

# MILC RUN

MIDSTATE INDEPENDENT LIVING CHOICES

*“Working for persons with disabilities towards empowerment to make informed choices.”*

## Welcome Don Wigington!



### A Note from the New Executive Director

Dear Friends and Partners,

I am excited and honored to join Midstate Independent Living Choices (MILC) as the new Executive Director. I want to thank everyone for your warm welcome and I look forward to meeting many more of you in the near future.

My set of professional experiences includes leadership experience guiding day-to-day operations of nonprofit organizations with a concentration on organizational visioning, strategic planning, implementation, culture, team building, fundraising and fiscal management. I look forward to using my skill sets towards MILC’s mission of “Working for persons with disabilities toward empowerment to make informed choices.”

*(story continued on page 2)*

#### PAGES 2-3

- A Note from the New Executive Director
- Immediate Openings!
- 7th Annual Sensitive Santa

#### PAGES 4-5

- Captions, Captions, Captions!
- Consumer Success Story
- Home Aware
- Voting!

#### PAGES 6-7

- Assistive Technology Review at MILC
- Loan Programs

## A Note from the New Executive Director (cont.)

I have been an active member of the disability community for many years. My son, Tyler, was born with developmental disabilities that included Intellectual Disability and Autism. I volunteered many years with Special Olympics before joining as staff and held multiple positions in my 12 years there. I have also worked closely with the University of Wisconsin-Madison Waisman Center on several research projects over the years related to health care advocacy for individuals with disabilities and have been very active in promoting/supporting several activities in the Dane County area including bowling leagues, fitness clubs, and other social outings for individuals with disabilities.

The central goal of MILC is to assist individuals with disabilities in advocating for their rights and achieving their full potential within the communities of their choice. MILC has a long history of providing quality and essential services such as Independent Living Skills Training, Advocacy & Transition Services, Accessible Recreation, IRIS Program and Personal Assistant Services (PAS). My vision is to strengthen the effectiveness and impact MILC has on individuals and communities through the following goals:

- Advance Organizational Development
  - ~Invest in staff by developing strong benefit packages and providing professional development opportunities to attract and retain top talent
- Build Capacity
  - ~Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of MILC by modernizing technology and organization infrastructure
  - ~Strengthen current funding opportunities and develop new revenue streams through partnerships and individual giving
- Expand Reach
  - ~Develop a marketing & communication plan to promote MILC services offered
  - ~Establish relationships with new community partners

MILC is dedicated to improving opportunities for persons with disabilities to live independently. I am excited to join an incredible team of staff and I look forward to working closely with our consumers and dedicated partners who share in our vision to assist individuals achieve equal opportunities and to control choices in their own lives.

**Thank you again for your support, and I look forward to working with you!**

**~Don Wigington, Executive Director**

## IMMEDIATE OPENINGS!

Variety of shifts! Positions available throughout our  
11 county service area!

Great  
opportunity to earn  
extra income!

**Midstate Independent Living Choices**



is in search of **CAREGIVERS** interested in assisting individuals in their homes providing personal, supportive and/or respite care. Travel allowance for eligible cases/employees. Experience preferred, or willing to learn new skills.

To see a full listing of our current openings visit

[www.milc-inc.org](http://www.milc-inc.org)

Complete the application online and submit to

[ebuckles@milc-inc.org](mailto:ebuckles@milc-inc.org) or

call 715-344-4210, ext. 222 to request an application

## 7th Annual Sensitive Santa

Midstate Independent Living Choices (MILC) is hosting the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Sensitive Santa event at the Central Wisconsin Children's Museum in Stevens Point. Sometimes visiting Santa can be overwhelming. Loud music, long lines, and crying children can overstimulate visitors to Santa. At the MILC event, anyone with a special need or disability (along with their family) can take their time to visit Santa. Play in the museum as you wait for your turn to see the big guy. Everyone has FREE access to the museum and snacks are provided. Bring your camera!

### Save the Date:

Friday, December 2nd, 2022

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Central Wisconsin Children's Museum

1100 Main Street, Stevens Point



## Captions, Captions, Captions!



Do you have a hard time hearing on the phone? Do you find captions on the TV to be super useful? If so, a captioned phone may be the perfect option for you! The CapTel 2400i makes it easy for individuals to enjoy conversations and catch every word. No more awkward laughing or standard responses cause you are guessing what they are saying.

CapTel 2400i shows the words in real time during the call and they can be made to be bigger for individuals with vision impairments. It offers powerful amplification up to 40 decibels and comes with a telephone keypad for comfortable dialing. This model requires telephone service, high-speed internet and standard electrical power to be used. For individuals that do not have high speed internet a different model is available.

Call us today to see how the CapTel 2400i can improve the quality of your phone calls!

*~Madison Matijevich, IL Consultant*

## Consumer Success Story



A few months ago, MILC received a call from someone who needed to transition out of a rehabilitation facility into their own home. Alan needed a ramp in order to do so. Alex Lena, one of MILC's IL Consultants, met with Alan to determine the size of ramp needed to safely enter and exit the home. With three Roll a Ramp segments that came to 18', and with adequate clearance from the sidewalk, MILC was able to loan the ramp at no charge so Alan can safely enter and exit his home for appointments, shopping, and social recreation while in recovery.

This photo was taken at the end of the loan when the ramp was no longer needed. Alan and his son were grateful for the opportunity to increase Alan's independence and ability to get him home and back into the community.



## Home Aware

The Home Aware system from Sonic Alert is a complete alarm system. The Home Aware comes with a powerful bed shaker/vibrator and a phone cord. The plug for the phone cord is on the back of the main unit. Any landline phone can be used with this system. When the phone rings, the shaker will move and/or the main unit's strobe light will flash. The alert system can be used with a phone, a baby monitor, a doorbell, or a carbon monoxide detector, all of which are sold separately. The optional cell phone detector can be used to get vibration and/or strobe light alerts from a cell phone. To use it with a smartphone, you'll need to download a free app. There is also an add-on called the Sonic Bridge that can be bought separately. It lets the Home Aware connect to a Sonic Alert remote receiver and can be used as a personal lamp flasher.



At MILC, you can try out the Home Aware Complete Home Alerting System. We have the main unit, the bed shaker/vibrator, the telephone cord, and the smartphone transmitter. Please call our office at 715-344-4210 if you are interested in trying this for yourself or a loved one.

*~Karalyn Peterson, Resource Coordinator*

## Voting!



You may already know that you have one more chance to vote this year. Depending on where you live, you can vote for up to 12 different offices. Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, U.S. Senator, Congressional Representative, State Senator (odd numbered districts), Assembly Representatives, County Sheriff, Clerk of Court, and Coroner offices, as well as the Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, and each of those offices' respective assistants (where applicable). Go to [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) and enter your home address to find out who will be on your ballot, where you go to vote, if there are any debates or forums coming up, and much more. My Vote Wisconsin at [www.myvote.wi.gov](http://www.myvote.wi.gov), the Wisconsin Elections Commission at [www.elections.wi.gov](http://www.elections.wi.gov), and the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition at [www.disabilityvote.org](http://www.disabilityvote.org) are also good places to find out about elections.

If you don't have a computer, you can always call me and I'll look into this for you, or you can come to the office and we'll look together. Please call Karalyn Peterson at 715-344-4210 x230 for more information and I would be glad to help you. Vote!!!!!!

## Assistive Technology Review At MILC:



Over the last couple of years, we have seen how important distance communication is in our lives. We use this to communicate with friends, family, co-workers, businesses, etc. Distance communication is communication between 2 or more individuals that are geographically separated. Examples of this type of communication include, but are not limited to, texting, phone calls, e-mails, FaceTime, Zoom.

If you have a disability such as a hearing loss, vision loss, mobility impairment, or speech impairment, being able to access/use distance communication devices may be difficult. There are different pieces of assistive technology (AT) that one can use to independently access distance communication equipment.

If someone struggles to access their computer due to a vision loss/impairment to be able to attend a meeting virtually or e-mail someone, there is equipment and software individuals can try and purchase\* to independently access their computer. Equipment can include large computer monitors. A computer monitor at least 27" is suggested for someone with vision loss. There are also software such as JAWS, which reads the screen and uses keyboard shortcuts to control your computer, as well as ZoomText, which magnifies everything on your screen. Other equipment that may help are large print keyboards with high contrast.

If someone has a mobility impairment and does not have any functional use of their extremities, there is still a way for them to access a computer independently. Equipment such as eye gaze devices with computer controlling software allows users to control their computer with their eyes.

At MILC we have a computer system with a large 27" computer monitor, high contrast and large print keyboard, Tobii Dynavox PCEye eye gaze system, JAWS, ZoomText software that individuals can demo.

\*As these items can be very costly, Independent Living Consultants can work with you or your loved one to try and find funding for the equipment. One source is the Telecommunication Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP). This allows individuals with qualifying disabilities to apply, and if approved, receive a voucher to help offset the cost of the equipment. Qualifying categories include hard of hearing (HOH), severely HOH/deaf, severely HOH/deaf-blind, severely HOH/deaf-low vision, mobility impairment, and speech impairment.

If you are interested in seeing any TEPP-eligible equipment or are interested in learning more about the TEPP program, please give us a call and ask to speak to an Independent Living Consultant.

*~Alex Lena, IL Consultant*

# LOAN PROGRAMS

## What is Wisloan?

Wisloan is a statewide, alternative loan program that allows Wisconsin residents with a disability, or their families, to purchase adaptive equipment, assistive technology or modify their homes so that they can live more independently. The applicant must be 18 and a resident of Wisconsin who wishes to improve his or her quality of life through the acquisition of items (examples include assistive technology, modified vehicles, etc.).

**Both Telework and Wisloan** loan amounts will depend on the item being purchased and the ability to repay. The current interest rate is 6.5%.

Bad credit, including bankruptcy is not a reason to not apply. The focus is on the ability to make the monthly payments. Reasons for credit issues are taken into consideration by the review board. Contact an IL Consultant at the MILC office for assistance in completing an application.

## What is Telework?

Telework is a statewide, alternative loan program allowing Wisconsin residents with disabilities to purchase computers and other equipment needed to work from remote sites away from the office, including at home, on the road or at a Telework center. In addition to the purchase of equipment, the loan funds can be used for training to use equipment, extended warranties, the cost of maintenance and repair.

## What is TEPP?

### **Telecommunications, Equipment Purchase Program**

If you are one of the millions of people who have difficulty using a telephone, you should know that help is available through the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program, or TEPP. The TEPP Program provides funding, (through the Universal Service Fund), for people with disabilities to purchase specialized telephones and related equipment.

The TEPP program issues vouchers, each with different dollar amounts, based on several categories of disability. For example, the Hard of Hearing voucher is \$100, the Deaf/Severely Hard of Hearing voucher is \$800, and the Mobility Impaired voucher is \$1,600. (Vouchers over \$100 require a \$100 co-pay, but there are programs available that may help cover that cost).

If you don't know what kind of phone will work for you, we have several different types of phones that you can borrow from our Wistech Loan and Demonstration Program so you can 'Try before you buy'.



Please contact MILC for further information about the TEPP Program or to schedule an appointment to try a few phones. (We can also assist with the application).

**Midstate Independent Living Choices**  
**3262 Church Street**  
**Stevens Point WI 54481**

**NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION**  
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**How To Get a Hold of Us:**

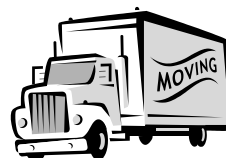
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**To contact the following departments dial:**

Mental Health/Peer Support: Ext. 243  
IL Program: Ext. 238  
PAS Program: Ext. 224  
Human Resources: Ext. 226  
Accounting: Ext. 214

**MOVING?**  
**Let us know so we can keep**  
**you on our mailing list.**  
**Contact us at [milc@milc-inc.org](mailto:milc@milc-inc.org)**



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