



# RESOURCE CENTER for independent living

Consumer Newsletter • Spring 2011

## Upcoming Events

### Friends Groups

**Arkansas City** - 3rd  
Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

**El Dorado** - 4th  
Wednesday at 1 p.m.

**Emporia** - Last  
Monday at 2 p.m.

**Eureka** - 4th Tuesday  
at 1 p.m.

**Fort Scott** - 2nd  
Wednesday at 1 p.m.

**Iola** - 3rd Thursday at  
1 p.m.

**Osage City** - 2nd  
Wednesday at 1 p.m.

**Ottawa** - 2nd  
Wednesday at 1 p.m.

**Overland Park** - 3rd  
Wednesday at 1 p.m.

**Topeka** - 3rd Tuesday  
at 1 p.m.

**Call your local office  
for more details.**

### Office Closures

May 31 - Memorial Day

### Disability Caucus

August 10, 11 & 12

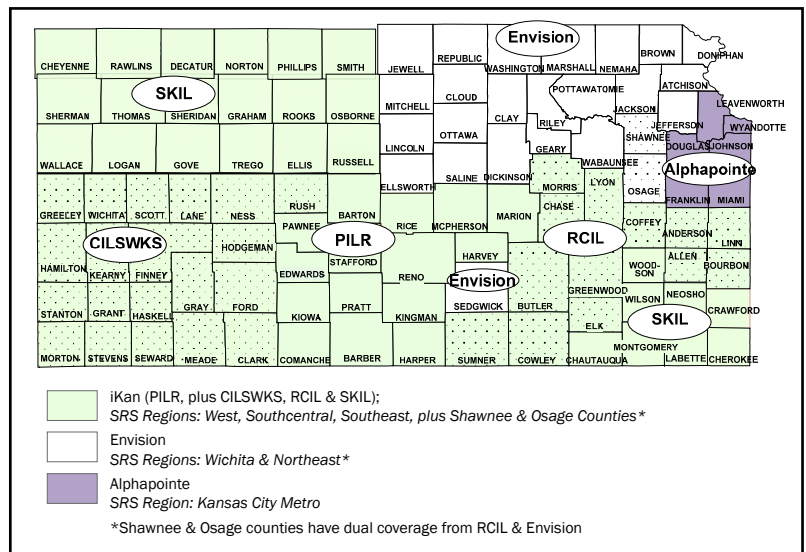
## Closer Look: Understanding the New iKan Program

By Mandy Smith, Orientation & Mobility Specialist

In the last issue, we covered a brief outline of the contract awarded from Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (KRS) to enhance the services to individuals who are 55 years or older and are blind or have low vision. Now that we are making great strides toward progress on this project, we thought it would be a good time to go into further detail.

The contract was awarded to Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR), which has subcontracts with RCIL, Southeast Kansas Independent Living and Center for Independent Living in Southwest Kansas to expand services across the state. These five Centers for Independent Living (CIL) formed iKan and cover 76 of the 105 counties in Kansas; the remaining counties are covered by Alphapointe and Envision.

Before KRS awarded contacts to PILR, Alphapointe and Envision, the state had a



program called KAN-SAIL (Kansas Seniors Achieving Independent Living Skills) that served individuals who were 55 years and older and blind or had low vision. KAN-SAIL was based out of Topeka and had two representatives that covered all 105 counties. The KAN-SAIL program and name have been retired and letters have been sent to all their consumers with a referral to the contractor that is covering that area.

Under this new arrangement, the contract specified that there would be two parts – direct service and capacity building. The direct service side has been in effect since

Continued on page 5

# RCIL Board of Directors

Karen Barezinsky  
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## Alternate Formats

To receive a copy of this newsletter in an alternate format, please call 800.580.7245.

# Executive Director's Message

*By Chad Wilkins, Executive Director*

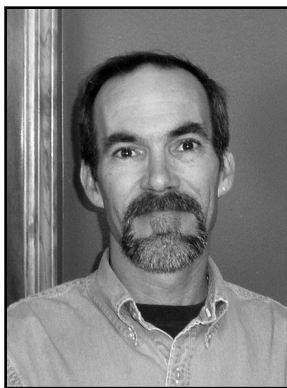
In our first newsletter of the new year, we like to provide you, our consumers and supporters, with highlights from our annual operating report. These highlights, included as an insert in this newsletter, show some of our greatest accomplishments for 2010. Although 2010 was a challenging year due to cuts to state funding for programs and services, we still accomplished many great things. To name a few, we became the Assistive Technology for Kansans/Kansas Equipment Exchange's Northeast Access Site and obtained a subcontract to offer services to Kansans who are more than 55 years of age and blind or have low vision. We also increased access to traumatic brain injury services and helped more than 20 individuals leave institutional settings and move back to their communities.



In addition to the highlights, we've also listed the many individuals, organizations and businesses who donated to RCIL in 2010. We are very thankful for all the donations we received and could not operate a successful organization without the continued support of our donors.

Although 2011 poses a new set of challenges for our organization, we know that with your continued support, we can accomplish many more great things! 📧

## RCIL's New AT Specialist



RCIL proudly welcomes Stuart Jones as the newest member of the ATK/KEE team. Stuart started working December 28 2010 as an

Assistive Technology Specialist and will be focusing on providing assistive technology support for students and schools. 📧

## Save the Date! Self-Direction Tool Kit Training

Do you self-direct your personal assistance services? Join us for a no-cost, full-day training to learn more about screening, hiring and managing your personal care attendants on May 18, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at the Emporia Public Library, 110 E. 6th Ave, Emporia, Kansas. Breakfast and lunch provided. Reserve your spot by calling Rebecca at 800.580.7245 by emailing [hr@rcilinc.org](mailto:hr@rcilinc.org). 📧

# RCIL Friends: Important Information, Support & Fun

By Beth Combes, Information & Referral Specialist



Kathy Vidrio and Gary Rosenbaum enjoy the Eureka RCIL Friends group monthly meeting held January 24, where there was helpful information, refreshments and bingo.

**R**CIL Friends are groups of people with disabilities that come together for social and educational events. The Eureka RCIL Friends group had their monthly meeting the afternoon of Monday, January 24 at the Eureka Public Library. Independent Living Specialist Macy Gaines facilitated the meeting, where she taught consumers about weather/storm preparedness and weatherization programs. The group also had a lot of fun enjoying refreshments and playing bingo.

Kathy Vidrio, a member of RCIL Friends, attended the last meeting. "It's beneficial to those who don't

get out a lot, and the information is great!"

Another RCIL Friends member, Gary Rosenbaum also enjoys the meetings. "It's a lot of fun to be here, and I like the people. A guy I met at the group helped me find contractors for my ramp, and here soon we're going fishing."

There are nine additional RCIL Friends groups in the eastern part of Kansas and all RCIL consumers are invited to join the fun at their local group. If you are interested, contact your local RCIL office or refer to the first page of this newsletter for more information. 📧

# Celebrating Success!

By Karli Davis, Communications Specialist

**T**his past year, Cody had an independent living goal of finding employment. Cody was already working for Pizza Hut, but was searching for an additional job. He enlisted the help of his SRS counselor in Pittsburg and Ashley Chance, RCIL Independent Living Specialist in Fort Scott. Ashley took Cody all around town to fill out applications, and after much persistence, Cody was hired at the deli as a bus boy and dish washer.

Cody is glad for the opportunity to work at the deli, and even though he just recently started this new job, he is already enjoying it.

"I like doing my job, and I enjoy it and the people," said Cody. "I've already made very good friends there, I enjoy my boss because he's a good guy, and I just like being there because it's fun."

Cody's successful job search can happen to anyone, and he has a few tips for others in a similar situation.

"Pray about it, go and fill out applications, and keep on trying to call the person for a call back," said Cody. "It will all fall into place and work out for the good."

If you have a successful independent living goal you would like to share with our readers, please contact us at 800.580.7245. 📧

# Changing Spaces

By Karli Davis, Communications Specialist

You may have heard, there are some big changes going on with the RCIL Satellite offices. While some of the offices are changing, one thing will remain the same — RCIL's programs and services will still be available.

The Emporia office will be moving April 1st from 625 Merchant to 614 Merchant. The Arkansas City and Burlington offices will not be

renewing their leases, but consumers can still receive services. Arkansas City Targeted Case Manager (TCM) Stephanie Wold can be reached at 785.220.4863 and TCM Julie Tracy can be reached at 785.220.6002. Burlington TCM Pat Pittman can be reached at the Emporia office, TCM Susan Williams can be reached at the Osage City office and Transitional Living Skills Specialist (TLS) Jessica



The new Emporia office—614 Merchant.

Cole can be reached at the RCIL office in Iola. For your convenience, PCA timesheets can be faxed to the RCIL home office at 785.528.3665. ☎

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## Shaping Your Future: You Are Your Best Advocate

By Summer Ludwig, Targeted Case Manager

The legislative session is under way, and it's already a very busy one. Governor Brownback introduced his proposed budget, and the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Committee are already working on their own budget proposals. Trying to craft a state budget that will pass both the House and Senate as well as meet the Governor's approval is a daunting task, especially when Kansas is facing a \$550 million budget deficit.

There are many new faces at the Statehouse this year, so it's even more important for those of us in the disability community to make contact and establish relationships with our Legislators. It's up to us to make sure our Representatives know what Centers for Independent Living do, what Independent Living really means, and what programs

and services are critical to ensuring Kansans with disabilities equality in our communities.

We understand that beginning a dialogue with your Legislator can cause anxiety; maybe you aren't sure what to say or how to say it. The most important thing to know is that you are your own best advocate. No one else knows exactly what you need or how Legislative decisions affect you and your family. One of the Core Services that Centers for Independent Living provide is advocacy. We can work together to assist you in becoming an empowered, effective advocate for yourself and the disability community.

Our goal is to dramatically increase the amount of consumer advocates working with RCIL this Session.

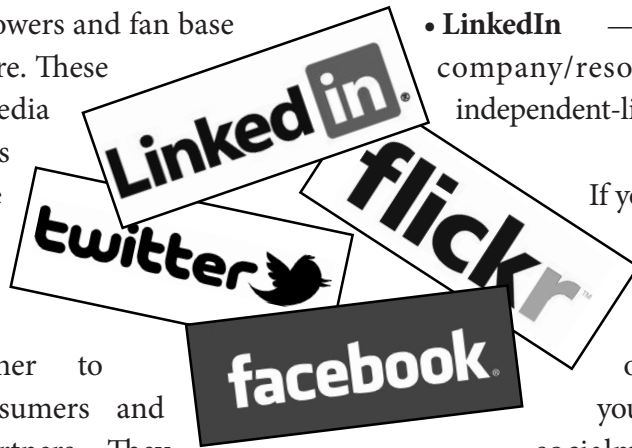
If you want to be involved but aren't sure where to start, what needs to be done, or just want more information, please contact your local RCIL office. If you are an advocacy veteran and would like to be added to our Consumer Advocacy Group, please contact Summer Ludwig at [summer@rcilinc.org](mailto:summer@rcilinc.org) or 785.267.1717. As part of our Consumer Advocacy Group, you will receive Legislative news and updates and Calls to Action as issues arise throughout the session.

If you would like to share your story with your Legislators or your community, please let us know. We are always in need of people willing to talk about how their services benefit them or how being forced to wait for services impacts individuals, families and communities. ☎

# New Ways to Stay Informed

By Karli Davis, Communications Specialist

Because of RCIL's expansive coverage area, we've added to our social media plan to stay connected to our consumers, employees and friends. We currently have profiles and provide updates on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Flickr and plan to increase our efforts and expand our followers and fan base in the near future. These four social media outlets allow us to communicate information in a more effective and efficient manner to both our consumers and community partners. They also allow us to provide frequent updates and inform more people about our programs and services and advocacy efforts.



If you're new to social media or just want the most up-to-date RCIL information, check out the following social media sites:

- **Facebook** — [facebook.com/rcilinc](https://facebook.com/rcilinc)
- **Twitter** — [twitter.com/rcil](https://twitter.com/rcil)
- **Flickr** — [flickr.com/rcil](https://flickr.com/rcil)
- **LinkedIn** — [linkedin.com/company/resource-center-for-independent-living](https://linkedin.com/company/resource-center-for-independent-living)

If you have a question about our social media plan or any comment or suggestion, you can email us at [socialmedia@rcilinc.org](mailto:socialmedia@rcilinc.org)

or post your question or comment on any of our sites. We love to hear from you, and our social media efforts cannot succeed without your participation! 📧

## You Asked for It

### Where can I get Kansas Homestead Refund and Food Sales Tax Refund forms?

You can get both forms at your local library. You can get your refund quicker if you file online than by mail. If you need assistance, contact your Independent Living Specialist at your local RCIL office.

### Do you have a walker I can borrow?

Yes. RCIL has an equipment loan program to allow consumers to borrow durable medical equipment (DME) for short term for free. We also accept DME donations and give them out to consumers that need it long term.

Contact the Information & Referral Specialist at 800.580.7245 if you have any questions or need any resources.

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## iKan Program

*Continued from page 1*

August 2010. Each iKan partner has one representative who will focus on delivering the five core services to individuals who are 55 years or older and are blind or have low vision.

The capacity building side has multiple parts and players. This includes a representative from each iKan partner (in most cases it is the same person that is doing direct service) who is attending Texas Tech to become certified in Orientation and Mobility (O&M). O&M specialists teach individuals who are blind

or losing their vision how to travel safely efficiently, and independently. Additionally, a representative from each CIL will become certified to teach Braille. Both certifications will be complete around May 2012.

To aid in direct service practices, each of the iKan partners held focus groups to collect information from individuals who are blind or have low vision. This information will be put in a manual to train direct service staff across the state August 9 and 10 the Disability Caucus pre-conference. 📧



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## Moved?

If you've moved or changed your phone number, name, or email address, call 800.580.7245 so we can keep in contact with you!

## We're on the Web!

Visit us at:  
[rcilinc.org](http://rcilinc.org)

Find us on:



### Sign up for NetPals:

Receive emails about events, resources and advocacy updates by calling 800.580.7245 or visiting [rcilinc.org](http://rcilinc.org).

## RCIL Home Office

Address	Phone	Fax
1137 Laing Osage City, KS 66523	785.528.3105 (local) 800.580.7245 (toll free) 785.528.3106 (TDD)	785.528.3665

## Satellite Office Locations

<b>Arkansas City</b> P.O. Box 926 785.220.4863 (Stephanie) 785.220.6002 (Julie)	<b>Emporia</b> 614 Merchant (April 1st) 620.342.1648	<b>Ottawa</b> 233 W. 23rd St 785.242.1805
<b>El Dorado</b> 615 1/2 N. Main 316.322.7853	<b>Fort Scott</b> 710 W. 8th, Ste. 206 620.223.5670	<b>Overland Park</b> 10200 W. 75th, Ste. 100 913.362.6618
	<b>Iola</b> 726 W. Patterson 620.365.8144	<b>Topeka</b> 519 SW 37th St 785.267.1717