

MERIL

Spring 2022
*Toward a Barrier-Free
Northwest Missouri.*

Why Advocate?



**Because there's
no place like home!**

Save your
independent living
services!

Join the People First
self-advocacy group!

Part-time caregiver
jobs with benefits!

Join Us and Be an Advocate!



Advocacy: Our Most Vital Core Service

The Independent Living Movement is predicated on the core service of advocacy.

Ed Roberts, the father of the independent living movement, was once asked about the most

important Center for Independent Living (CIL) core service. He stated that they were “advocacy, advocacy, advocacy, but not necessarily in that order.”

He was exactly right in that advocacy is the most important of the core services (the others being: information and referral, independent living skills training, peer support, and transition) because without advocacy, funding and support for other services would be not possible.

Each year during the winter and early spring months of January through May, the Missouri General Assembly convenes for the legislative session in Jefferson City. They discuss and decide on funding for such items as highway funds, higher education, and agricultural interests, among others.

The majority of funding that MERIL and the other Missouri CILs heavily rely on are contained in two House Bills: HB 2 and HB 10. HB 2 appropriates monies for the Independent Living grant administered through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The other major budget line item we watch and advocate for are the In-

Home and Consumer Directed Services programs. These two programs are funded through HB10 appropriations.

Do you want to know how you can help MERIL and the other Centers for Independent Living around the state?

There are two major ways to help. One is to individually contact the two state Senators: Dan Hegeman (573-751-1415) and Tony Luetkemeyer (573-751-2183) AND the five Missouri House members that represent the MERIL service area: Allen Andrews (573-751-9465), J. Eggleston (573-751-4285), Dean Van Schioack (573-751-3666), Bill Faulkner (573-751-9755), and Brenda Shields (573-751-3643). You can find more contact information at <https://www.mo.gov/government/legislative-branch/>.

The primary message is this: “to keep the lives of individuals in mind and support the necessary increases in Independent Living appropriations in HB 2 and the rate increases to keep up with minimum wage increases as well as other costs for the In-Home and CDS programs.”

The other way to impact change is to participate in statewide advocacy days, either in person or online. The independent living advocacy day was on April 12 this year, and the annual Disability Rights Legislative Day was on March 9 (<https://drlld.org/>).

As always, if you have specific questions about advocacy in general or specific bills, please do not hesitate to contact me at the MERIL office: 816-279-8558.

- Rob Honan, MERIL CEO



CDS Matters to You. Share Your Story!

Now is the time to let Missouri lawmakers know how important the CDS program is to you!

We encourage everyone to share their story with those in government who are making decisions to increase or decrease funding for the independent living services that so many Missourians with disabilities rely on to remain safe and comfortable in their homes and communities.

Social media can be an effective way connect with lawmakers and help them understand how important Consumer Directed Services (CDS) are to your life, the lives of your friends and family, or the lives of the people you serve.

So that you will be heard, use these three hashtags when sharing your story on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

#MOLeg #InvestInCDS #HB3010

Save your  **Independent Living Services**



Missouri lawmakers propose cuts and under-fund **the independent living services you use** to remain living independently in your home.



Join us in telling them **why living independently in your home is important to you** and to other people with disabilities.

Call us to find out how you can help
save the funding for your services.

816-279-8558 www.meril.org



MERIL & Disability Advocacy



Advocacy, one of MERIL's core services, can be divided into three categories: self-advocacy, social advocacy, and systems advocacy. These types of advocacy often overlap and inform one another, and many of MERIL's services simultaneously address all three levels.

We provide information about ADA compliance, workplace accommodations, skills training, and self-advocacy support for people with disabilities. We are available to speak at organizations about the importance of inclusion and accessibility.

Stay connected to your local Independent Living Center for important legislative information!



GET SERVICES

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POLICY AND ADVOCACY



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Briefs

People First

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Sign up for advocacy updates from Paraquad at <https://www.paraquad.org/policy-and-advocacy/>

Advocates asking for higher pay stick hundreds of notes on Parson's door



<https://fox2now.com/news/missouri/advocates-asking-for-higher-pay-stick-hundreds-of-notes-on-parsons-door/>

Follow us on [Facebook](#) to receive important updates about legislative issues that affect people with disabilities.



Self advocacy: Empowering people to have as much control over their own lives as possible, including where they live and how their care is provided. Peer support and skills training play an important role.



Social advocacy: Removing barriers in society (public spaces, workplaces, etc.) so people with disabilities are fully included in the community.

Systems advocacy: Ensuring laws protect the rights of people with disabilities, and supporting adequate funding of independent living resources.

MERIL Caregivers Are Amazing!

We help caregivers find part-time jobs!

MERIL accepts applications for caregivers to work for a Consumer Directed Services (CDS) participant, and/or to work for participants in MERIL's In-Home Services program. Caregivers help people with disabilities with personal care tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, and bathing. Caregivers do not need any prior experience and the hours are flexible. Visit meril.org/caregivers to learn more.

Caregivers make a big difference in the lives of people with disabilities, making it possible for them to live independently in their own homes and communities. By working for a MERIL participant, caregivers also support all of the other Independent Living (IL) services MERIL provides.

For providing care to our participants and for supporting our services, we appreciate the caregivers who partner with us to fulfill our IL mission. Thank you!



CAREGIVER JOBS

WITH BENEFITS, INCLUDING:

PAID VACATION!



EARN PAID TIME OFF
EVERY WEEK!



EXTRA PAY ON
WEEKENDS & HOLIDAYS!



COMPANY-MATCHED
RETIREMENT PLAN!

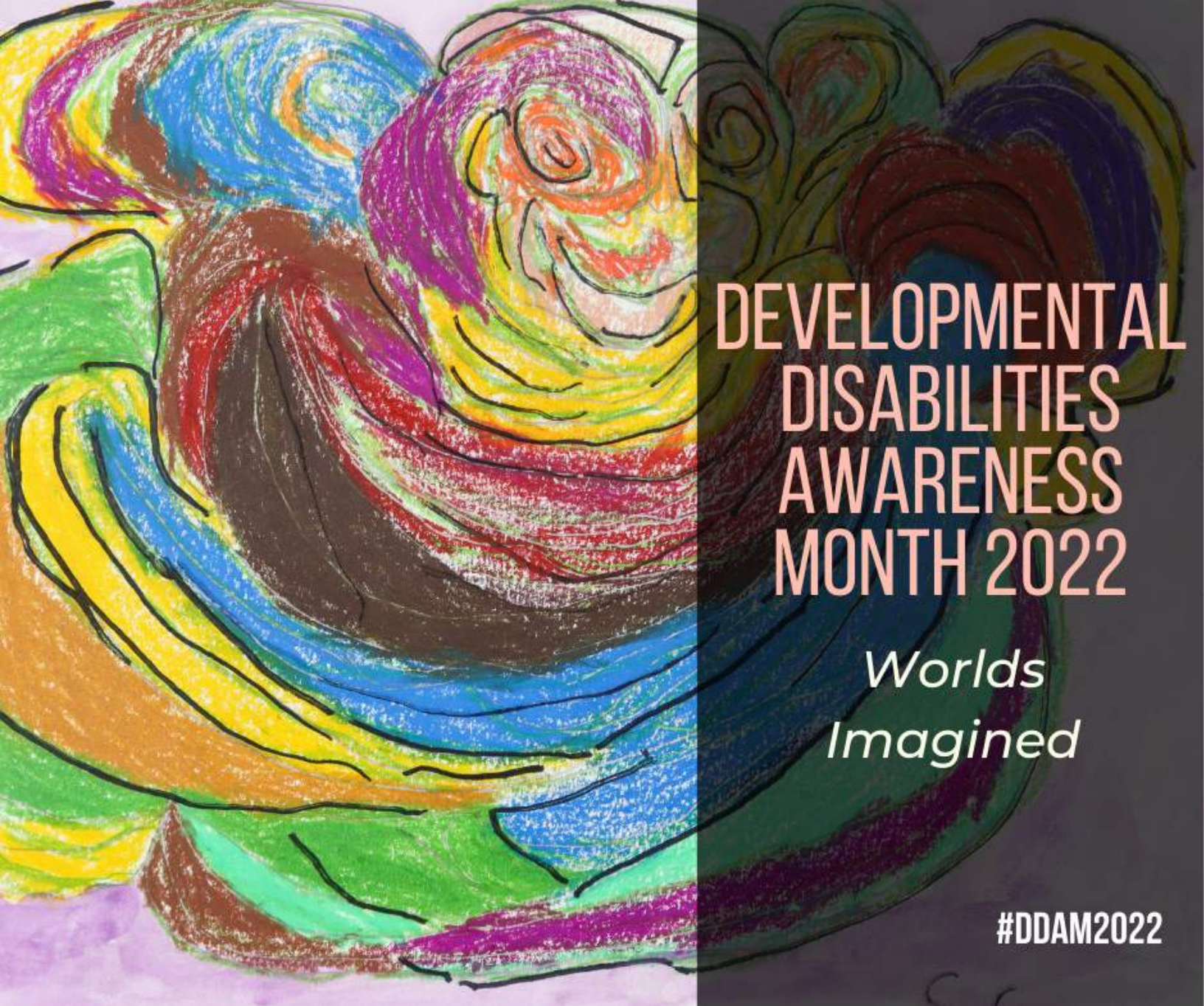
**NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.
FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE.**

APPLY AT
MERIL.ORG/JOBS



Apply in our St. Joseph or Maryville office to become a caregiver!

If you are responsible and have a passion for helping people with disabilities live independently in their homes, we want you to work for a MERIL participant! Visit www.meril.org/caregivers to learn more.



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH 2022

*Worlds
Imagined*

#DDAM2022

People First empowers people with developmental disabilities!

People First of Missouri (www.MissouriPeopleFirst.org) is a self-advocacy support group, which was created by and is run by people with developmental disabilities. The St. Joseph chapter meets monthly at MERIL.

People First is a statewide organization that promotes equality for people with disabilities so they can live the life they want in the community. Our members:

- ◆ Teach and empower people to understand their rights and responsibilities and to speak up for themselves (self-advocacy);
- ◆ Stand up for one another to help people live the life they want with the supports they need (advocacy for one another);
- ◆ Advocate for community services that allow people to have choices and control over their supports and lives (advocacy at the systems level);
- ◆ Create change in communities to ensure opportunity and full, meaningful participation for all people (advocacy within the community).

Learn more at meril.org/peoplefirst

Put your labels to good use!



Give your Best Choice bar code labels to us and support a great cause! Thank you!!

We're looking for members!

BE A LEADER!

HAVE FUN!

MEET PEERS!



People First of St. Joseph is a self-advocacy support group for people with developmental disabilities. Label donations will help fund activities for advocacy, community projects, and conferences/educational activities!

MERIL - 4420 S 40th St., St. Joseph - 816-279-8558 - meril.org/peoplefirst

Our MERIL Community



Lauren Lynch and Lisa Gabriel accepted the Superstars for Kids Youth Organization Award on behalf of the Regional Transition Network of Maryville!



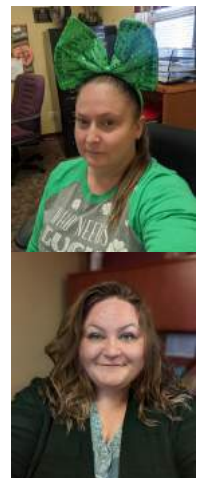
People First members Chris and Gary were awarded with medals for testifying in Jefferson City for wider broadband access for people with disabilities!



Charles Walters, a member of the People First self-advocacy group, passed away on March 8, 2022.



We met students and shared information about disability service careers at the My Success Event!



We are wearing green for St. Patrick's Day!

Making a Difference at MERIL

Your contribution will help change lives!

Donations to MERIL help fund programs that assist people with disabilities in their goal to live a full life in their homes and communities.

Please consider a financial gift to MERIL. You may mail a check, use our [PayPal link](#), or donate on [Facebook](#).

In addition to donating, you can help us immensely by spreading the word about our services. The more people who know about us, the more we can help.

Visit www.meril.org/help to read more about people who have benefited from our services.



We thank all of the kind people who help us fulfill our mission by making charitable contributions, and donating assistive devices and durable medical equipment.



Support MERIL.

When you shop at **smile.amazon.com**,
Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

amazonsmile

If you go to smile.amazon.com and shop, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase amount to a nonprofit of your choice. We hope you choose MERIL as your donation recipient!

Independent Living with Assistive Tools!

[Missouri Assistive Technology](#) provides a wide variety of assistive technology devices—including phones, magnifiers, and computer equipment—to MERIL so that we can demonstrate them to people with disabilities throughout Northwest Missouri.

MERIL provides informed demonstrations of the devices, either in our office or in people's homes, so they are able to find out which device best fits their needs. And many people qualify for free devices!

The most popular devices are the telephones available through the [Telecommunications Access Program \(TAP\)](#). These telephones are designed for people who have hearing loss, low vision, and other types of disabilities.

Pictured here is a participant holding a cordless TAP phone with amplified volume and large buttons, which allows her to communicate via phone even with significant hearing loss and vision loss.

Assistive technology devices are important tools that allow people with disabilities to live independently in their homes.

Learn more at meril.org/tools



Helping people with disabilities
and people who are aging
live independently
in Northwest Missouri.

Subscribe: meril.org/news
Contact: 816-279-8558
meril@meril.org
Main office: 4420 S 40th St.
St. Joseph, MO 64503
Branch office: 2416-B South Main St.
Maryville, MO 64468

Northwest Missouri's Center for Independent Living

Since 1994, MERIL has provided five core services for people with disabilities in our nine-county service area:

- ◆ Information and referral
- ◆ Independent Living skills training
- ◆ Transition services (youth and nursing home)
- ◆ Peer support
- ◆ Advocacy

Our vision is: **A Barrier-Free Northwest Missouri.**

More than half of our board members and staff have a disability. We use our personal experiences to see the **abilities** that people have, and we respect people for who they are.

We believe people with disabilities should **have control** over their own lives, achieve their own goals, and fully participate in their communities.

Learn more about Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Missouri at www.mosilc.org and at www.mocil.org.



disability resources & referrals **Nonprofit**

Choose your own caregiver

help with cleaning, cooking, shopping, personal care

Phones & devices for
low hearing, low vision

independence

advocacy & peer support

Nurse visits at home

medication, blood pressure, diabetes care

Youth
Services

Independent Living Skills Training

Nursing home transition

Accessibility

www.meril.org
816-279-8558

Call us. Tell us about your health condition or disability. We'll help you get the resources you need to live independently.

MERIL offers a wide variety of services and resources for people with disabilities.

Our most popular service is our Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program, which allows a person to hire a caregiver of their choice to perform personal care tasks in their home.

We help caregivers find part-time jobs!

MERIL helps the CDS participant (the person with a disability) find a potential employee (caregiver). Anyone who is interested in becoming a caregiver should contact MERIL to fill out an application. The hours are flexible and no experience is required.

Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living (MERIL) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization governed by a board of directors: Tammy Blakely (director), Mary Clements (director), Chris Fagan (director), Joseph D. Hegeman (director), Christy McGuire (director), Kelly Narowski (director), Kim Wright (director), and Robert Honan (CEO).