilinc.org](http://www.rcilinc.org)



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