



independence<sup>INC</sup>

ADVOCACY

PEER SUPPORT

TRAINING

TRANSPORTATION

COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION

THE FACES OF

# *Independence*

INDEPENDENCE, INC. ANNUAL REPORT 2017



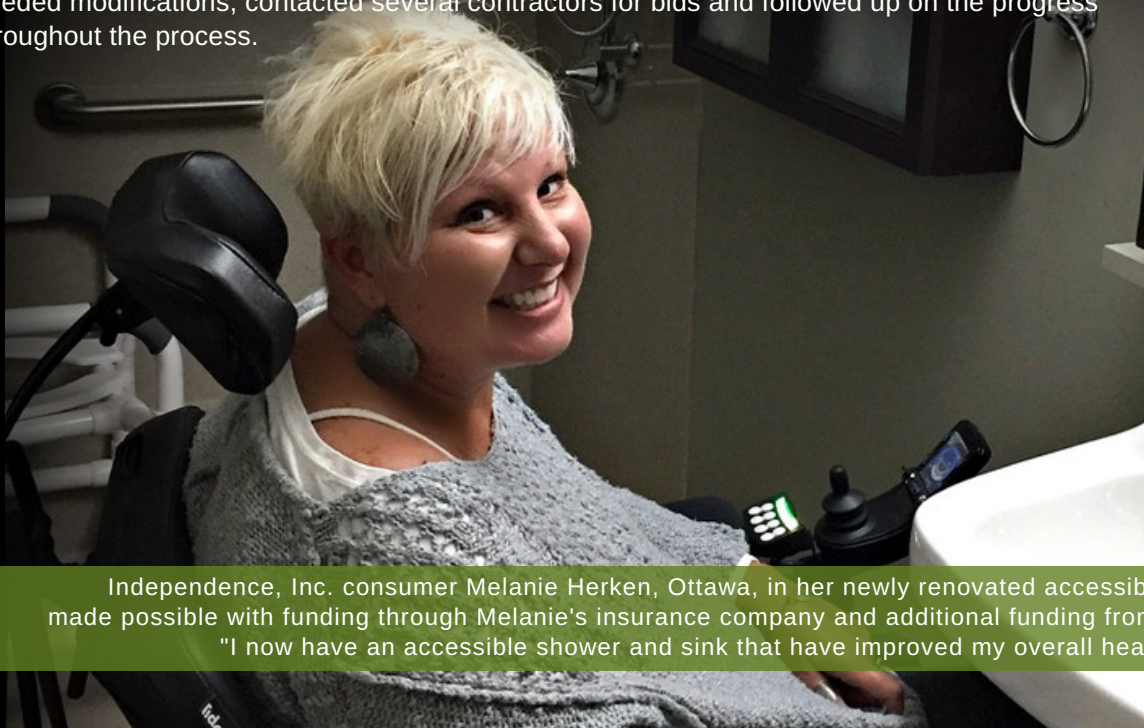
## INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY AND CONSUMER- DIRECTED CARE

Here at  
Independence, Inc.  
we are at work  
in our communities  
to educate, equip  
and support  
community members  
with disabilities who  
wish to live their  
best, healthiest,  
most independent  
lives in the homes  
and places of their  
choosing.

Independence, Inc. Intern, Frankie Lane, works with Ron Miller on his self-directed fitness goals as part of a collaboration with KU's Health Access to Independent Living program, designed to support consumers with physical disabilities who want to improve their overall health.

On the cover: Independence, Inc. consumer, Kay Carson, sitting on her porch with newly constructed accessible hand railings

Here at Independence, Inc. we advocate daily for consumers as they self-direct their care and work towards their own independence. Last fall, our team worked with Ottawa resident, Melanie Herken, to coordinate and carry out a much-needed home modification - a complete gutting and rebuilding of her bathroom to accommodate the use of her wheelchair. "I am 43 years young and was diagnosed with MS at the age of 27" says Melanie, who now utilizes a wheelchair as her sole means of mobility . "I reached out to my insurance for home modification approval. Independence, Inc. made contact and assessed my needs." Co-Director Bob Mikesic and staff assisted Melanie by doing the initial assessment to identify the needed modifications, contacted several contractors for bids and followed up on the progress throughout the process.



## OUR IMPACT

# 1,062

TOTAL  
SERVICES  
PROVIDED BY  
CORE  
SERVICES  
STAFF IN 2017



Independence, Inc. consumer Melanie Herken, Ottawa, in her newly renovated accessible bathroom made possible with funding through Melanie's insurance company and additional funding from the MS society.

"I now have an accessible shower and sink that have improved my overall health"





## ACCESSIBLE HOUSING AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The Accessible Housing Program assists renters with disabilities make needed modifications to their rental homes to provide accessibility & gain independence.

The AT Grant offers funding to aid in acquiring assistive technology or accessibility modifications to consumers homes.

Independence, Inc. consumer, Barbara Skeet, using her new accessible ramp to safely exit her home. "It's great!" said Barbara's daughter. "She can now come and go more safely from her home to various appointments without falling" Barbara's new ramp was made possible through the Independence, Inc. Accessible Housing Program.

Kansas consumers have found the help they need gaining access to assistive technology in areas such as vision, hearing, communication, mobility, home accessibility and computer related equipment. Meet little Nathaniel "Bubba" Brown. Nathaniel is a bubbly, sweet 3 year old with a contagious smile, who was born with a rare form of epilepsy and needs specialized equipment to help his family care for him. With financial support from Independence, Inc.'s Assistive Technology Grant Program to add to Nathaniel's fundraising campaign, Nathaniel's family was able to acquire an accessible van to accommodate the travel needs of this smiling, happy boy. "Receiving this van has been a tremendous blessing and burden reliever" said Nathaniel's mom, Alysha. "Gone are the exhausting struggles of transportation. Instead, travel has become enjoyable again!"



Nathaniel "Bubba" Brown (nickname given by his big brother Samuel) is all smiles for the camera in front of his new, fully accessible van. Inset: The Brown family celebrating Nathaniel's 2nd Birthday in 2017. Nathaniel, now 3, celebrated another birthday in April.

## OUR IMPACT

# 227

TOTAL  
CONSUMERS  
FUNDED  
THROUGH THE  
ASSISTIVE  
TECHNOLOGY  
GRANT PROGRAM


Accessibility





## INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TRAINING AND INFORMATION & REFERRAL

Independence, Inc. is here to assist individuals with disabilities in maximizing their potential to lead fulfilling and productive lives. With programs like Independent Living Skills Training and Information & Referral Services, individuals can increase their self-reliance and independence.

A group of five people, three men and two women, are in a kitchen. The man on the far left is wearing a white t-shirt with 'SUPER BOWL XLII CHAMPIONS' and a Pittsburgh Steelers logo. The man next to him is wearing a black polo shirt and glasses, holding a bottle of hot sauce. The woman in the center is wearing a red t-shirt and is smiling. The man on the far right is wearing a dark blue t-shirt. The woman behind the man in the black shirt is wearing a green striped shirt. They are all smiling and looking at the camera. There are white bowls and a blue bowl with food on the counter.

Independence, Inc. peer group participants gain valuable independent living skills and have fun in the process! Peer groups are open to anyone and include activities like crafts, gardening, movies, music, writing, and more. Pictured above: members of the cooking club showing the fabulous meal they prepared

Independent Living Skills Training and Information and Referral Services are programs that are an integral part of our mission here at Independence, Inc. Meet Karla Westphal. Following a transient ischemic attack (TIA or mini-stroke) in 2013, Karla was unable to return to her prior job and needed to find work. Karla decided it was time to explore self-employment options and pulled inspiration from her passion for animals "I have always wanted to work with animals, especially cats" says Karla, "I'm a cat person." For Karla, independence means the ability to do something for herself and not rely on anyone to do it for her. With this focus, and the support of her husband, Matt, she set off on a journey to create a job for herself that was her dream and her vision. Karla Westphal's Pet Sitting Services is the culmination of that dream. When Karla turned to Independence, Inc. for assistance, our staff worked closely with her to support her employment goals, provide training and referrals, and help get her business off the ground. "Independence, Inc. helped me to get the paper work set up, details worked out, and especially helpful was a volunteer in the computer lab who worked with me to set up my business Facebook page". Karla now has a thriving business that she says brings her comfort and therapy and is "rewarding and challenging".



Karla, owner of Karla Westphal's Pet Setting Services, and her cat Leo. Karla utilized the Independence, Inc. computer lab and Information and Referral Services to help start her business. "I had a lot of questions about getting my business set up and Independence, Inc. was there to help!"

## OUR IMPACT

# 659

TOTAL  
CONSUMERS  
SERVED  
THROUGH  
INFORMATION  
& REFERRAL  
SERVICES



## DISABILITY MENTORING DAY & YEP! YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

DMD is our annual Disability Employment Awareness event that matches youth from area high schools with a business mentor for a day of job shadowing followed by a celebration banquet.

Our YEP! program matches youth with local businesses for job skill development through an 80 hour work trial. We pay the wages & offer support while the student gains valuable work experience.



The theme of our 2017 DMD was "I Am More", reflecting the worth and ability of all people, to be valuable, contributing members of society. Above: pencil sketch for keynote speaker and artist Richard Hight's on stage performance where he created an original work of art, now hanging in our lobby. Inset: DMD student participants and school staff.



If you were to ask Gabriel Mullen where he sees himself in 5 years, he might say something like on the steps of Washington, or writing for an advocacy publication that supports the rights of individuals with disabilities. But more importantly, Gabe, who says he wants to fully embrace his autism, has a more broad vision in mind. "I see myself being in a sure state of what I want to do with my life", including a stable job and a future in which he has the tools to live independently. We had the privilege of sending Gabe to Capitol Hill last summer for the Annual Conference on Independent Living where he gained valuable skills and insight into the world of disability rights and advocacy. Gabe was part of the 2017 Independence, Inc. YEP! program with a work trial at Heartland Works, Lawrence, where among other things, he learned how to manage client caseloads and upload documentation to client files. "Gabe is an incredibly bright young man and has caught on quickly" says Justin, Gabe's supervisor at Heartland.



## OUR IMPACT

# 17

TOTAL YOUTH  
ENROLLED IN  
THE YEP! YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT  
PROGRAM

# 80

TOTAL YOUTH  
PARTICIPATED  
IN THE 2017  
DISABILITY  
MENTORING DAY  
PROGRAM

Independence, Inc. YEP! participant Gabe Mullen, (3rd from left) in Washington with other conference-goers for the 2017 Annual Conference on Independent Living, "Revolution, a Global Independent Movement". Independence, Inc. sponsored Gabe's conference attendance.

## GENERAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

One of the most important factors in independent living is the ability to get where you need to go. With 5 accessible vehicles, Independence, Inc. assists consumers in getting to work, school, events, shopping, medical appointments and more.

Carolyn Palka, Lawrence, receives assistance from Independence, Inc. driver Chip McConnell, while utilizing our General Public Transportation Services. Our Transportation department serves all of Douglas County and provides out-of-town medical rides to Kansas City and Topeka.

Transportation is a vital part of independent living and our General Transportation Department here at Independence, Inc. serves an average of about 490 consumers each month who need rides to stay active and independent. Meet Anthony Schwager. Anthony was born with developmental disabilities to the extent that his future career options seemed limited. With a love of bees developed in his childhood, a drive and passion to work with them, and a whole lot of family support, Anthony has turned his fascination for honey bees into a chance to support himself with dignity. As Anthony worked to develop his business venture, Anthony's Beehive, raising bees and making honey-based products, he relied heavily on Independence, Inc. transportation services to get him where he needed to go, providing him with the independence needed to fulfill his dreams.



## OUR IMPACT

# 6,180

TOTAL RIDES  
GIVEN THROUGH  
OUR GENERAL  
PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION  
DEPARTMENT



Anthony Schwager, a long-time Independence, Inc. transportation consumer, with his honey bees he raises for his local storefront and online business, Anthony's Beehive.

Inset: Anthony, making sheets of beeswax that can be embossed with a honeycomb pattern and rolled into candles.



## A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTORS

"Dear friends,

Thank you for partnering with us through financial support, volunteering, referrals and more. Your work and commitment to disability advocacy and independent living is a valuable asset not only to our organization and the disability community but to our communities as a whole. We look forward to your continued support and a thriving and successful 2018!"



Co-Executive Directors, Jill Enyart & Bob Mikesic

## WHAT WE DO AND WHY WE DO IT

### OUR MISSION:

To maximize the independence of people with disabilities through advocacy, peer support, training, transportation and community education.

### OUR VISION:

To work together in transforming our communities to be the best places in which people with disabilities can live, learn, and work.

### OUR BOARD

Seth Stillings, President

Nancy Hause

Susan Johnson

Dustin Stumblingbear

Angela Motsinger, Vice President/Treasurer

Dennis "Boog" Highberger

Bruce Passman

Deb Young

Terry Manies, Secretary

Robert Hutchison

Carrie Stineman

## 2017 DONORS

# Thank you...

to all of the individuals, community partners and businesses who gave generously in 2017 to support Independence, Inc. and who made it possible for our programs and services to continue impacting our communities.

VICTOR ADAMS  
LON AKERBERG  
JODY ANDERSON & JIM MCGOVERN  
ERNEST & MARGARET ANGINO  
ROBERT ANTONIO  
BILL & BEVERLY BARTSCHER  
JUDY & DR. JOHN BELLOME  
BRUCE & JEANIE BUNDY  
MARY & GREGORY BURG  
RALPH W. & LINDA SUE CAMPBELL  
DEBORAH CARTER  
MARILYN CHAMBERLIN  
CLARK & LINDA CROPP  
JOHN DANIEL  
WILLIAM DANN  
DENNIS BROWN PAINTING  
JILL ENYART  
DANA FERTIG  
JOHN FRYDMAN  
JANE GETTO  
STEPHEN J. & BOBBIE GISH  
JOAN & WEB GOLDEN  
CHRIS & BETHANY GRAHAM  
CAPTAIN & KATHARINE GRAY  
SARAH HAAVIK & KARL ALTMAN  
JENE & DON HERRON  
DENNIS "BOOG" HIGHBERGER  
DAVID & DIANA ICE  
JANE & MICKEY IMBER  
LARRY IRICK  
JEWISH COMMUNITY WOMEN  
ATHENA JOHNSON  
BERNARD JUDGE

WILLIAM & JEANINE LIENHARD  
ANN MAH  
TERRY MAINES  
KAREN & RANDALL MCGRATH  
MEDTRONIC  
GENE & CAROL MEYER  
LAWRENCE MIKESIC  
TIMOTHY MILLER  
MILLER AGENCY  
MARTIN MOORE & DURAND REIBER  
MARY MORNINGSTAR  
BRIAN & DEBORAH NORWOOD  
LOIS ORTH-LOPES & STEVE LOPES  
BRUCE PASSMAN  
RANEY PROPERTIES, L.P.  
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KAREN RISNER  
MARY M. ROSS  
MR. & MRS. KENNETH ROWEN  
LARRY SAATHOFF  
BARBARA & RICHARD SCHOWEN  
BILL & CINDY SELF  
TOM SKRTIC  
SETH STILLINGS  
AUDREY & JOHN STUDDARD  
ORLEY & TONI TAYLOR  
AUSTIN & RUTH TURNEY  
ELEANOR UNRUH  
VISITING NURSES ASSOCIATION  
NANCY VOGEL  
BARBARA WATKINS

## YOUR IMPACT

YOUR SUPPORT  
HELPED US  
TO SERVE

# 1,852

TOTAL  
CONSUMERS  
THROUGH 15  
DIFFERENT  
SERVICES IN  
2017

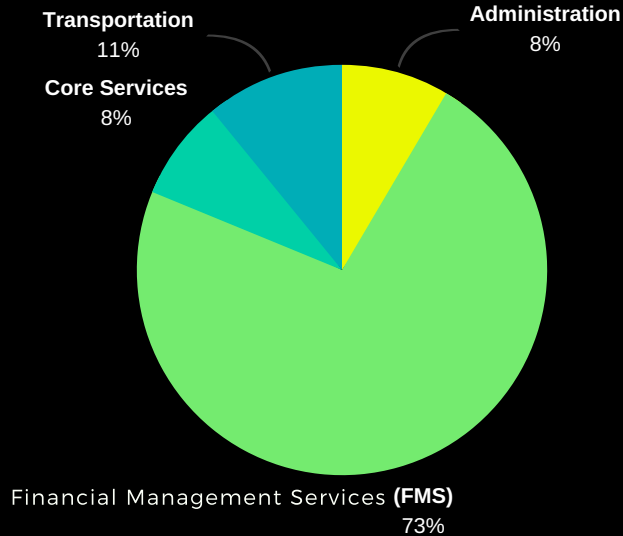
DEB & BOB WERTS  
GLEN & NANCY WHITE  
CINDY WILLIAMS  
MICHELE WILLIAMS  
MOLLY WOOD  
MIKE YODER & KAREN SEIBEL  
EMILY & WILLIAM ZUNG

# *financial statement*

## UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR 2017

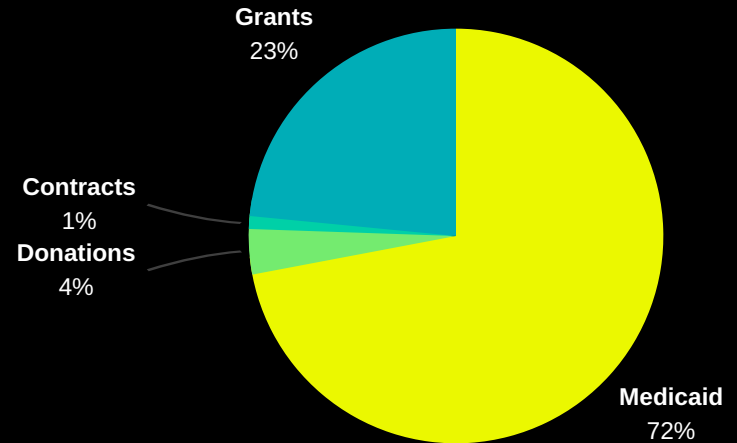
### OPERATING EXPENSES

(TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES: \$2,516,787)



### SOURCES OF REVENUE

(TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE \$2,550,834)





# *We need you...*

...to be part of our family of support! Will you consider partnering with us? We rely on the generosity of people like YOU to help keep our programs and services active and growing as we serve our communities and the individuals who live in them.

## ONLINE GIVING

visit our website <http://www.independenceinc.org/donate/> for safe and secure online giving. Prefer Facebook? We have a donate button on our FB page! You can also sign up for our newsletter and stay in the know! <https://www.facebook.com/independenceincCIL/>

## YEAR END DONATIONS

Become a valued member of our team by supporting us during our year-end campaign. Look for our letter in December. Not on our mailing list? Contact Amy Ballinger, Community Engagement Manager, 785-841-0333 ext. 119 or [aballinger@independenceinc.org](mailto:aballinger@independenceinc.org) to receive our year-end mailing.

## PLANNED GIVING

Leave a legacy of lifelong influence in the disability community by contributing to our mission through a planned gift. Find out how, including the financial benefits to you, by contacting Chip Blaser, Executive Director of the Douglas County Community Foundation. [chipblaser@dccfoundation.org](mailto:chipblaser@dccfoundation.org) or 785-843-8727 and ask about contributing to Independence, Inc.

## SPRING CAMPAIGN

Our mid-fiscal year campaign is a vital part of our fundraising plan. We rely on these funds to finish out each year with our valuable programs and services. This year, we are asking for our Spring donations along with this report. If you would like to give during this campaign, visit our website for fast and secure online giving: <http://www.independenceinc.org/donate/> or look for our Spring Ask letter to arrive in the mail. Thank you in advance for your continued support and for being a valued team member!

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
AND GIVE ONLINE**

**BECOME A  
YEAR-END DONOR**

**CONSIDER  
PLANNED GIVING**

**BECOME A  
VOLUNTEER**

**SIGN UP FOR OUR  
NEWSLETTER**

**GIVE NOW  
TO OUR SPRING  
CAMPAIGN**



World-renowned musician, artist and educator, Jesse Stewart, performing with participants of the mixed-ability workshop "improvising inclusive communities", hosted by The Commons, AUMI-KU Inter Arts and Independence, Inc.,

For a complete list of our services, contact us, walk in, or visit our website:

Independence, Inc

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785-841-0333

visit us online [www.independenceinc.org](http://www.independenceinc.org)