



HEARTLAND INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER

Because home is where the heart is.

**July -
September
2016**

1010 Hwy 28 West

Owensville, Missouri 65066

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The Director's View

Our nation will elect a new President on November 8th. That is also the general election date for state and local issues. It is a day that you can make a difference in the direction of our state and our communities. It is even more important for people with disabilities. Did you know that people with disabilities are one of, if not the largest, potential group of voters in our state, but sadly, rank at the bottom of groups that actually cast a ballot?

All 163 districts in the Missouri House of Representatives are up for election in November. Half of the 34 Senate districts are also on the ballot. While many districts in both the House and Senate have incumbents running for re-election, many current lawmakers have "termed out" and, therefore, cannot seek re-election. On the state level, you can voice your choice for the candidate you support for the United States Congress in your district. On a more local level, the November ballot will allow you to vote for various county officials, including your city or town's elected officials, such as Mayor, City Council, and school board members.

The voice of the disabled community has grown stronger in recent years. Laws have been passed to make it much easier to vote. There is an early voting period, casting an absentee ballot, and Missouri's Permanently Disabled Voter registration. There is curbside voting and accessible voting machines. All of these changes are great. Now voting boils down to **YOU**. You have the right to make your voice heard. Heartland Independent Living Center urges you to register and to vote on November 8th. If you have any questions about how and when to register, voting options, or where you vote, contact your respective County Clerk. That is the chief election official in each county. Here is the contact information for Heartland's three primary counties:

Franklin County Clerk Debbie Door (636) 583-6355 or 400 E. Locust in Union

Gasconade County Clerk Lesa Lietzow (573) 486-2632 or Gasconade County Courthouse in Hermann.

Maries County Clerk Rhonda Brewer (573) 422-3388 211 or 4th Street in Vienna

Pat Chambers
Executive Director

Changes in the Care Closet Program

Due to a recent donation from Unilever Corporation in Jefferson City, Heartland's Care Closet received pallets of product to be distributed through our Care Closet program. Because of this generous and significant donation, Heartland has revisited the policy of only being able to help our consumers once every six months. **Effective October 1st**, our consumers will be able to access the Care Closet every three months.

The Care Closet gives consumers access to basic hygiene and cleaning supplies. Some of the items available through our Care Closet are: shampoo, conditioner, laundry detergent, toothpaste, all-purpose cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, sponges, peroxide, triple antibiotic ointment, toilet paper, paper towels, etc. Items in the closet are subject to change based on availability and new items are being added as we receive donations. With the donation from Unilever, items such as body wash, lotion and kids 2-n-1 shampoo/conditioner were added to the closet.

If you're in need of these types of items or any assistance through Heartland's other programs, call and speak with our Intake Specialist, Dani Turner, today!



Family Care Safety Registry Price Increase

The one-time registration fee for the Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR) is increasing to \$13.00, starting October 1st. There is a \$1.25 processing fee on top of the \$13.00 making **the new cost \$14.25**. The FCSR is a method to obtain background screening information administered by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). Any person who is hired as a child care worker, elder care worker, personal care worker, or as a mental health worker is required to register with FCSR.

A Partnership Forms

Heartland Independent Living Center and the Central Ozark Private Industry Council (COPIC) have recently teamed up to better serve job seekers in Gasconade County.

“COPIC is a subcontractor of the Central Workforce Development Board,” said COPIC Executive Director Patricia Rogers. “The partnership with Heartland Independent Living Center allows us to serve job seekers locally where they live. This eliminates the need for job seekers to travel to a Missouri Job Center to be served. Our funding is limited. The office space at Heartland has allowed us to hire a person to work in Gasconade County to better serve job seekers and employers. The services that are available at the Heartland location are

the same as those provided at a Missouri Job Center, except for services mandated by the State of Missouri for Unemployment Insurance reporting.”

COPIC strives to help both job seekers and employers.

“We utilize Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to provide employment and training services to six counties (Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Phelps, and Washington),” Rogers said. “Services include registration in Missouri’s jobs.mo.gov system. This allows job seekers to view and apply for jobs available throughout the state of Missouri. We do career assessment to help job seekers identify occupations that they are suited for based on their existing skills. We determine eligibility to enroll in education and employer based training programs. WIOA funding may be provided to enable the job seeker to participate in training to develop new skills. We assist employers with recruitment and job placement. WIOA funded On-the-Job Training Services allows the employer to claim reimbursement of 50% of the wages paid to the participant while in training. We assist with WIOA funded Support Services to help with transportation, child care, and other training related needs. COPIC has been in operation for 28 years. We are mandated to meet state and federal performance goals to continue receiving funding to do the good work of helping job seekers find long-term employment to sustain self-sufficiency for themselves and their families.”

The staff person from COPIC is in the Owensville office two days a week.



**EXTENDED HOURS OF OPERATION
EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1ST!!!**

**New Hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Open through Lunch**

I Always Park in the Handicap Spot, But I Can Walk Just Fine

By Blogger Eden Strong

Just as I closed my car door and stuck my key in the ignition, a loud thud made me jump and look at my side-view window, which now appeared to have coffee streaming down it.

“What the hell?” I muttered to myself. But before I could even begin to process what had just happened, the woman who threw the coffee cup made the situation very clear.

*“Get the f*ck out of the handicapped spot, you loser!” she screamed at me. “You have legs, so use them! I watched you walk in and out of that building and you are a lazy excuse for a human being! I’ve taken down your license plate number and have called the police. YOU ARE GOING TO HELL!”*

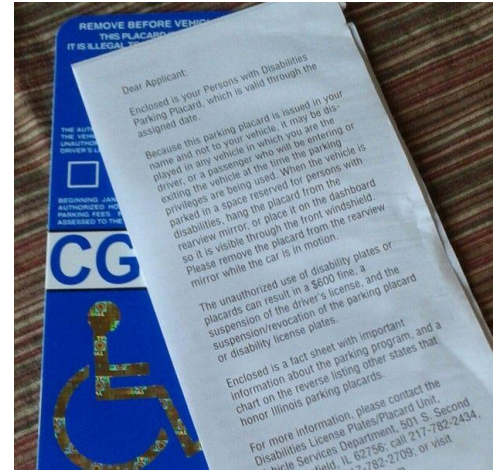
I’m used to being in this situation by now (and admittedly past the point of mature restraint because it happens so often) so I told the woman that I would save her a seat in hell, which she would be occupying very soon if she didn’t get out of my way. Then I slowly began to back my car out of the spot and pray that I didn’t run over her feet.

As I drove away shaking, I realized I'll never get used to the vile attention that people throw at me (figuratively and now, apparently, literally) when they see me park in the handicap spot. In fact, just a few days before that incident, a woman came up and slammed her hands on the hood of my car as I was backing out; she demanded to know what was so wrong with my able body that I would steal a spot from someone who really needed it.

And the week before that? A man stopped me as I was walking into an office building and demanded I move my car. When my quivering and intimidated voice tried to tell him I did, indeed, have a placard and that I was legally allowed to park there, he physically tried to stop me from entering the building, as he called the police and reported my "fraud."

Because here's the kicker: I am legally handicapped. You just can't SEE my handicap. I don't walk with a limp or anything "obvious."

You can't see my strength wasting away from a genetic disorder (it resembles Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome), which ravages my joints and steals my muscle tone. You can't see that there are times when my lung function hovers around 70 percent. You don't know I'm recovering from a cardiac condition. You also don't know that I go to physical therapy for two hours a day, four times a week, in an effort to retain the muscle mass I have, and you can't possibly understand what it feels like to not be able to push a shopping cart with more than a few items in it before your shoulders begin to scream in pain and beg for mercy.



You'd probably roll your eyes if you knew that because of that pain, I break my grocery shopping list up into three different lists and unload each haul into my car before returning to the store to get the items on the next part of my list. My shoulders simply can't take any more than that, and pushing a cart with everything in it at once has simply become impossible. But I can walk just fine, which is funny because I've had over 30 hours of surgery on each of my ankles, and have so much metal implanted in them that I have been known to set off many a metal detector.

In fact, I'm a donor recipient because my own body parts just weren't good enough anymore. But I can run, and I do — quite a bit actually. Yet, I can't always do things that require any sort of strength and because of that, my doctor finally convinced me that parking closer to the door — in order to limit the amount of time I need to push a cart or carry a bag — would allow me to save my energy and not need a nap or a massage after a quick stop at the store. (That is, assuming the door is automatic or has a disabled button; otherwise, sometimes I can't even get the door into the building open.)

One of the most crushing moments of my life was standing in court just a few months ago, listening to the state's job specialist tell the judge I was unemployable on a full-time basis because of my medical issues, and then having the judge deem me permanently disabled. I had just turned 32 years old. After being denied a year earlier, I had only agreed with my doctor and my lawyer to appeal the decision when my health took a sharp decline. But nothing had prepared me to actually face the truth about my health; a truth that up until that point I had adamantly shunned because it was so hard to accept.

It's a struggle for me to get up every day, and most days my first realization that I'm awake is the pain I feel before I even open my eyes. And it's even harder when I'm going through the motions as a single mother of two special needs children, but I get up and I move forward, because I have no other choice.

I survive on a very small disability check (that doesn't even cover my mortgage), food stamps, and writing jobs that can be done from my couch, or the waiting room of a doctor's office. I do what I can, choice. In fact, I do it with a smile on my face because eight years ago I wasn't sure if I would even be around to watch my

kids grow up. But thanks to medical advances and a complete dietary change, the destruction of my internal organs has stopped (and almost completely reversed itself). Sadly, the same can't be said for the damage it had already caused to my joints and muscles. The pain is still there and it's only going to get worse, but the only choice I have in this situation is to decide how much I want to complain. So if you see me walking across the parking lot, even if I'm wearing heels, please stop throwing things at me. Please stop yelling at me, spitting at me, and getting in my face because you don't know what's really going on. You aren't my doctor, and you aren't my judge.

You are just the person who is ruining the blessing of me still being able to walk. Please allow me to have my dignity — and my parking spot.

Upcoming Events

October 13th – Union Business Expo from 3:00 to 7:00

October 19th & 20th – Disability Awareness Education presentation at Belle School

November 6th – Daylight Saving Time Ends. Clocks move back 1 Hour. **Don't forget to check and change batteries in smoke alarms, corded telephones and all devices that support independent living!**

November 9th – Volunteer Fair at East Central College 1:00 to 6:00

November 11th – Closed for Veteran's Day

November 24th & 25th – Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

December 6th – Franklin County Service Providers Presentation at Washington City Hall 12:00

December 26th – Closed for Christmas Holiday

Staff News

After working with Heartland on a contracted basis starting in October of 2012 and then hired full-time in February of 2013, Janet Ocheskey has retired from her job as one of Heartland's Registered Nurses with the HILC In-Home program.

“My plans for retirement are to do whatever I want to do. I will miss my fellow employees and clients. I will **NOT** miss the computer.”

Her final day with Heartland was September 30th.

Janet Niebruegge (right) has been working with Heartland as a part-time Registered Nurse for the HILC In-Home program. Due to the retirement of Janet Ocheskey, a full time position opened up and Heartland is very happy to announce that Janet N. will be stepping in to fill that role.



Heartland Independent Living Center is looking for potential board members.



If you;

- ✓ Want to work on behalf of individuals with disabilities.
- ✓ Have a disability and successfully function in everyday life.
- ✓ Live in Franklin, Gasconade or Maries County.

What HILC asks for our board members:

- Attend monthly board meetings on the third Monday of the month in Owensville.
- Advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities.
- Share your strategic thinking skills at meetings.

If you are interested, please contact Heartland Independent Living Center Executive Director Pat Chambers: pchambers@heartlandilc.org or by phone at (573) 437-5100, extension 105. We are especially looking for potential board members who live in Gasconade and Maries counties.

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