WE NEED YOU!

Prairie Independent Living Resource Center, Inc. provides a wide variety of important services to people with disabilities in Kansas. As a nonprofit we are mostly grant funded and these grants don’t always cover necessary costs to run our programs. We would greatly appreciate any amount you could donate to our organization to ensure our sustainability to continue to serve residents of Kansas with disabilities. You may be wondering about your best options for contributing to PILR. One option is to give from your IRA (if age 70-1/2 or older): Regardless of whether you itemize your taxes, this gift helps you fulfill your required minimum distribution and is not considered taxable income. Please consult with your tax or financial advisors to determine the best charitable giving strategies for you.

Please send your generous donation to: PILR Development Department, 17 S. Main St Hutchinson. KS 67501

LOAN CLOSET

PILR has durable medical equipment available to loan. There is a minimal application fee. All equipment is not available at all times; please contact our offices for equipment options. PILR also has limited personal hygiene items available.

DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Thinking of getting rid of that medical equipment you no longer need? If so, please consider donating it to PILR. Our consumers need wheelchairs, walkers, rollators, shower seats, CCTVs, video magnifiers, and canes. If you have any of these items or others you would like to donate, please call 620-663-3989. Your donation will be appreciated!
PILR CALENDAR

http://www.pilr.org/contact-us/calendar/

March 2020
8th – Daylight Saving Time Begins
11th - Low Vision Support Group Meeting 1:30 p.m.
Delos V Smith Senior Center 101 W 1st Ave Hutchinson
12th – Older Blind Program Lunch and Learn 12 p.m.
404 N. Chestnut, Johnson, Kansas
17th - St Patrick’s Day
20th – First Day of Spring

April 2020
8th – Low Vision Support Group Meeting 1:30 p.m.
Delos V Smith Senior Center 101 W 1st Ave Hutchinson
10th – Good Friday
12th – Easter
24th – Burgers and Brats Fundraiser for PILR 5:30-7:30 p.m
Grace Community Church
500 West Ross Blvd, Dodge City, Kansas

May 2020
10th – Mother’s Day
13th – Low Vision Support Group Meeting 1:30 p.m.
Delos V Smith Senior Center 101 W 1st Ave Hutchinson
25th – Memorial Day - All PILR Offices Closed

CHORE BUSTERS!
Do you need a little help around the house? Limited home maintenance and cleaning services by Chore Busters. Now recruiting for customers. Call us today at 620-663-3989

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Changes

Debbie Goertz – Accounting Coordinator

PILR has been through many changes in the past 30 days.

Chris Owens, after 23 years, has retired from PILR. She brought compassion, passion, integrity, and authenticity to PILR. Chris is a strong woman who isn’t afraid to share her opinions and speak her truth. She always listened without judgement. PILR will miss her, but wishes her well on her new life adventure.

Erica Rivera has been appointed as PILR’s new Executive Director. Erica has been employed with PILR since 2007. I have heard many stories about her interview, a very nervous, shy, young lady. Chris saw potential in her and hired her as an Independent Living Specialist in 2007. Erica brings to PILR compassion, energy, ideas, motivation, and most all Love for PILR. We look forward to PILR’s next chapter with her leadership.
Living Independently with a Vision Disability

Tammy Fuhr – Independent Living Specialist/OIB

Do you know someone with Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma, or any other eye diseases? If so, they may be a great candidate for services through our Older Blind Program. With this program we serve individuals age 55 and older who experience blindness or visual impairments by providing Independent Living Services. Here are some success stories of individuals that have received services through our Older Blind Program.

Do you know someone that has a hard time reading the newspaper? Well that was the case for this 83 year old. After showing different types of magnifiers she decided that a video magnifier worked best. We applied for some funding assistance and was approved for half of the cost. The individual then was able to cover the other half. With the video magnifier they can now read the newspaper independently.

How about seeing the writing on the back of the washing machine? This 65 year old was having trouble setting their washing machine dial to the correct cycle. With the placement of bump dots on the dial and cycle that is used, she can now be confident in knowing that she is using the washing machine on the correct cycle.

What about someone that loves to read but the task is now too strenuous for them with a magnifier? The ILS would recommend Kansas Talking Books which is a free service to those that qualify. Many individuals listen to talking books throughout the entire day to pass time and continue something they love.

PILR covers 60 counties for the Older Blind Program. If you feel you or someone you know could benefit from these services please give us a call!

Wake to Change

Adam Fortna – Independent Living Specialist

I am not a morning person. In fact before I was married and had a kid it was not uncommon for me to sleep till noon. Now a days I don’t have that luxury. Every morning I wake up at about 6 a.m. to the sound of my son. He sometimes shouts his disgust that I have not gotten him out of his crib yet. Other times he just sits patiently chatting with Edwin the stuffed turtle, dropping my name every now and again so I know he is up. As much as I sometimes want to cover my head and ignore it I can’t. When I finally wake from my grogginess and stagger across the hall. He is standing in his crib waiting with a big smile. While I hate the early morning, I love that smile.

Change is something most people would call uncomfortable. We are creatures of habit and when the norms are broken, we get cranky. Change comes whether you like it or not and most times you can’t control it. To be honest the only change you have complete control over is the change within yourself. If you accept change and get out of bed, you might find out change is not that bad. Pick it up and you never know, you might end up getting a morning hug.
Danielle Mowery – Employment Specialist Dodge City

My name is Danielle Mowery and I am an employment specialist here at PILR. Although I am new to the organization, I have learned so many things and worked with some very wonderful individuals. Every day is a new experience and some experiences just brighten your whole life.

For example, I am currently working with a young man by the name of Phillip. Phillip is a quadriplegic and has limited use of his extremities. But he does not let that slow him down.

At our first meeting he was very hesitant about meeting with us. He hardly spoke and was very tense. But once we gained his trust the tension lessened and now he is just so full of energy and has quite the sense of humor.

Once you meet Phillip you would definitely see the meaning behind perseverance. He is extremely artistic and a real go getter. Phillip volunteers at the Finney County Humane Society when not employed. There he interacts with people coming in to adopt animals. He really enjoys working with the kittens and wanted to adopt one himself. He is currently working a job experience at Hot Wheelz in Garden City. There he is interacting with the public by talking about the cars. He is also learning about the ins and outs of car buying and selling. At one of my recent visits I found out that he is in the process of creating a logo for the business. He also is helping with the Facebook page.

Seeing Phillip grow from the beginning to where he is now and where he is going in the future is just a constant reminder that this is Not Just A Job but a truly rewarding experience.

I am happy that I get to be a part of their journey even if for a short time. I truly enjoy helping people and watching their eyes light up when they do something that society has told them cannot or will not be able to do.

BURGERS OR BRÄTS!
A fundraiser for Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR)
At the Grace Community Church
500 W Ross Blvd, Dodge City, KS 67801
April 24th from 5:30-7:30 p.m.
New Faces at PILR

Phil Handsaker – Service Coordinator – Dodge City

What an honor to be a part of the Prairie Independent Living Resource Center! Being a part of the PILR is a great feeling based on the amazing things I have seen accomplished in the short time I’ve been here.

I’ve had a true desire to help people improve their circumstances since I can remember, probably partially due to having not had those supports when I was younger. That extra support, or lift, through the hard times can make all the difference sometimes.

That may be the reason I have worked in human services for as long as I can remember in one way or another.

Helping people accomplish their dreams, seeing them gain the skills they need to strike out on their own paths (after all, we all march to a different drummer), hearing of people’s successes and challenges…I feel humbled to have had a part in the success they have found.

People I helped set and achieve goals for also inspired me to start a cowboy rock band that performed for five years in Oregon. They reminded me that I have always encouraged people to take that first step toward achieving their goals (and a goal is only a dream that someone put a deadline on) and basically told me to “put my money where my mouth is.” Talk about nervous when I stepped up on a karaoke stage and warbled out a song (it was not pretty). But practice helped (and lots and lots of encouragement). We wound up performing all around the state of Oregon; all thanks to people that helped me overcome some hurdles I never thought I’d get past.

I continue to return those favors of support and encouragement in the service I provide through our Independent Living Skills program here at the Prairie Independent Living Resource Center, or PILR. I know how wonderful the results can be.

We are PILR. I like that. You know, one of the definitions of a “pillar” is “a person or thing regarded as reliably providing essential support for something.” That just seems a perfect definition of what we do.

A PILR SUCCESS STORY:

Nicole Scott – Independent Living Specialist

My name is Nicole Scott and I’m an Independent Living Specialist, who has been with PILR since 2018. My job is very rewarding to me and I enjoy completing consumer’s goals with them to create a level of independence.

One of my consumer’s is a 39 year-old male who recently moved to Hutchinson from South Carolina. He started off in the homeless shelter for a few months until we were able to get him into transitional housing. With this consumer, I have taught him to be more comfortable riding the R-Cat, learning how to cook independently, budgeting, and referred him to Vocational Rehabilitation where he currently is working with the End Dependence Program in hopes to find employment very soon.

Pictured right is Nicole’s Consumer in his new apartment
Advocacy Day

Chelsey Rose – Independent Living Specialist - Pratt

Advocacy Day at Pratt Community College was February 18, 2020. Nineteen students from eight area high schools learned about self advocacy and advocacy for employment. Self advocacy is the ability to state ones needs and make an informed decision about the supports necessary to meet those needs.

Throughout the day, people presented different topics. One of the favorite’s was Jamea Kline of Aetna with a team building exercise. The students were divided up into 4 groups; their job was to build a bridge over a bowl using popsicle sticks, glue and string. For a little while the students struggle until they worked together. Once they worked together bridges were formed. This was a great team building exercise.

Next, Amy Jackson of Students Success Center spoke about different accommodations that Pratt Community College (PCC) can offer students and the different programs PCC can offer. Following Amy came Sarah Massey Associate Director of Admissions. She gave an informational tour of Pratt Community College.

Gail Boisseau transition coordinator for South Central Kansas Special Education CO-OP showed students the ins and outs of interviewing. When Gail first came out she demonstrated the incorrect way to interview. The students all laughed. Than Gail demonstrated the correct way to interview and discussed the differences. Way to go Gail!

Kerry Von Schriltz and Scott Smith of the Peoples Bank talked about the different types of checking accounts, types of loans people can obtain and debit card tips. Many of the students enjoyed this topic.

And lastly, Anthony Frischenmeyer and Chelsey Rose of Prairie Independent Living gave a presentation on “What is Advocacy.” Through the presentation, they provided examples of when to speak up.

A Big THANK YOU goes out to:

Pratt Community College, Amy Jackson and Sara Massey, for the use of the building,

the informational session, handouts, great lunch, and tour of the college.

Jamie Kline of AETNA for the great team building project and presentation

Kerry Von Schrilz and Scott Smith of the Peoples Bank for their time and presentation

And to Gail Boisseau (SCKSEC), Nancy Miracle, (SCKSEC), Linda Adelhardt (PILR), Chelsey Rose (PILR), and Anthony Frischenmeyer, (PILR) for the team work it took to put this all together.

Mission Statement: The purpose of Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR) is to achieve the full inclusion and acceptance of people with disabilities through education and advocacy. PILR is a Non-Profit organization.

Vision Statement: A world of inclusion where diversity is celebrated and choices are honored.
I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Kim Rohr and I have recently been selected to serve as a board member for PILR. I have been a social worker for over 20 years and am the Director of Care Management at Hutchinson Regional Medical Center. In my work experience, I have utilized PILR’s services for patients and appreciate the difference this program makes in the lives of others.

When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my husband and 2 daughters. We love to travel, especially if it involves water or mountains. I also enjoy home improvement projects and crafting. I was raised in Hutchinson and proud to call it home. I look forward to being a part of this organization and excited to see the positive impacts that are made.

**Counties Served:**

**Independent Living**
- Barber County
- Clarke County
- Comanche County
- Edwards County
- Ford County
- Harper County
- Harvey County
- Hodgeman County
- Kingman County
- Kiowa County
- McPherson County
- Ness County
- Pratt County
- Reno County
- Stafford County

**Older Blind**
- Hutchinson Office:
- Dodge City Office:

**Older Kansan Employment Program**
- Pratt, Reno, Rice, Kingman and Harper

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**PILR Staff**

**~Hutchinson~**

- Andy Reichart, Assistant Director
- Debbie Goertz, Accounting Coordinator
- Heather Jones, Independent Living Services Coordinator
- Adam Fortna, Independent Living Specialist
- Tammy Fuhr, Independent Living Specialist/OIB
- Nicole Scott, Independent Living Specialist

**~Pratt~**

- Linda Adelhardt, Service Coordinator
- Chelsey Rose, Independent Living Specialist
- Tom Harrison, OKEP Employment Specialist

**~Dodge City~**

- Bob Gilbert, Employment Specialist
- Cindy Daniels, Employment Specialist
- Anthony Frischenmeyer, Employment Specialist
- Seth Kelley, Business Account Manager
- Christina Castor, Administrative Assistant/HR
- Phil Handsaker, Service Coordinator
- Mignon Luckey, Independent Living Specialist/OIB
- Danielle Mowery, Employment Specialist
- Rosa Mendoza, Information & Referral Specialist
The Voice of PILR
Newsletter
March 2020: Volume 19, Issue 1

Board of Directors
Cammie Rumback – President
Kelly Miller – Vice President
Dave Hederstedt - Treasurer
Bonnie Lloyd
Cat Poland
Kim Rohr

Interested in becoming a board member?
Please visit our website www.pilr.org to submit your application!

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please send to Erica Rivera at: erivera@pilr.org

The editor reserves the right to edit or omit letters. Views stated in this column are not necessarily the views of PILR.

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PILR is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider.