# **From the Director**

# Dear Friends and Supporters of Options for Independent Living,

# As we move into the spring season, I am excited to share with you some of the highlights from the past few months at Options. Our dedicated staff has been hard at work advocating for disability rights and services in Wisconsin, and we have seen some exciting developments in our efforts.

# One of our recent successes was the Independent Living Days in Madison, where members of Options Board of Directors and staff collaborated with other Independent Living Centers to promote awareness and advocate for disability rights. This event was a tremendous success and brought together individuals from across the state to learn and share their experiences. At this event, Karin Zuleger received the Relentless Badger Award. We are very proud to have Karin on our team!

# In addition, Options was one of 45 local non-profit organizations that participated in Give BIG Green Bay. We are thankful for the support provided to Options. This collaboration with other non-profits was invaluable, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work with our colleagues to promote our collective cause and philanthropy in our community.

# I am also pleased to share that Options staff have begun work on the Home and Community Based Services Grant that we received late last year. These funds will allow us to expand our home accessibility assessment services and provide resources to consumers for assistance in completing the recommended modifications. We are excited to be able to provide even more support and services to those in our community who need them.

# At Options for Independent Living, we remain committed to our mission of promoting independent living and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. With the continued support of our community and dedicated staff, we look forward to making an even greater impact in the months ahead.

# Thank you for your support and commitment to our cause.

Take care and stay healthy,

Josh Theis, Executive Director, josht@optionsil.org 920-393-1045

# **Consumer Spotlight- Accessibility Assessment & Navigator Program** by Marie Smith, Accessibility Assessment Specialist

# Cody is a very bright and energetic young man who always has a positive outlook on life. He is constantly laughing and cracking jokes. Cody was referred to *Options* for Independent Living by TMG IRIS for an Accessibility Assessment to address barriers to his bathroom. Cody experienced an automobile accident resulting in a traumatic brain injury, which affected his mobility. During the Accessibility Assessment, I invited Cody and his mother Brenda to tour *Option* Showcase Model Home and Office Complex for more ideas on making Cody’s home environment more accessible. Brenda and her friend Jim visited *Options* for a tour. After seeing the accessible bikes on display in *Options* Adaptive Recreation Program, Brenda and Jim shared that Cody has a recumbent exercise bike that he enjoys riding but can no longer ride. His feet have grown to a size 14 and constantly slip off the pedals. Also, his feet are too close to the body of the bike, so his ankle brace hits it with each pedal revolution. Without the exercise bike, Cody cannot maintain his muscle tone and cardio health. Brenda has tried securing Cody’s feet with different types of straps, but they continued to slip off the pedals.

# The combination of his feet slipping off the pedals and brace hitting the bike was very frustrating for Cody and limited his desire to ride the exercise bike. I teamed up with *Options* staff to find a solution on how to help Cody overcome this barrier to ride his exercise bike again. With funds provided by the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Grant, *Options* Navigator Pilot Programwas able to purchase Terratrike Heel Support Pedals with straps and pedal extenders from the Hostel Shoppe in Stevens Point WI. The new footplates fit Cody’s large shoe preventing them from slipping off and the extenders keep his feet from hitting the body of the bike. The recumbent exercise bike was dropped off at *Options* and the new pedals were attached. Cody came into *Options* to try out the bike with the new pedals. The pedals worked out perfect! As you can see by the expression on Cody’s face below, a picture is worth a thousand words.

# Cody is pictured riding on his adapted incumbent bike with a smile on his face.  He is wearing a blue t-shirt with blue and black athletic pants.  He has brown short hair.**Mark Your Calendars**

# Mark your calendars for the **Free Fox Valley Wheelchair Wash** to be held on Friday April 28th at NuMotion, 920 North Westhill Blvd., Appleton, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Power wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs, and scooters will be cleaned and inspected. CNA’s will be available to assist with transfers upon request.

# **Our Burger/Brat Fry is BACK**! Each registered attendee is provided with two free meals tickets, one for themselves and one for a guest. Any additional meal tickets can be purchased for $5.00.  Options for Independent living will showcase their adaptive recreational equipment. As a reminder, NuMotion is accessible by Valley Transit Bus 15. **Registration is required, please call** Alyson Johnson at 920-288-7095 to reserve your spot today!.

# This event is sponsored by: NuMotion; *Options* for Independent Living; Easter Seals; Lutheran Social Services; The ALS Association; and Valley Transit.

# **Options Community Expo**

# Mark your calendar for Options Community Expo **Thursday, August 24th from 3 pm – 7** pm at 555 Country Club Road. The day will include a durable medical equipment drive, a wheelchair wash and safety check, wheelchair van demos, , adaptive recreation equipment, free food from the Brown County ADRC accessible food truck, and much more!

So bring your used medical equipment to donate, get your wheelchair cleaned and inspected, your belly filled with good food, check out the modified vans, try out some great recreation equipment and maybe win a prize! Hope to see you there, it will be a fun day for all!

# **Call To Action! Please support WI Independent Living Centers!**

# The WI State Legislature is in the process of deciding the upcoming 2023-25 biennial budget and we need your support. This year WI Independent Living Centers, with Senate Bill 71 (SB71), is asking for a funding increase for Independent Living Centers (ILC’s). ILC funding has been stagnant for over 20 years and centers are ﬁnding it difﬁcult to meet their obligations across the state. We ask you to please reach out to your legislators to let them know the impact independent living services has had in your life and ask them to support AB71. You can ﬁnd out who your legislators are by clicking on <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/> or call Autumn at Options, 920-393-1035, she will assist you.

# Options staff will also be attending the budget writing listening session for the Joint Finance Committee meeting at the Lakeland Union High School in Minocqua on April 26, and we would love to be able to share how Options assisted you with Committee members. Please feel free to write up a personal story of how Options services assisted you and email to sandyp@optionsil.org, send to Options at 555 Country Club Road, Green Bay WI 54313, attention Sandy or email directly to Joint Finance Committee at **budgetcomments@legis.wisconsin.gov**

# Thank you for your support of WI Independent Living Centers!

# **Meet Options New Staff - Welcome Ian, Heath, Becky, and Autumn!!!**

# **Heath Karau** - I am the new Independent Living Coordinator on the Options team. I started on November 7th! I am very passionate about helping people with all disabilities grow and live their best lives.  Having a lifelong hearing disability, and a recent recipient of Cochlear Implant technology, I have lived experience with self-advocating and navigating the resources I needed to improve the function of my life.  I came to Options personally seeking assistive technology in 2022, and received a lot of support which inspired me to want to be part of this team in assisting other individuals with disabilities in NE Wisconsin.

# My past career of 25+ years is in Architecture and Project Management.  In 2022 I received Peer Support Specialist training and became SMART recovery certified for helping people with their mental health and substance abuse challenges.  I am very proud to be on the Brown County Homeless Coalition Committee team in 2023 which is driven to improve and further develop the infrastructure Green Bay needs to help the homeless population live sustainable lives again.  A personal goal of mine in 2023 is to establish a support group in Brown County for Cochlear Implant users and future candidates, as well as anyone with hearing disability through the HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America).

# I am a nature lover and you will find me spending as much time as possible outdoors hiking, camping, biking and soaking it all up! I love exploring my creativity through the fine arts in painting, drawing, writing poetry and gourmet cooking!  I sincerely look forward to connecting with people with disabilities in NE Wisconsin and growing into my new exciting career with the Options!



# **Ian Kaster** - Options is excited to bring Ian aboard as a member of the Assistive Technology team.  His role is to assist consumers in the selection, acquisition, or use of assistive technology devices (equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a person with a disability).  He has been a great asset to our team already with a goal to help people with everything from adaptive recreational equipment, like our outdoor Track chair, to alternative phone options for people with hearing, vision or mobility impairment. He has also been an integral part of streamlining and growing our durable medical equipment LEND program.



**Autumn Nordall –** Options brought Autumn aboard as an Advocacy Coordinator. Autumn will be working 20 hours a week attending Communities on Transition meetings (C-Cots), teaching self advocacy classes for youth, and following up with consumer advocacy needs. Autumn knows Options well. As a youth she was a consumer of Options services after sustaining a spinal cord injury from a vehicle accident, she has been an Options Board member, and most recently President of Options Board. We are excited to have her as part of Options Team! “I am so excited to continue my journey at Options as Advocacy Coordinator! I love that I can guide and support others just as I was supported throughout the organization for the last 21 years.”



# **Becky Bookter -** Becky began her role as Accessibility Assessment Specialist at the end of January 2023.  Becky is no stranger to Options for Independent Living.  Upon graduating from college from U.W.-Milwaukee with a degree in Occupational Therapy, in 2000, she volunteered and was later hired at Options where she worked for 3 years. After leaving her job position at Options in the early 2000s, she gained experience in the clinical setting, school setting, and community setting assisting persons with disabilities.  Becky continued to sporadically volunteer with Options, and financial support Options’ mission throughout the years.  Today Becky is happy to return to Options for Independent Living and working with consumers in Northeastern Wisconsin, and collaborating with her colleagues.  She is grateful to be a part of team where works of compassion are observed daily. And Options is glad to have her back!

# Becky is a female.  She is pictured smiling and wearing a light blue dress shirt.  She is wearing black framed glasses and has shoulder length brown hair.

#

# **Options 2023 Relentless Badger Award Winner**

# Karin is pictured at her desk holding the award.  She has brown hair, has glasses and is wearing a blue multi-colored sweater.

# Karin Zuleger was selected as Options 2023 Relentless Badger Award Recipient! Karin has worked for Options for 25 years as a Work Incentive Benefits Specialist. She started at Options as an Intern and soon after completing her Internship she was hired. She has done a formidable job educating consumers with disabilities on how work will affect their benefits. She has tirelessly advocated with consumers when Social Security has notified them of overpayments showing Social Security they were incorrect, thus saving the consumers $1000’s of dollars they did not have to pay back. On the other side, she has assisted consumers with acquiring payments from Social Security that were due to them, called back pay. All in all Karin has done a wonderful job assisting the consumers she worked with on their benefit needs! Thanks for all the work you do Karin!!! Congrats on your award, it is well deserved!!

# **BENEFITS BUZZ**

# **2023 SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES**

# **Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)**

# There will be an **8.7% COLA for 2023**. This means Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits will increase 8.7%. The increase will start in January 2023 for Social Security benefits and December 30, 2022, for SSI benefits. There also will be changes to certain work incentive amounts. I show some of the changes below. I based the information on Social Security’s Fact Sheet on the 2023 Changes, which you can view at <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2023.pdf>. You can find more information at <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2022/#10-2022-2>.

# **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**

# Trial Work Period -The amount that counts a month as a Trial Work month will be **$1,050.00 per month in 2023**. It was $970.00 per month in 2022.

# **Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA)**

# Non-Blind Amount -The SGA level for people who are not blind will be **$1,470.00 per month in 2023**. It was $1,350.00 per month in 2022.

# Blind Amount -The SGA level for people who get SSDI based on blindness will be **$2,460.00 per month in 2023**. It was $2,260.00 per month in 2022.

# **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

# **SSI Federal Benefit Rate**

# Individual Amount -It will be **$914.00 per month in** **2023**. It was $841.00 per month in 2022.

# Couple Amount -It will be **$1,371.00 per month in** **2023**. It was $1,261.00 per month in 2022.

# **SSI Resource Limits**

# Individual Amount -It will be **$2,000.00 per month in** **2023** (the same as it was in 2022).

# Couple Amount -It will be **$3,000.00 per month in** **2023** (the same as it was in 2022).

# **SSI Student Earned Income Exclusion**

# Monthly Limit -The monthly limit for this Exclusion will be **$2,220.00 in 2023**. It was $2,040.00 in 2022.

# Annual Limit -The annual limit for this Exclusion will be **$8,950.00 in 2023**. It was $8,230.00 in 2022.

**Medicaid & BadgerCare Renewal Timeline & Resources**

Since early 2020, [special rules have been in place](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001LOJPx2dJVVZq1hgHO29Yr-Fd5M2ajFiuBqafoW1RgJz-zOypn_ffDUCapRLjs2X1NAJo9tRjySFDHjU0u09JQIragsO069ck7ES_t4LuQsen32QMAqyZ9YBBmnDipX2Sbu-bLTdvnermKhp7Ud49a38aJF0GuoHwWdYUU-2CRsBjSYrguvxoRhKx9VC_EOVuEbnwW3Njb0E=&c=gAN_w0ZFvKcauf0OGblRXW1ayoKmpnGfl1BQwmd86eXd_piuWa8Jww==&ch=2xbasJO3aHp31lsDQOeXaoM7VWre59cKWLYE3eyQipK1UNU5a9ZZRQ==) pausing BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid renewals and terminations. These rules have allowed members to keep their health insurance even if there is a change to their situation--like their household size or income--that would normally make them lose their insurance.

The federal government recently passed a bill**that will end the policy of continuous Medicaid eligibility**on **March 31, 2023.** This means that beginning on April 1, new applicants to BadgerCare Plus and Wisconsin Medicaid programs will be covered by regular eligibility rules.

This change will not END coverage for any members at that time. Instead, it begins a 14-month process of “unwinding" this rule for Wisconsin’s Medicaid and BadgerCare programs and a return to routine operations. For most members, this unwinding means they will need to go through a renewal process at some point during the next year. Members will receive a notice with their renewal date. More information is provided below.

In the coming weeks, more details will be shared about the precise timing of next steps. Here is [the current plan from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS):](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001LOJPx2dJVVZq1hgHO29Yr-Fd5M2ajFiuBqafoW1RgJz-zOypn_ffDfE-tUSV3ue6FOl5X_-WQ_RLnJuqd-KKI_o6z9TPyIGFsnT7qZn_xTHVoHHYtBPwZddzDy_RzVOoSKlvA02pERgk1SxMKrL4HZwGaMORGsAAlYkhl9YVlB9IPxTgRPe_6J-VUFhlq7SyW1g-PTJMpoYl64qgALXl7j5P6c8okA2sCTM8tL5EK65awhl3YKaazQ==&c=gAN_w0ZFvKcauf0OGblRXW1ayoKmpnGfl1BQwmd86eXd_piuWa8Jww==&ch=2xbasJO3aHp31lsDQOeXaoM7VWre59cKWLYE3eyQipK1UNU5a9ZZRQ==)

* ﻿DHS will send out a letter to members in March with details about their scheduled renewal date. Members should watch for the letter, read it, and make sure they understand what they need to do and when. Members should not renew until it's their renewal time.
* Up to 90 days before a member needs to renew, they may get an email or text message to "update your address." This reminder is to help make sure that DHS has a valid address before sending out a renewal packet.
* At 45 days before a member's renewal due date, they will get a packet from DHS telling them it is time to renew, providing a prefilled renewal form, and telling them their next steps.

**Two groups of Medicaid members** must follow different, more time-sensitive processes to avoid a gap in coverage.

* **Members who have not confirmed their citizenship or immigration status** must do so **before May 31**
* DHS has previously requested this information, and will make another attempt to reach out to this group with letters and phone calls in March
* **Members whose coverage has been manually maintained by DHS while the special rules have been in place must *reapply*before May 31**. These members cannot use the standard renewal process.
* These members may not know who they are. DHS will reach out to this group in April with a letter (and an email, if possible) telling them what they need to do.

**We encourage you to sign up to get direct updates** about Wisconsin's unwinding efforts from DHS at [DHS-Medicaid Unwinding Communications listserv](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001LOJPx2dJVVZq1hgHO29Yr-Fd5M2ajFiuBqafoW1RgJz-zOypn_ffDfE-tUSV3ue6BlW2FC8zpHSKjx7U0Q9A3gqPKPqZwtySnzZIP7XEallaGwLe0G7WpCYd2HaNXD4lrMwUad-YkRXrCClE4QsqcrlLiRhrGH44RAFoOjgSPsHSNlPJEu4gGwIm2P3rVI2Xv__cj9ICcrxdLc-up0aqUWr9LYj2UPjH3tWVD4e4OHQ=&c=gAN_w0ZFvKcauf0OGblRXW1ayoKmpnGfl1BQwmd86eXd_piuWa8Jww==&ch=2xbasJO3aHp31lsDQOeXaoM7VWre59cKWLYE3eyQipK1UNU5a9ZZRQ==).

# **RECREATION NEWS**

Options Adaptive recreation program, Adaptive Adventures, teamed up with Brad Roethlisberger and held our first ever Sled Hockey Clinics on November 2022 and Feb 2023. Brad has a very strong history and reputation as a leader for sled hockey and created the first team in Wisconsin. We had about 13 participants total between the two events and while we would have liked to see a few more participants, we were really excited at the responses we received from those who came. One youth participant saw sled hockey in the most recent Paralympics and declared to his parents that he wanted to be a professional sled hockey player. Due to a lack of opportunity in our area, he hadn’t been able to even try sled hockey until our November event. We’d like to hope that with continued growth and support that we can watch him grow and reach that professional level someday!

After the event we were contacted by a foundation out of Madison called Paul’s Party, which has a mission to “fund fun” for kids with physical disabilities in honor of son Paul who was an avid sled hockey athlete. We are excited to announce that Paul’s Party has contributed to fund all necessary equipment to start a youth sled hockey team in the Green Bay area. We will be working hard over the next year to find youth who are interested in being a part of the team and parents or family/friends, or other individuals who are interested in taking a team leadership role, such as coach or manager. If you know anyone interested in participating in either the open skate / sled hockey clinics or development of the new team please contact Calvin at Options at calvinr@optionsil.org or 920-393-1037.

# **Adult Trike Available to Use at Options**

# When balance becomes a barrier, but you love riding bicycles try checking out our Adult Tricycle! This adaptive recreation equipment is certainly a way to avoid tipping over and losing your balance when doing the hobbies you love.

# This bike is a large 3 Wheel Tricycle. The 24-inch wheel design provides a comfortable riding experience for all adults. At the same time, the adult tricycle is equipped with a large basket, which allows you to carry more vegetables, fruits, and other items when you travel.

# The 3-wheel bike for adults is made of Hi-tensile steel and can support a total weight of 350 pounds for drivers and goods. In addition to the tricycle's practicability, the tricycle's design ensures the security and stability of driving, and the triangular frame will remain firm and stable.

# Pictured is a blue 3-wheeled bike with a basket behind the seat.Fast & Secure Riding: Our adult tricycles have a dual braking system. Through the control of two handles, you can quickly start the braking effect, ensure security when riding, and let you enjoy the ride more.

# The handles are ergonomically designed to make it easier to control; the adjustable seat can be adjusted to adapt to different rider heights; the low step makes it easier for you to get on the tricycle. This trike for adults will be a practical tool in your daily life. It can be used for entertainment, shopping, or exercise. You no longer need to worry about carrying many items by bike. Instead, you can ride comfortably in towns, beaches, or bicycle lanes.

# Try it out today! This adaptive recreational equipment is available to loan for free for up to two weeks! If you’d like to schedule an appointment to view this trike to make sure it’s a fit for you then contact calvinr@optionsil.org at (920)393-1037.

# **WI State Parks Update**

# With spring and summer right around the corner, looking to reserve a spot for camping in WI state parks is on a lot of minds. For those unable to use outdoor campsites, the Wisconsin State Park System offers 10 accessible cabins. There are 8 larger cabins and 2 smaller, rustic cabins. These cabins are available only to people with disabilities and their guests and must be reserved ahead of time.

# Reservations are needed for all accessible cabins in the Wisconsin State Park System. Only one reservation period will be confirmed per application. Due to the high demand, reservations will not be accepted for more than four consecutive nights and no more than four nights per year. There is a $7.95 reservation fee in addition to the nightly cabin rate. **The first day to make reservations is January 10.**Applications will not be accepted postmarked or delivered before January 10.

# The reservation request form lists cabin details, rules and regulations, rates, refund information and reservation conditions. Campers must fill out the form completely. This application does not guarantee your reservation - the property office will notify you when your reservation has been confirmed.

# Mail or deliver your completed Cabin Reservation Request Form to the state park/forest where you wish to reserve a cabin. Disabled applicants must identify themselves (or one of their camping party) on the application form. The addresses are listed on the form. Please make sure the envelope is marked "Cabin Reservation".

# You may reserve any cabin by calling the park between June 1 and the season's end, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., .or visiting the website at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/camping/adacabins/availability>

# **Accessible Lodges/Resorts, Bed and Breakfast, and Tour Company for Vacation Fun!**

**Resorts/Lodges with Accessibility**

* **Pine Forest Lodge,** Mercer, WI (715) 476-2241 http://www.pineforestlodge.com/index.htm or https://pineforestlodge.com/about-us/
* **Sunrise Lodge, Land O’Lakes, WI** (800) 221-9689, (715) 547-3684, [www.sunriselodge.com](http://www.sunriselodge.com/)
* **Sunset Pines Resort, Willard WI** (715) 267– 8969, [www.sunsetpinesresort.com](http://www.sunsetpinesresort.com)

**Accessible Bed and Breakfast**

* **Welcome HOME,** Newburg WI (near Cedarburg) For information or reservations: Call (262) 675-2525 or www.welcomehomebb.co

**Accessible Travel Tour Company**

* **Abel Trek,** Reedsville WI (800) 205-6173 or https://abletrektours.com/

Please note: *Options’* staff have toured the Bed and Breakfasts listed and it is very accessible for individuals who use wheelchairs. We have not toured the resorts or lodges nor have we worked with this travel planner. It is best to call and make sure the type of access you may require will be provided.

# **Get free at-⁠home COVID-⁠19 tests**

# Every home in the U.S. is still eligible to order 4 free at-⁠home COVID-⁠19 tests. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days. Order your tests now so you have them when you need them. <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

# Need help placing an order for your at-⁠home tests?Call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

# **Want to Get Involved in Legislative Advocacy? It’s easy, join Act Now!**

# Do you want your voice to be heard, but feel your voice alone would not be enough? Join *Options* legislative advocacy network, **Act Now!** Individuals in the network receive legislative alerts and updates on issues impacting people with disabilities. When an alert or update is received, everyone on the network is encouraged to pursue the issue by contacting their area legislators, therefore combining your voice with many! Act Now alerts can be delivered either through email or US Postal Mail.

# Contacting your legislators about issues that may affect you, or someone you know, is important. 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. This network will educate you on the issues and help you to advocate more effectively. The more people in the network, the greater the impact.

# If you are interested in joining Act Now, contact Sandy Popp at *Options* (920) 393-1043 or toll-free at (888) 465-1515, ext.179.

# **Tech Closet News** Image of Wistech Assistive Technology Program Logo

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

# **Raizer Patient Lift**

# The Raizer Emergency Lifting Chair empowers independent living. A fall in the home can be extremely stressful and the Raizer allows one person to raise a fallen individual back safely, swiftly, and easily to their feet.

# The Raizer can be assembled very quickly around a fallen person. Lifting with the Raizer requires minimal physical effort. There is no strain on the body for the helper or the fallen person. At just 27lbs, it is easy to carry and transport. The Raizer is easy to store and deploy as needed.

# The Raizer Patient lift is available for anyone to loan out for free. We will demonstrate how the lift works before you loan this device. You can then check it out and use it for up to two weeks. This will give you time to ensure it will be a fit for you and your family before making a purchase.

# Pictured is the Raizer II  lifting chair -there is a women in black pants and gold shirt sitting in the chair and a women in black pants and white shirt crouched next to her.

# The Raizer is an excellent choice for an emergency lifting chair for the home and domestic settings, alleviating the fear of falls and empowering independent living along with giving comfort to your loved ones. Call us today to schedule a demonstration. Contact iank@optionsil.org at (920)393-1053 or calvinr@optionsil.org at (920)393-1037 to learn more.

# **What is the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP)?**

# TEPP helps people with disabilities buy equipment they need in order to use basic telephone services. The TEPP is paid for by the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund (USF) established by the Public Service Commission. Money is collected from Wisconsin telephone service providers to fund the USF. TEPP requires that an applicant:

# Be a Wisconsin resident.

# Be a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, or mobility or motion impaired.

# Needs special equipment to use the telephone in the home or when traveling (like a TTY, amplification, visual alert system, etc.).

# There is no age or income limit, but an individual can only get a TEPP voucher once every three years for the same type of disability. For more information on the TEPP program contact Calvin Richtig, Options AT Specialist at 920-393-1037.

# ***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 Dept. 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 stevel@optionsil.org, 920-393-1044, or toll-free at 1-888-465-1515, ext. 122.

# **Options Personal Assistance Program for Those on Medicaid**

# Options’ Personal Assistance Services (PAS) Program empowers people & families with disabilities to manage their in-home cares, including the selection of their Care Worker so that they can maintain a strong relationship with them and remain involved in the daily life of their family.

# Certified to provide services through Medicaid and to sub-contract services through IRIS, Options’ PAS program has been helping adults in need of in-home cares for years.

**Benefits of Using *Options* for Personal Care Services:**

* Options is not a Staffing Agency. Individuals can have family or friends provide the cares.
* Options can provide training for new Care Workers.
* A Case Manager will provide supervision of the Care Worker & coordinate service needs.
* Benefits including Health, Dental & Vision insurance as well as Retirement Savings Accounts for full-time Care Workers (30+ hrs/week).

**For More Information contact: Val Tschampl** – ***PAS Program Director***. valeriet@optionsil.org. 920-393-1036. Toll Free: 888-465-1515 ext. 182

**Jennifer Lardinois – *CLTS Case Manager / Care Coordinator***. jenniferL@optionsil.org. 920-393-1032. Toll Free: 888-465-1515 ext. 181

# **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’s), 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 remotes 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.

# *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.*

# **Support Options on Amazon Smile**

[AmazonSmile](https://amzn.to/2IRh1vw) is a program that donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases on Amazon to a charity of your choice.  The process is easy. All you need to do is start you shopping at smile.amazon.com. and choose Options as the charity of your choice. The donation is made at no cost to you. It can also be used in the Amazon shopping app once activated. So shop and support Options at the same time. Options thanks you!

# **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* website is: [www.optionsil.com](http://www.optionsil.com) Facebook is: <https://www.facebook.com/optionsil.greenbay/>

# GREEN BAY OFFICE 555 Country Club Road, Green Bay, WI 54307

# Front Desk 920-490-0500 Toll Free 1-888-465-1515 Fax 920-490-0700

# Executive Director Josh Theis 920-393-1045 josht@optionsil.org

# Assistant Director Sandy Popp 920-393-1043 sandyp@optionsil.org

# Accountant Peggy Mass 920-490-8270 peggym@optionsil.org

# Housing Program Manager Steve LaFrombois 920-393-1044 stevel@optionsil.org

# Accessibility Assessment Specialist Sarah Dunks 920-393-1034 sarahd@optionsil.org

# Accessibility Assessment Specialist Marie Smith 920-393-1046 maries@optionsil.org

# Accessibility Assessment Specialist Becky Bookter 920-393-1048 beckyb@optionsil.org

# Assistive Technology Specialist Calvin Richtig 920-393-1037 calvinr@optionsil.org

# Assistive Technology Specialist Ian Kaster 920-393-1053 iank@optionsil.org

# Work Incentives Benefits Specialist Karin Zuleger 920-393-1039 karinz@optionsil.org

# Independent Living Coordinator Supervisor/Memory Loss Technology Specialist Stacie Scheibe 920-393-1050 stacies@optionsil.org

# Independent Living Coordinator Heath Karau 920-393-1038 heathk@optionsil.org

# Advocacy Coordinator Autumn Nordall 920-393-1035 autumnd@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

# Office Assistant Roxanne Kiefert 920-393-1054 roxannek@optionsil.org

# Certified Peer Specialist Dave Zanon 920-609-9467 davez@optionsil.org

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