



*Serving Kansans with disabilities*

## Message from the Executive Director

By Chad A. Wilkins

2009 is a year for celebration here at RCIL. Each of our 10 offices has held or will soon be holding a Legislative Lunch & Learn. These lunch & learn events provide an opportunity for our legislators and the people they represent to meet. We've been discussing current happenings around the state and raising awareness about accessibility and the barriers that people with disabilities often face. Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh spoke at the Osage City lunch & learn on April 7<sup>th</sup>. He talked about how removing these barriers will move everyone into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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Secretary Thornburgh was instrumental in the drafting of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and has vowed to make his office “the least complicated and most accessible agency in state government.” At the El Dorado lunch & learn, El Dorado Mayor Tom McKibban turned the tables and asked his audience what the City could do to help make El Dorado more accessible. The crowd answered with items such as a zero-entry at the swimming pool and for safer, more accessible parking downtown.

With the IL philosophy at the core of what we do, addressing and educating people about these accessibility barriers can make the difference between independent living and institutional living for countless people. Having said that, RCIL will be hosting four Walking & Rolling events to raise awareness about accessibility and raise money for our Build A Ramp Program. The key to independent living for many people with disabilities is identifying their barriers and finding a solution or adaptation to remove those barriers. A consumer, Dean, was unable to leave his house *at all* because there was no way to get the durable medical equipment that he uses down the steps. When he suddenly experienced a medical emergency, it took several medical emergency staff to get him out of his house and to the hospital. With the support and advocacy of his Personal Care Attendant and the RCIL Build A Ramp Program, Dean now has increased independence and a safe exit from his home. Dean told us the ramp is his “favorite thing” about his home.

- **September 12, 2009 - Walking & Rolling in Emporia**
- **September 26, 2009 - Walking & Rolling in Iola**
- **October 3, 2009 - Walking & Rolling in El Dorado**
- **October 24, 2009 - Walking & Rolling in Paola**

Please call your local RCIL office for more information about these events and to find out how you can get involved!



## RCIL Partners with KU Research and Training Center on Independent Living

By Kathy Cooper, RCIL Legislative Advocate

RCIL has partnered with The University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living to provide the Living Well with a Disability program. The purpose of the Living Well with a Disability (LWWD) program is to improve the health and wellness of people with mobility disabilities. The techniques it teaches are effective for people with any type of disability or chronic health condition, however. RCIL saw the value in this program because often times, adults with disabilities are at risk for a variety of secondary conditions. These conditions range from pressure sores to chronic pain, chronic fatigue, de-conditioning and depression, among many others. They can have a significant effect on a person's health and interfere with his or her levels of personal independence.

Unfortunately, the occurrence of secondary conditions is not infrequent. They affect the majority of people with disabilities at least some time in their life. We believe that this workshop will help provide consumers the information and skills to enhance their personal health and to avoid or reduce the incidence and severity of secondary conditions. The eight week course will assist consumers to make lifestyle changes of their own choosing that can reduce the limitations they experience because of secondary conditions. RCIL staff will help consumers identify goals and the steps it will take to achieve those goals throughout the workshop. The different topics include Setting Goals, Solving Problems, Healthy Reactions, Beating the Blues, Healthy Communication, Seeking Information, Physical Activity, Nutrition, Advocacy and Maintenance. RCIL will provide a healthy snack or lunch and if funding continues a stipend for completing the course. The offices that currently have a workshop scheduled are Overland Park, Osage City, Topeka, Iola and El Dorado (which will be held in Eureka).



### Emporia Friends Group Raises Awareness About Accessibility

The Emporia RCIL Friends Group looked at the accessibility of downtown Emporia and raised awareness about the issues they saw. City Manager Matt Zimmerman and City Engineer Jon Proehl attended the Friends meeting where RCIL Independent Living Specialist Lennie Armstrong, along with members of the Friends Group, presented a slide show demonstrating the areas needing improvement. The City of Emporia plans to make these sidewalk replacements with 2009 funds and considers this a priority.

## NET PALS CONTEST!!!

RCIL is having a contest to get consumers registered to receive emails and information updates via Net Pals. Please go to the RCIL Website ([www.rcilinc.org](http://www.rcilinc.org)) and click on the Get Involved tab on the left hand side, then at the bottom of that page click on the RCIL Net Pals link, put in your email address and your name. You will receive a confirmation email asking you to click on a link; once you have done that you will be signed up to receive great information on disability issues, legislative issues, statewide events and RCIL events! We will draw one lucky winner from the people who register by July 31, 2009, to receive a gift card in the amount of \$20 to Wal-Mart! Remember this contest is only for consumers!



***You are invited! Please Come!***  
***RCIL Friends***  
 By Adam Burnett

RCIL "Friends" groups, formerly known as Consumer Advocacy Council (CAC) meetings, are held once a month at several RCIL offices. The purpose of these meetings is for RCIL consumers to share ideas, resources, and experiences, to learn about new services and programs, and **to have some fun!**

Want to learn more about Social Security work incentives?  
 Do you want to hear a special guest speaker? Have an advocacy project that you'd like some support with?  
 Just want to get out of the house and meet some new friends?

Come to your next local "Friends" meeting!

### ***RCIL Friends MEETING SCHEDULE***

Ark City - 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month

El Dorado- Last Wednesday of every month

Eureka - Last Monday of every month

Emporia -Last Monday of every month

Ft. Scott- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month

Iola-4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month

Osage City-2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month

Ottawa - 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month

Overland Park-3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month

Topeka-2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month

Wyandotte-3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month

# We Have Issues!



We have had so many ups and downs and twists and turns, I don't even know where to begin on legislative issues. As this newsletter is being put together, the legislature is in their Omnibus session trying to finish up all loose bills and the 2010 budget before the session ends in early May. The revenue projections have been short every month this year except for April, which means the budget keeps needing to be cut. If you haven't already, you will notice a difference in various programs and services throughout the state. Everybody has had to endure a cut, some are a little harder to take for us in and serving the disability community.

What can we do? How can you and I make a difference? **CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS!** This is the only way they will know what you, their constituent, want them to do. **YOU** need to tell them where you want the funding to go or how **YOU** want them to vote on a specific issue. It really is that simple and it really can make a difference. Get to know your State Senator and your State Representative, go to the town hall meetings, the legislative breakfasts and the RCIL Lunch and Learns! Phone calls, emails, letters, fax or in person, they all work! But only if you do them! RCIL will continue to advocate for consumers and the Independent Living Movement, but for it to truly be a "grassroots" effort, we need your help; we need your voice in whatever way you can!

## Office of Health Promotion Seeking Input Release from KDHE

Let your voice be heard! Advocate for Kansans with disabilities at the State level for public health! Come share your ideas and experience about prevention and control of, cancer, arthritis, or heart disease and stroke. Educate Public Health groups about CILs, the independent living philosophy, and any other relevant disability issue. Kansas is the first state to have consumers purposefully join other chronic disease programs to make sure people with disabilities are a public health priority so let's make history!! Join our Work Groups to serve as an advisor to the Office of Health Promotion chronic disease programs to:

- Increase public and provider awareness of Kansans with disabilities.
- Advocate for legislation, policies and programs to improve access to care and to improve the treatment and outcomes for Kansans with disabilities

### Membership Roles and Responsibilities:

- Meet at the annual or bi-annual face-to-face meetings
- Monthly meetings that can be accessed via telephone
- Review and provide feedback on all work products from workgroups that you are involved in
- Respond to communications- usually e-mails

Time, transportation, lodging and food reimbursement is provided. Questions? Want to participate? Please contact:

**Jamie Lloyd Simpson, MSE**  
**Disability Program Coordinator,**  
**KDHE Office of Health Promotion**  
**(785) 296-7990**



## Save the date! 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Caucus

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Caucus is scheduled for August 12, 13 & 14, 2009 and is being held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Topeka. The purpose of the Caucus is to develop new disability leadership in Kansas, to educate Kansans with disabilities about the mechanics of the policy making process and encourage their participation in it, to determine major issues facing Kansans with disabilities and to create solutions for issues identified.

The theme for the 2009 Caucus is **YES WE CAN WORK!**

RCIL has a limited number of scholarships available. Please contact your local RCIL office for more information.

## Kansas Client Assistance Program

The Disability Rights Center of Kansas (DRC) announces its Client Assistance Program (CAP). The CAP program provides advocacy and legal representation to guarantee the security of rights of people seeking or receiving services under the Rehab Act (this includes Vocational Rehabilitation services, Independent Living Center services, etc.)

### Eligibility Requirements:

- You must have a physical or mental impairment and want to work.
- Your impairment must result in a substantial impediment to employment.
- You are presumed to be able to benefit in terms of an employment outcome.
- You must need vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain gainful employment consistent with your strengths, abilities, capabilities, and informed choices.

For more information, please contact your local RCIL or the Disability Rights Center of Kansas at 785-273-9661.



## Find RCIL Online!

If you love to surf the web, check out our Website at <http://www.rcilinc.org>. Do you belong to Facebook? RCIL is now on Facebook! In the search field, type in RCIL to see our group and fan pages. Both our website and Facebook pages have updated information about current and future happenings as well as our location and general information about RCIL. Happy surfing!



## 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Fishing Has No Boundaries



The Wheatland Chapter of Fishing Has No Boundaries (FHNB) will be holding it's 2009 fishing festivities at El Dorado Lake September 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009. FHNB gives anglers of any age and range of disability the ability to go fishing, use accessible equipment and boats, and to enjoy the day! For more information, please call our El Dorado office at 1-316-322-7853.



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620-223-5670

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

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

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410 Cumberland  
620-364-2263

Emporia  
625 Merchant, Suite 238  
620-342-1648

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726 W. Patterson  
620-365-8144

Overland Park  
10200 W. 75<sup>th</sup>, Suite 100  
913-362-6618

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.rcilinc.org](http://www.rcilinc.org)

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