

Centerpoint

Taking Control of Tomorrow

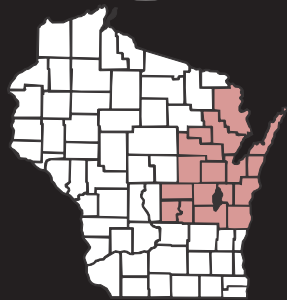
Centerpoint Newsletter. A publication of Options for Independent Living Inc

SUMMER ISSUE 2021

Serving 17 counties in
Northeast Wisconsin
and the Fox Valley

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A publication of:

options
for independent living inc.

optionsil.com



Over a year ago Options closed its doors to the public and continued to provide services via phone and virtually. While this may not have been the preferred method, it worked well during the pandemic, as many people with disabilities and those who are aging continued to have a need for the services we provide in an effort to remain independent. Services like IL Skills training, advocacy, information and referrals, home assessments, adaptive equipment, amplified phones and more. Staff continued to provide it all.

In addition, we worked with our generous Community Foundations and private donors to acquire funds to assist our consumers with funding for rent/ mortgage, utilities, internet, groceries, and more, so individuals with disabilities could stay safe and independent in their homes during the pandemic.

While we have learned new ways to serve our consumers, I am happy to report staff will start to meet with consumers at Options, by appointment only, starting June 1st. Masks will be required at face-to face appointments, unless an accommodation is requested. Safety for consumers and our staff will be a priority when we begin this new phase, therefore we ask for your patience in adhering to our cautionary measures.

2021 brought sad news for Options and its employees as our Executive Director, Sue Premo, decided to take early retirement in February for health reasons. It was a difficult decision for her, but she felt it was best for Options. Although Sue's time as Executive Director was short, Options Board and staff would like to thank Sue for her many contributions and wish her the best. With the retirement of Sue, Options is currently in search for a new Executive Director.

As we start to open things up a bit and venture into and around our communities again, this issue of CenterPoint includes information on COVID vaccine assistance and where to go for information, accessible places to play and stay this summer, adaptive video gaming, save the date for the Fox Valley Wheelchair wash, and much more, all in an effort to keep our consumers informed.

Continued on page 2

continued from page 1

The past year has been one of trials, successes, stumbling, learning, hope, and perseverance, but through it all if I could sum up in one word, I would say resiliency. I believe we have all become more resilient this past year with all that has happened. We have forged on despite and become better as a result. I hope this newsletter gives you information that helps you on your continued journey through this unprecedented time.

Take care and be safe,

Sandy Popp,

Assistant Director/Interim Executive Director ♦

COVID INFORMATION

From the WI Department of Health Services-

On Thursday May 13, the CDC released updated guidance that fully vaccinated people can resume activities they did before the pandemic, including participating in indoor and outdoor activities – large or small – without wearing a mask or physically distancing.

Mask wearing continues to be an important COVID-19 mitigation strategy in public transportation, schools, health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and other settings where additional regulations still exist, regardless of vaccination status. DHS is currently working on updating webpages and publications to include updated guidance for fully vaccinated people. We continue to encourage everyone to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

For continued updates go to: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>

VACCINATION INFORMATION

Wondering about getting your COVID shot?

Do you want to get your COVID vaccines, but find it difficult to figure out where to go, how to get there, what happens if you cannot leave your home, etc. If you need help getting your shots call us. Options is here to help people with disabilities.

We can help you with:

- Finding places/ways to get the COVID-19 vaccine
- Registering for the vaccine appointment
- Finding transportation to the site
- Answering any questions you might have

Call us today! (920) 490/0500 V/Relay or 888-465-1515 toll-free

CONSUMER CORNER

Ron - I am writing as a result of a very positive experience that I had with Calvin Richtig at Options for Independent Living in Green Bay Wisconsin.

I am a retired 77-year-old teacher. I was diagnosed with a hearing loss 33 years ago. Since that time I have worn Widex hearing aids. Over the years my hearing has deteriorated. All the usual problems with this loss such as hearing in large groups and the use of the telephone have become more challenging. About ten years ago I purchased a Clarity phone. It had served me well until recently. I was aware of Options because I had visited their facility here in Green Bay.

I decided I needed assistance from Options if I was going to be able to use the telephone. About 3 months ago I contacted Calvin Richtig at Options. We discussed my options for telephones. Due to the virus it was not possible for me to visit their facility. Calvin said that he could send me a couple phones to try. In a few days two cordless phones arrived at my home. I used both for several days, but it was

challenging for me because adjustment for volume and tone were on the handset. Thus I contacted Calvin. After some discussion I told Calvin that maybe I needed to try a phone with a cord. This would allow me to adjust the volume and tone on the base unit. In about a week a corded phone arrived at my home. I used it for several days and concluded with Calvin's help we had found a phone that met my needs.

It has been important for me to have found a person like Calvin with extreme patience to stay with me and not give up. Calvin and I have had a number of conversations over the past few months. It has been a true blessing to have Calvin walk me through this process.

I told Calvin that it is because of his hard work that I am now able to use the telephone with confidence. More people need to know the services not only for hearing impaired people but for all types of disabilities are available from Options for Independent Living. I am just very thankful that I found Options. ♦

Can't afford the Internet?

Go to page 7 for information on Emergency Broad Band Assistance

FOX VALLEY WHEELCHAIR T SEPT. 17, 2021

SAVE THE DATE

Options will be co-sponsoring the Fox Valley Wheelchair Wash this fall with Make the Ride Happen, Lutheran Social Services, Easter Seals, NuMotion, and Johnny B. It will be held at NuMotion in Appleton on September 17th, 2021 from 11 am to 3pm. We are

limiting the number of attendees this year, so registration will be required. We will also have additional protocols in place to keep our guests and volunteers safe during the event. More details to come as we get closer. ♦

RECREATION RESOURCES

We have all had enough of the indoors with winter and COVID restrictions. State parks continue to be open...so enjoy getting outdoors this summer...call ahead to find out if there are any COVID restrictions for the park you are going to visit.

There is so much to do and enjoy in our state parks. There are accessible cabins and rustic camping sites for the camping enthusiast. There are rustic cabins located at Copper Falls and Blue Mound state parks as well as larger cabins with more amenities at Mirror Lake, Buckhorn, Harrington Beach, High Cliff, Kohler-Andrae, and Potawatomi state parks, Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit, and the Richard Bong State Recreation Area. These cabins are available only to people with disabilities and their guests and must be reserved ahead of time. Cabins fill up quickly so make your reservations early to take advantage of the wonderful accessible camping opportunities.

The Department of Natural Resources also has many accessible piers for fishing and boat access throughout WI. There are also accessible hiking trails. All of this allows people with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

For more information on the accessible cabins, campsites, adaptive equipment, piers or hiking trails contact Nick Zouski at 608-267-7490 or email DNRWisconsinParks@wisconsin.gov or go online to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/camping/cabin.html>.

In Wisconsin there are also accessible cabins and B&Bs to rent, along with a tour company specific for people with disabilities. Call ahead for any COVID restrictions. And whatever you do...enjoy!

Accessible Lodges, Cabins, Bed & Breakfast

Pine Forest Lodge, Mercer, Wisconsin 715-776-2241

www.pineforestlodge.com/index.htm • <https://pineforestlodge.com/about-us/>

Sunrise Lodge, Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin

800-221-9689 or 715-547-3684 or www.sunriselodge.com

Sunset Pines Resort, Willard Wisconsin • 715-937-5109 • www.sunsetpinesresort.com

Welcome HOME Bed and Breakfast, Newburg Wisconsin (near Cedarburg)

262-675-2525 • www.welcomehomebb.com

Accessible Travel Tour Company

Abel Trek, Reedsville Wisconsin • 800-205-6173 • <https://abletrektours.com/>



OPTIONS TEAMS up with ACCESS ABILITY TO LOAN TREK CHAIR

In 2019 Options for Independent Living partnered up with Access Ability Wisconsin to provide access to an all-terrain outdoor wheelchair for our consumers with mobility barriers. This has been an excellent opportunity for individuals living within our seventeen county service area to gain access to off-road adventures that would limit most traditional mobility devices.

The outdoor wheelchair is available with a trailer, intended for individuals to take anywhere they want to use it, for typically about a two-week period, for no cost. We at Options and AAW have a passion for providing access to outdoor recreational opportunities for individuals in our area, and throughout the state. Contact us to learn more about the chair or for information on how to reserve it yourself.

The following is a testimonial and photos from Aaron, father of a child who recently used the device to participate in a Boy Scout event with his peers.

“The track chair was amazing at the Boys Scouts event on Saturday. Mason was able to hike with the boys for 4.5 hours and over 5 miles (unbelievable!!). I cannot thank you enough for this life changing experience for both me and Mason. So very grateful for your organization. Definitely one of the most amazing experiences of our lives (both for Mason and myself).

Mason is 11 years old and was diagnosed with Congenital Myasthenic Syndrome at an early age, which has made enjoying the outdoors challenging. This is the first time we have “camped” or “hiked” together without me trying to carry him around the woods and rough terrain. We were able to navigate hills (up & down), rocky terrain, and wet areas. The All-Terrain Outdoor Wheelchair (Action Trackchair) is so important for our family and as you can see by the picture, Mason had a tremendous weekend. I cannot thank you enough for the work you are doing to change lives across our area.” ♦



Photo of All-Terrain Outdoor Wheelchair (Action Trackchair)



Photo of Aaron, father and Mason, son at Boy Scout event

TECH CLOSET NEWS

OPTIONS AT Specialist can assess an individual with a disability to determine the role assistive technology can play in achieving greater independence. For more information on the pictured technology or other assistive technology that can help you reach your goal of independence, contact Calvin Richtig, **OPTIONS AT Specialist**, at 920-393-1037 or toll-free at 888-465-1515 ext 130.

WisTech

Assistive
Technology Program

Assistive technology partially supported by the WisTech, Assistive Technology Program. Telecommunication partially funded by the Universal Service Fund (USF.) ♦

ADAPTIVE GAMING

Options for Independent Living is working with other organizations to develop an accessible video gaming experience for individuals with various disabilities or barriers. We have recently acquired several different accessible game controllers and adapters that will allow users with various physical limitations to play video games with something other than a standard controller. Some examples of equipment currently available for demonstration and loan include;

Microsoft Xbox Adaptive Controller

Logitech Adaptive Gaming Kit

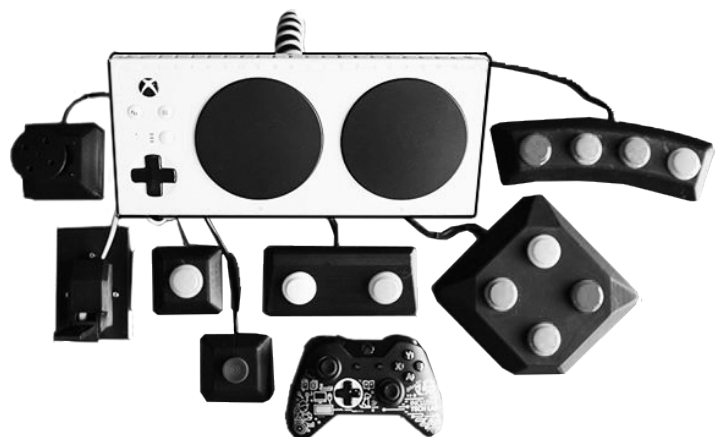
Warfighter Engaged joystick, switches and cross platform controller adapters

All of these controllers can be used with the native Microsoft Xbox, but will also work on Sony PlayStation and Nintendo Switch.

Staff are also experimenting with console and in-game settings that enhance the controller features. We are also exploring solutions to barriers related to hearing loss, vision loss and cognitive/ stimulation variations. If you are interested in learning more about the possibilities of accessible gaming please contact Calvin at Options, 920-393-1037. We would love to enhance the experience for those who are already playing, and introduce gaming to individuals who do not or have not played at all. ♦



Warfighter Engaged Adaptive Gaming Kit



Logitech Adaptive Gaming Kit

EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT PROGRAM

Can't afford the Internet? Maybe this program can help:

Emergency Broad Band Assistance

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to necessitate distance learning, telework, and reliance on telehealth, broadband connectivity is essential. Congress created the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program ("EBBP") to address affordability, one of the main barriers to internet adoption. This program is run by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is an outreach partner and is able to provide information. The PSC does not administer or oversee the program.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit offers a monthly discount to low income household to offset the cost of broadband Internet subscriptions. The EBBP is a monthly discount of up to \$50 per month, which increase to \$75 per month on tribal lands. Eligible households may also get discounts on a laptop, desktop, or tablet computer if their provider is participating in the device benefit. The broadband provider will receive the money directly for providing service to an eligible household. Participation by internet service providers is voluntary.

For more information on this program or to sign up go to

www.getemergencybroadband.org

or call the PSC PHONE AND INTERNET HELPLINE 608-267-3595. ♦

OPTIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS and MEMBERS

Autumn Nordall, President

Connie Greenwald, Vice President

Jacob Ruatti, Treasurer

Joyce David, Secretary

MEMBERS

Scott Anderson

Steve Boney

Scott Menzel

Amy Perry

Lynn Smits

Paul Haasl

Eric Stream

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

VISION STATEMENT: *OPTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING* empowers people with disabilities.

MISSION STATEMENT: *OPTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING*, serving people with disabilities in 17 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, is the pre-eminent non-profit organization of choice to empower people with disabilities. *OPTIONS* provides opportunities, through advocacy and education, for individuals with all disabilities and ages, to actively access their communities, maximize their independence, and connect with the resources and funding available to them. ♦

options
for independent living inc

WISCONSIN STATE BUDGET UPDATE

This month Wisconsin legislators will be voting on a 2-year biennial budget for our state. The budget year starts July 1, 2021. There are many components to the budget proposed by the Governor that will positively affect services for people with disabilities and those who are aging. The following is an press release from the WI Survival Coalition covering one of the main components to the Governor's budget, Medicaid Expansion and Direct Care.

Courtesy of the WI Survival Coalition, Press Release, May 19, 2021

Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organization members have consistently supported Medicaid expansion. Medicaid provides access to critical services for many people with disabilities which are not available at all or to the degree needed in private insurance. Expanding Medicaid eligibility to a more reasonable poverty level will not only provide vital, comprehensive and affordable health care benefits to many people with complex conditions and mental health needs who struggle to manage their health and keep working, but will also increase the hours that direct care workers can contribute to supporting people with disabilities, without fear of falling off the benefits cliff. The Governor's Task Force on Caregiving in its work to find solutions to the direct care workforce crisis noted that Medicaid expansion would significantly address crisis by allowing current workers to work an extra shift per week (8 hours) and still retain public health insurance. Currently many people with disabilities go without care, risking their health, because they cannot find workers to fill shifts.

Savings from the proposed Medicaid expansion are also critically needed to reinvest in programs and services critical to people with disabilities and older adults, including for use as sustainable direct care worker rate and wage increases. Wisconsin has a long proud history of broad bipartisan support for services and supports for people with disabilities.

As the legislature continues deliberation on the budget, we ask that policymakers come together to support the initiatives that are vital to the lives, health, and independence of Wisconsinites with disabilities. Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 20 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability. ♦

ACT NOW - ADVOCACY NETWORK!

Join **OPTIONS** legislative advocacy network, Act Now! Receive legislative alerts and updates on issues impacting people with disabilities, delivered either through email or US Postal Mail.

When an alert or update is received, everyone on the network is encouraged to pursue the issue by contacting their area legislators, combining your voice with many!

Your legislators want to hear firsthand how legislation being considered can impact your life positively or negatively. It helps in their decision making. Joining Act Now will assist you in those efforts and educate you on the issues.

Contact Sandy Popp at **OPTIONS**
920-393-1043 or (888) 465-1515 ext 179 ♦

FUNDS for HOME ACCESSIBILITY, REHABILITATION, OR REPAIR

OPTIONS has HOME funds for Home Accessibility, Rehabilitation, or Repair

The HOME Loan Program provides deferred payment/ no interest second mortgage loans to make homes accessible or make home repairs. The loans are focused on providing resources to households that include someone who has a disability or is older and is at low-to-moderate income status. *OPTIONS* receives funds for the HOME from the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development through the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Housing to administer the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME Loan Program).

The loan must be paid back when the property is sold, transferred or ceases to be the borrower's principal place of residence. Types of projects include (but not limited to) ramp construction, bathroom, kitchen and bedroom modifications, along with general housing rehabilitation and repairs. The counties served by this program include Brown (outside Green Bay City limits), Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara, and Winnebago Counties. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements to be considered for a loan.

For more information contact Steve LaFrombois at stewel@optionsil.org, 920-393-1044, or toll-free at 1-888-465-1515, ext. 122. ♦

OPTIONS' MEDICAID PERSONAL CARE PROGRAM

OPTIONS offers a Personal Care Program for people with permanent physical disabilities who are: Medicaid beneficiaries, medically stable, require personal care services, and have identified an individual to provide personal care. The program is consumer-directed and includes personal care assistance with: bathing, dressing/undressing, prosthetics, grooming, eating, mobility in home, toileting, transferring, and incidental services (laundry, light housekeeping, meal prep).

The consumer must agree to responsibly use personal care services and have back-up support available as needed. *OPTIONS* does not provide emergency or back-up personal care services. Consumers utilizing *OPTIONS* Personal Care Program must have chosen an individual who they are interested in hiring. The Personal Care Worker (PCW) candidate must be at least 18 years-old and be trained in the skill(s) necessary to provide cares to the consumer. The PCW cannot be a parent/guardian of a minor child or a spouse.

If you have a referral or would like more information on *OPTIONS* Personal Care Program please contact Valerie Tschampl, RN Supervisor at 920-393-1036 or toll-free at 888-465-1515 ext 182 or e-mail at valeriet@optionsil.org. ♦

WISCONSIN WISLOAN PROGRAM

WisLoan is a statewide alternative loan program helping Wisconsin residents with a disability purchase assistive technology that assists them in living more independently and productively. Any Wisconsin resident with a disability over the age of 18 in need of assistive technology or home modifications is eligible to apply for a loan.

Some examples of assistive technology include wheelchairs, hearing aids, closed circuit televisions (CCTV), and vehicles with modifications, or the modifications necessary to make a vehicle accessible.

For more information or to apply for WisLoan call **OPTIONS** at 920-490-0500 or toll-free at 1-888-465-1515. ♦

WisLoan is a federally-funded project of the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation, and a cooperative service of the Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, IndependenceFirst, and BMO Harris Bank. ♦



TELEWORK LOAN PROGRAM

The Wisconsin Telework program is a statewide, alternative loan program that allows Wisconsin residents with disabilities to purchase computers and other equipment needed to work from home or from other remote sites, e.g. work on the road or at a telework center.

Loan funds can be used to purchase equipment, training to use equipment, extended warranties, and cost of maintenance and repairs. For more information contact the staff at **OPTIONS** for Independent Living at 920-490-0500 or toll-free at 1-888-465-1515

Some examples of assistive technology include wheelchairs, hearing aids, closed circuit televisions (CCTVs), and vehicles with modifications, or the modifications necessary to make a vehicle accessible.

For more information or to apply for WisLoan call **OPTIONS** at 920-490-0500 or toll-free at 1-888-465-1515. ♦

This program is made possible through a grant from Rehabilitative Services Administration and authorized by Section (303)b of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and implemented by subsequent program regulation 34 C F R Part 373. The Department of Workforce Development-Division of Rehabilitation received the grant and provides programmatic and fiscal oversight. IndependenceFirst, a community based and consumer-controlled independent living center based in Milwaukee, administers the program in partnership with BMO Harris Bank and Wisconsin Independent Living Centers. ♦

GREEN BAY OFFICE

555 Country Club Road, Green Bay, WI 54307

Toll Free 1-888-465-1515 • Fax 920-490-0700

Executive Director	to be determined	920-393-1045	to be determined
Assistant Director	Sandra L Popp	920-393-1043	sandyp@optionsil.org
Accountant	Peggy Maas	920-490-8270	peggy@optionsil.org
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Housing Program Manager / Maintenance Supervisor	Steve LaFrombois	920-393-1044	stewel@optionsil.org
Accessibility Assessment Specialist	Sarah Dunks	920-393-1034	sarahd@optionsil.org
Accessibility Assessment Specialist	Marie Smith	920-393-1046	maries@optionsil.org
Work Incentives Benefits Specialist	Karin Zuleger	920-393-1039	karinz@optionsil.org
Assistive Technology Specialist	Calvin Richtig	920-393-1037	calvinr@optionsil.org
Independent Living Coordinator / Memory Loss Technology Specialist	Stacie Scheibe	920-393-1050	stacies@optionsil.org
Independent Living Coordinator	LeAnne Loveless	920-393-1047	leannel@optionsil.org
Supportive Home Care Program Director/Personal Assistant Services	Valerie Tschampl	920-393-1036	valeriet@optionsil.org
Personal Care Program Care Coordinator	Jennifer Lardinois	920-393-1032	jenniferl@optionsil.org
Billing Specialist	Missie Olm	920-393-1048	missieo@optionsil.org
Secretary	Barb Guyes	920-490-0500	barbg@optionsil.org
Certified Peer Link Specialist	Dave Zanon	920-609-9467	davez@optionsil.org
Certified Peer Link Specialist	Paula Jolly	920-737-1884	paulaj@optionsil.org
Advocacy Coordinator/ CPS Supervisor	Stephanie Birmingham	920-495-9688	stephanieb@optionsil.org

FOX VALLEY OFFICE

2331 E. Lourdes Drive

Toll Free 1-888-465-1515 • Fax 920-490-0700

Independent Living Coordinator	John Meissner	920-997-9999	johnm@optionsil.org
Independent Living Coordinator	Alyson Windle	920-882-9309	alysonw@optionsil.org



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<p>We can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find places/ways to get the COVID-19 vaccine • Register for the vaccine appointment • Find transportation to the site • Answer your questions <p>Call us today! (920) 490/0500 V/Relay or 888-465-1515 toll-free</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Brown</td> <td>Menominee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calumet</td> <td>Oconto</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Door</td> <td>Outagamie</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fond du Lac</td> <td>Shawano</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green Lake</td> <td>Sheboygan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kewaunee</td> <td>Waupaca</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manitowoc</td> <td>Waushara</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marinette</td> <td>Winnebago</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marquette</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>OPTIONS website www.optionsil.org</p> <p>FACEBOOK facebook.com/optionsil.greenbay/</p>	Brown	Menominee	Calumet	Oconto	Door	Outagamie	Fond du Lac	Shawano	Green Lake	Sheboygan	Kewaunee	Waupaca	Manitowoc	Waushara	Marinette	Winnebago	Marquette	
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