

# NICIL NEWS

## NICIL

412 Locust St  
Sterling, IL 61081

815-625-7860  
[www.nicil.org](http://www.nicil.org)

### NICIL Team Members

#### Direct Services

- Julie—Specialist
- Jessica—Coordinator
- Emily—Program Manager

#### Administrative Services

- Amy Jo—Fiscal Manager
- Michele Miller—Executive Director

## NICIL: YOUR PARTNER, YOUR RESOURCE

Northwestern Illinois Center for Independent Living (NICIL) is a not for profit agency designed to serve people with disabilities by people with disabilities. 51% (or more) of our staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers are people with disabilities. NICIL's main office is in downtown Sterling and, by appointment, our team will meet in other counties. NICIL provides services to residents in Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties.

We are currently funded through the award of three contracts from the Illinois Department of Human Services under the Department of Rehabilitation Services that allows us to do the work that we have the

honor and privilege of doing every day. We are currently in the process of developing fee for service programs as well.

These three contracts allow NICIL to serve and assist persons with disabilities who want to transition out of the nursing home into community living, persons who want to remain in their home with the assistance of personal assistants, and persons who wish to learn new skills in order to become more independent. NICIL also assists persons with personal or systems advocacy goals, provides information and referral services, and peer mentoring guidance to consumers who request

such services. We serve people in the age range of birth to death; however certain programs have age restrictions. Partnering agencies make referrals to NICIL in an effort to ensure their clients receive a complete package of services.

NICIL works with partnering agencies and the referral in a team like sense to accomplish the goals set forth by the person referred.

For answers to additional questions or to make a referral please call 815-625-7860.

## ACCESSIBILITY TOPIC

Person first language puts the person before the disability. As a society, we have gotten too hung up on medical diagnosis and end up using the medical diagnosis to describe an individual. This is hurtful and disrespects individuals with a disability. An example is to say people with disabilities, not the disabled or accessible parking, not handicapped parking.

For more information on this topic or if you would like NICIL to do training on this topic for your business contact NICIL at: 815-625-7860 or email [frontdesk@nicil.org](mailto:frontdesk@nicil.org).

## FEATURED PARTNER

Whiteside County Public Transportation (WCPT) is a federally assisted program that has been in business for over six (6) years and has a fleet of vehicles that are fully accessible. WCPT will provide curb to curb transit services to anyone who is a resident of Whiteside County for a fee; however some folks may qualify for free transportation. Located within the Whiteside County Senior Center in Sterling, at 1209 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, WCPT provides rides Monday through Friday, 6AM-6PM, on a first come, first served schedule, within the

county, and has a set schedule of trips to Dixon, Clinton, Quad Cities, and Rockford each month.

WCPT works with NICIL to assist consumers who are working on independent living skills that require learning how to utilize public transportation, whether for continuing their education, looking for employment, or just a social outing. A member of the NICIL team or a member of the WCPT team will even ride with

consumers the first couple of times to ensure skill mastery and confidence by the consumer. To schedule your first ride, contact WCPT dispatch at (815) 625-RIDE(7433).

Fares for utilizing WCPT are as follows:

Within Whiteside County

Age 5 and under:

\$0.50 one way

Ages 6-59:

\$2.00 one way

Ages 60 and older:

\$1.00 suggested donation

Outside Whiteside County

All Ages: \$0.25 per mile

*“It is time for us all to stand and cheer for the doer, the achiever – the one who recognizes the challenges and does something about it.” – Vince Lombardi*

## SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

One of NICIL’s core missions is to actively participate in Systemic Advocacy. The understanding of this overwhelms many including the NICIL team that is until you break it down. It means the advocacy for changing things within a system. For example when there are changes in a law, it is our job (NICIL and you) to educate our elected officials on our views so that they know our needs and can get laws into place that support independent living.

Many people believe that their voice doesn’t

matter, but it does! One voice, combined with many does make a difference.

Since April 2015 NICIL has been very vocal in systemic advocacy on many topics, but the majority of our time has been on the State of Illinois’ budget and the Determination of Need (DON) score increase. Many voices have been heard on these topics and in the case of the DON score, the many voices were heard and the DON score remains at 29, saving over 34,000

home services from being lost in Illinois. Your voice makes a difference and the lives of over 34,000 are impacted. A big thank you to all of you who were part of this systemic advocacy and change! The State of Illinois budget, well, that is a topic for another article!

It’s time to be heard, use your voice and make a difference. Visit the NICIL website and click on our Action in Advocacy page for the latest issue that needs your voice!

## CONSUMER HIGHLIGHT

John H. volunteers at NICIL and manages the duties of the front desk with a smile on his face and a kind demeanor for all who walk in the door.

John goes above and beyond his volunteer duties. He takes on extra shifts and duties to ensure that the NICIL staff focuses their efforts on the consumers. On more than one occasion, John has helped me haul 30 heavy chairs downstairs, only to have

to drag them back upstairs the next day. He single handedly handles the decoration efforts of the Christmas holiday, beautifully decorating the NICIL office for the season. All of these extras and he maintains a part time job at Applebee's. Mostly, I envy John's creative streak. He enjoys many different areas of crafting, and is truly passionate about crocheting. On any given day, John sits at NICIL's front desk,



earpiece on his head and in between phone calls, crochet needles in his hands, gives shape to his latest creation. John agreed to head up NICIL's craft group that will begin in the next few months. John is truly an inspiration and a prime example of Independent living.

## STAFF BLOG— JESSICA

I absolutely love to cook! I guess you could say it is a "hobby" of mine. Family dinner time has gotten more complicated in the past 3 months. My husband and I are both working 10 hour shifts and we had a baby arrive in July. However, family dinner time is important so I make it a

priority. Here are some tips to make dinner work. 1) Cook extra meat and place what you don't need in the freezer. 2) When making a meal make extra and put some in the freezer (soups and casseroles freeze well). 3) Use the crock pot. 4) Always have ingredients for

meals like spaghetti, sandwiches and don't forget about macaroni and cheese. 5) Put down the cell phone and other electronics. Family dinner doesn't have to be fancy, what is important is spending time together because tomorrow isn't guaranteed.

*"Never let the odds keep you from doing what you know in your heart you were meant to do. " –  
**H. Jackson Brown Jr***

## FEATURED DISABILITY

January - March We see many Awareness Ribbons and information on awareness of the month, but do you really know anything about them? We are starting the conversation by identifying the month and the awareness. These are just a few of them for

each month in this time period, but visit our website at [www.nicil.org](http://www.nicil.org) for a full list or at our friends Disabled-World at [www.disabled-world.com](http://www.disabled-world.com) for more information.  
January  
Glaucoma  
Codependency  
Celebration of Life

February  
Heart and Stroke  
Human Relations  
Boost Your Self-esteem  
  
March  
Colorectal Cancer  
Developmental Disability  
Foot Health  
  
Be aware, be informed, use your voice, and take action!

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### **Bruce Willis**

A famous person with a disability is Bruce Willis, star of the "Die Hard" series and "The Sixth Sense." He enrolled in a high school drama class as a way to overcome a debilitating stutter. To his surprise, he found the speech impediment disappeared when he performed. Needless to say, he used that coping tool to his advantage and now rakes in up to \$25 million for his roles in action films.

*Northwest Illinois Center  
for Independent Living*

**NICIL**

### Introductions, Please

Welcome to NICIL's first official newsletter of 2016! We have had newsletters in the past and then we didn't, but, we are back at it again. There are many reasons, but our most important reason is to stay in contact with the NICIL stakeholders. Our first thought was very industrial with all the latest news about the disability community and medical advancements. While that is all important information, we wanted the NICIL newsletter to be about what is happening in Northwestern Illinois and what amazing things are taking place right here in our area.

Let's start with the basics in getting to know you and you to know us! Each newsletter will cover areas of concern, for example areas of advocacy, legislation that is taking place and barriers to independent living. We will encourage you to take action and we will even give you options, but always remember that action means involvement and involvement means empowerment. Together we encourage empowerment and the betterment for all people with disabilities.

We get asked all the time about the term stakeholders, a term used to identify a whole group of NICIL folks. Stakeholders are the people who have a stake in NICIL and its success. This means our customers (called consumers in the industry), our team members (staff), volunteers (front desk), Board of Directors (also volunteers!), community members (supporters and families), elected officials (local, State, and Federal), business owners and businesses (potential employers and supporters), referral partners, and even our vendors. That is a long list! Yet, every one of these folks contributes to NICIL's success. Without everyone's help we could not serve our stakeholders!

Now you know a little about us, you'll learn much more in the coming year, but any time you want to talk or have questions, we are here! Call us at 815-625-7860 or visit our website at [www.nicil.org](http://www.nicil.org). We are looking forward to a new year of service.

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## CLASS SCHEDULE