

Independent Lifestyles, Inc.  
A Center for Independent Living

Annual Report 2011



# Annual Highlights



In the Spring of 2011, Independent Lifestyles moved into our new building in Sauk Rapids. The move was a very exciting time for us as we were able to add much more space allowing for new collaborations with our consumers and community.

Received Capitol Campaign Grants from Otto Bremer and the Morgan Family Foundation. Through grants and private donations \$105,000 was raised.

Six hundred sixty-one people with disabilities were served in 21 different counties in Central Minnesota. Consumers accomplished 1,442 goals out of the 2,371 goals they set.

Received two grants for our new Technology Center, one from the Blandin Foundation and one from Benton Telecommunications.

Project BRAVE (Broadband, Resources And Vocational Exploration) was rolled out with the objective of providing computer access and training for people with disabilities and community members.

Cara Ruff, Executive Director, won the Live United Lifetime Award for Advocacy from United Way of Central Minnesota.

The Peer Mentor program began our Consumer Lounge Activities providing social opportunities to people with disabilities. Activities such as bingo, cards, games and movie nights are now available.

Hosted both our Annual Consumer Appreciation Day and Consumer Holiday Party. Between the two, several hundred consumers attended and great fun was had by all.



## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Consumers, Colleagues and Community Partners -

Independent Lifestyles had a phenomenal year and realized our long held dream of owning our own building with all the amenities that our Consumers and Staff need to provide effective and efficient services. We really wanted a place where Consumers could hang out, play games, socialize etc., so we created a consumer lounge, which now also hosts many social activities led by our Peer Mentors. We created an accessible kitchen for skills training; a technology center in which we have a variety of computer classes and accessible programs and equipment, as well as a conference/education center. We have already had the privilege of hosting many of our community partners' workshops, retreats and events in this new space! We send out many thanks to our grantors, the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Morgan Family Foundation,

the Benton County/Blandin Foundation, and Benton Telecommunications who made a tremendous impact on our capital campaign and allowed us to provide this wonderful space. In addition to renovating a building and moving the entire organization, the staff were hard at work serving people of all abilities throughout Central Minnesota. This year, 661 individuals received intensive services which involved setting and accomplishing hundreds of goals. We were also able to provide information and referral, community education, support services, and personal care attendant care services to hundreds more, bringing our total served close to 1,000 individuals. Many of these services keep individuals living in their homes with dignity and choice versus having to go to a higher cost living facility or institution, which saves Minnesota taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This year our team also focused on new services and supports that have been expressed as needs by our consumers and community. As we begin our new fiscal year we are rolling out those programs and look forward to sharing those outcomes with you next year. Lastly, we send out a thank you to all our community partners including DEED, Vocational Rehabilitation, United Way

of Central Minnesota, and all of the organizations who partner with us on the Disability Awareness Task Force and the network of non-profits with whom we work to enhance the lives of those we serve.



A Team Promoting Independence and Choices for People with Disabilities, Their Families and Communities

*Cara Ruff & the Board of Directors*





Independent Living Skills

Independent Living services are consumer directed and individually tailored to each person's needs. Skills training may include self-esteem, cooking/nutrition, housing, communication, employment, financial management, benefits management, and transportation.

During 2010-2011 Independent Lifestyles served a total of 661 people of all disabilities and out of 2,371 independent living goals set, accomplished 1,442 so far, allowing them to achieve and/or maintain their independence.



Accessibility Program

Independent Lifestyles assists individuals who need access to their homes and vehicles. Accessibility projects may include ramps, bathroom designs, vehicle technology, business and community assessments, and more. Over the past year, 180 people received Accessibility Services. A total of 46 projects were fully completed, which included ten ramps, ten whole home modifications with ramps and ten whole home modifications without ramps. Seventy-four Accessibility projects are still in progress. Sixty individuals were provided Information and Referral Accessibility services.



Peer Mentoring Program

Independent Lifestyles Peer Mentors provide support through one-to-one relationships as well as in group settings. Peer Mentors work with consumers to provide support, socialization, disability pride and community integration. The Peer Mentor team also facilitates regular social activity groups to practice new relationship skills and provide safe opportunities for integration and skill application.

During 2010-2011 the Peer Mentor program served 152 consumers over the past year. The peer mentors provided one-to-one services (many also attended groups) to 61 consumers and 91 consumers attended one or more of our social activity groups without receiving one-to-one services.



PCA Choice Program

PCA Choice is a consumer directed option which allows the consumer to be responsible for the hiring, training, scheduling and supervising of their Personal Care Assistants.

For the 2010-2011 fiscal year Independent Lifestyles continued to see growth within the program with 47 consumers receiving PCA Choice services and employing over 91 PCA's. Independent Lifestyles expanded marketing efforts into outlying areas in order to offer the service to unserved/underserved populations in rural areas. Independent Lifestyles is excited to continue this growth and to reach more potential consumers.



BRAVO Program

(Blended Resources Achieving Vocational Outcomes)

The BRAVO Program is a collaboration with the Department for Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) serving consumers in our nine county area to achieve vocational outcomes.

The BRAVO Program took on a new look and approach this year, where members of the BRAVO Staff work directly out of the Workforce/VRS Offices. This allowed both the BRAVO Staff and the VRS Staff to have daily contact, for streamlined service to consumers. The two BRAVO Staff had 105 individual referrals, opened 277 goals and accomplished 167 of these goals. These goals encompassed: employment soft skills, drivers training preparation, CNP, CDL, State Pharmacy Exam, ASVAB test preparation, cooking, relationships, hygiene, benefits management and many other goals.



Community Education

Independent Lifestyles is proud to continue to host and chair the DisAbility Awareness Task Force (DATF) for the past 11 years since its inception. The DATF is comprised of 15 local organizations and entities committed to bringing education and awareness to the community. Activities include education to students, businesses, community and legislative leaders, Dinner and a Movie, as well as an annual Celebration of Abilities. Activities are focused in the month of October which is Disability Awareness Month.

Over the past year Independent Lifestyles provided numerous trainings to the community on disability related topics.



### » *Conference Space*

Independent Lifestyles' Community Education Center is available to all businesses and members of the community for accessible meetings and trainings. This room is equipped with the technology needed to make your event run smoothly, along with two wireless microphones that can be used, as well as a full sound system for computers or videos. We are hopeful that when you have a need for a room to host a meeting or special function that you will consider our newly remodeled community education center.

### » *Accessible Kitchen*

Independent Lifestyles' accessible kitchen allows for the ability to teach cooking skills to people of varying disabilities. Several cooking classes have been held and the consumers enjoy the ability to create different dishes.

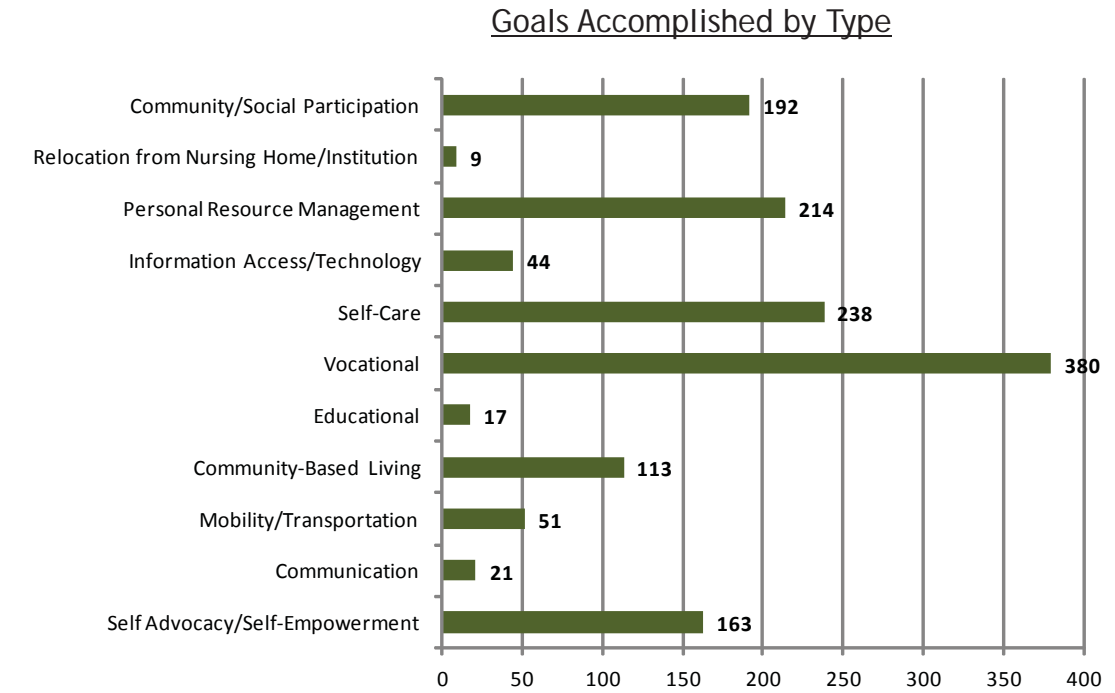
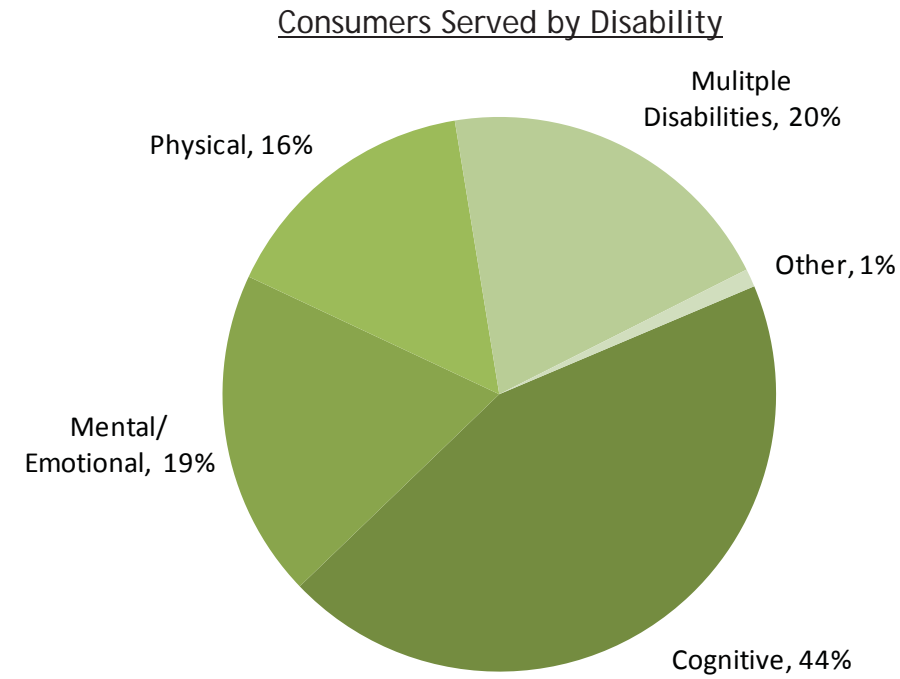
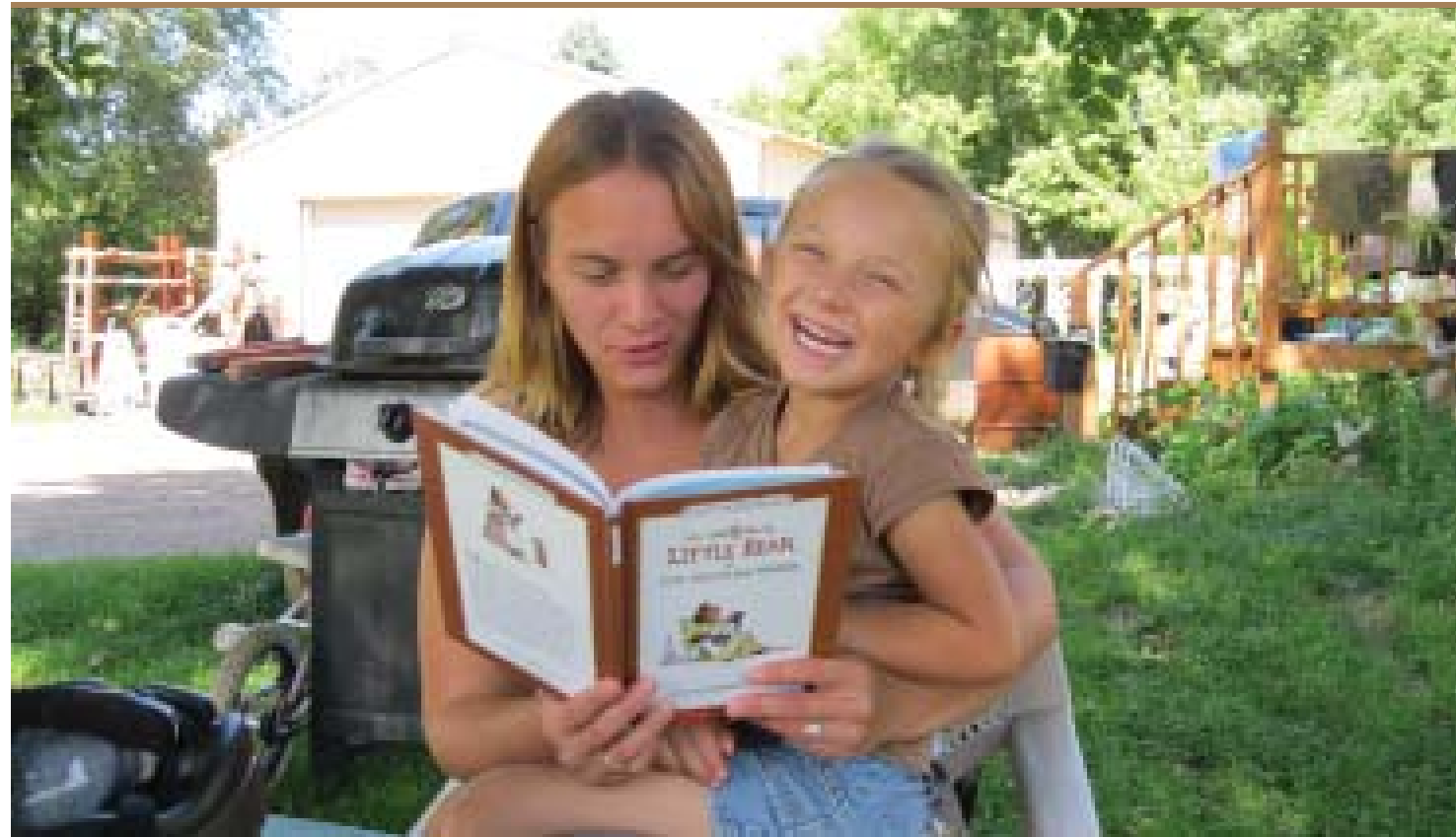
### » *Technology Center*

Project BRAVE (Broadband, Resources, And Vocational Exploration) is an initiative created to provide computer training and broadband access to the community. A grant was received from the Blandin Foundation allowing for the creation of our technology center as well as development of computer classes offered to the public for free. The technology center offers a variety of technology and adaptive equipment that anyone can access. The classes cover computer basics and learning the internet. Over 30 consumers and community members have taken advantage of the classes with more receiving one-on-one help when using the technology center. A grant was also received from Benton Telecommunications allowing for the purchase of additional adaptive equipment and a part-time computer teacher. This is a very exciting opportunity that we hope to see grow and expand.

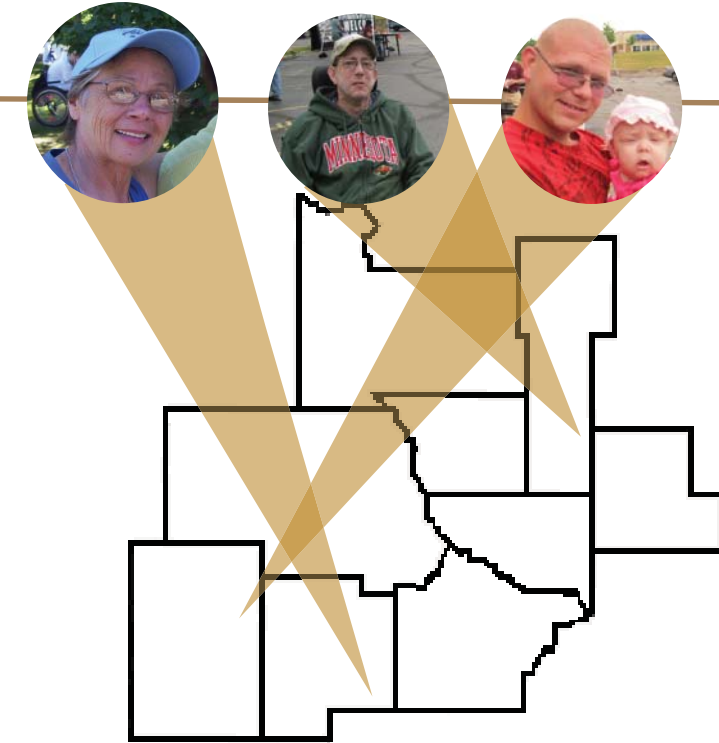
# *Our New Building*

# Stefanie's Story

Last March, Stefanie met with her IL Specialist for the first time. Her family was anticipating a move to Otsego. Stefanie struggled with basic reading skills her whole life, and was embarrassed about her lack of reading ability. Stefanie tried to get by without much reading. She was a very good worker and was even promoted to managerial positions at various fast food places, but the jobs did not last because her lack of reading skills interfered with long term employment. Stefanie and her IL Specialist began weekly sessions that focused on the fundamentals of reading. The IL Specialist explained that reading was just another form of problem solving; like the jig-saw puzzles Stefanie loved to piece together. Reading was based on words hooked together to form sentences and paragraphs to tell a story. There were stories to read for fun and there was technical reading for IEP's, job applications, or job manuals. Her IL Specialist discussed recognizable word patterns that formed words as well as prefixes and suffixes. Stefanie began to pick out the patterns and then practice the words. Then sentences and paragraphs were tackled. Stefanie was reading! The IL Specialist pointed out the structure of IEP's and other technical documents; one can look for captions or topic sentences to get the main ideas. Stefanie practiced reading children's books to her kids; she practiced reading women's magazines and job applications/manuals. Stefanie then started picking up books to read for fun. It was an amazing day when Stefanie announced she just finished reading her first novel and could share the story highlights! Stefanie started a job at Kohl's and also cleans houses once a week. She has become a competent reader, enhancing her parenting skills as well as her employment options.



*Serving people with disabilities  
in 9 counties in Central  
Minnesota and beyond*



# Amber's Story

My daughter was born in 2003 with Mosaic Trisomy 13 (born with an extra 13th chromosome) causing developmental delays and Tetralogy of Fallot (two open heart repairs: one at 5 1/2 months and one July, 2010). Her name is Amber Juliet, and we depend on her 25 year old sister's PCA services. With a mere 20 hours of time a week, PCA services have proven to be very beneficial to Amber's continued progress. We were told when Amber was born she would never walk or talk by the "gloom & doom" team of geneticists. But this little girl runs, plays, walks, and her words are coming together. Yes, a lot can be contributed to our wonderful school systems, but without the "EXTRA" assistance we receive with PCA services, her personal daily living skills would not be where they are now. Her Cardiologist recently wrote in his report that Amber thrives from the love and care from her large family (Amber has 11 biological siblings). Her family physician and our family doctor of 28 years have relayed the same conclusion. Who better to have PCA services from than someone that knows the family, particularly the child, than a family member!

Relative PCA'S are instrumental in being there for their family member. Sometimes it is the evening, weekends, or early mornings that services are needed. Most PCA's that are non-relative can't be available those hours, so the consumer cannot be assisted when needed the most. This is the case of my daughter Amber, and her PCA/sister. Children such as Amber are comfortable with a family member. With a family member Amber is more attentive and can grasp the concept of daily living skills, which she struggles with due to some physical defects as well. Some of the best care comes from the "love and concern" of a family member. Thanks to Independent Lifestyles PCA Choice Program we are able to make this happen.



# Financial Summary

## Thank You to Our Donors

Amy Diederich	In Honor of Wallace Nelson
Amy Sidmore	In Memory of John Mertens
Ann & Arnold Lauer	James Bettendorf
Anonymous	Jay Keller
Ardis Sandstrom	Jennifer Hermanson
Arllys Hengemuhle	Jerry & Lorraine Gould
Arvilla Roering	Joe & Cyndi Mee
Barb & Steve Ludwig	John Bartlett
Barbara Kiffmeyer	Joyce Notsch
Benton County Blandin Foundation	Karen & Rick Ahles
Benton Telecommunications	Kathleen Theisen
Cara Ruff	Keith & Randi Magsam
Central MN Endodontics	Kris Haffley
Cherry Hengel	Marilyn Hallstrom
Crown Press	Mark & Susan Durant
Danelle St. Marie	Mary Ann Reischl
Dean Watkins	Mary Merchlewicz
Deborah Steele	Meggan Jordan
Donald Osterberg	Morgan Family Foundation
Donna Roering	Naima Jama
Dr. James Tuorila	Otto Bremer
Drs. Roy & Barbara Saigo	Pam Kotzenmacher
Edmund & Joyce Schaefer	Pat Welter
Eugene and Mary Margaret Bjorklun	Patricia Brain
Eva Sova	Patrick Lynch
Gabriela Wirz & Brandi Canter	Quality Care Services
Gordon Wagner	RJ Belanger & Assoc.
Granite Financial	Robert & Mary Kovell
Greg Cooley	Roger Lahr
Harvey & Rita Vosen	Tom & Noreene Mee
	Tom & Vi Ruff
	Tom Ellenbecker
	Tom Theis

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of September 30, 2011

<b>ASSETS:</b>	
Current Assets:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$167,137
Investments	431,384
Receivables	48,091
Grants Receivable	63,088
Other Receivables	2,627
Prepaid Expenses	<u>20,346</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>732,673</u>
Net Property and Equipment	<u>1,545,454</u>
Net Other Assets	<u>7,324</u>
Total Assets	<u><u>\$2,285,451</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS:</b>	
Current Liabilities:	
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	\$23,510
Accrued Salaries, Benefits and Payroll Taxes	71,077
Accrued Compensated Absences	68,297
Other Accruals	<u>3,637</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>166,521</u>
Long-Term Debt - Net of Current Maturities	<u>688,401</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>854,922</u>
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>1,430,529</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u><u>\$2,285,451</u></u>

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the year ending September 30, 2011

<b>REVENUES &amp; OTHER SUPPORT:</b>	
Fees for Service	\$1,186,550
Grant Revenues:	
Federal and State Grants	661,002
United Way	30,041
Other Revenues	<u>165,587</u>
Total Revenues and Other Support	<u>2,043,180</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>1,861,827</u>
Change in Net Assets	181,353
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>1,249,176</u>
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	<u><u>\$1,430,529</u></u>



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