

Three Rivers Inc.

Access to Independent Living

JANUARY 2009

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Director's Note
- Consumer Story
- H.O.M.E.
- Medical Equipment Loan Program
- Digital TV Conversion
- PBPN
- Transportation
- Advocacy

“Advocacy Alert”

Immediate Advocacy Action is Needed

Let your voice be heard!

“Everyone is important.”

The physical disabilities waiver was frozen on December 1, 2008. This freeze will be devastating to people needing attendant care services. This not only affects people with disabilities, but also Personal Attendants. More than 3,600 jobs will be lost.

To find out how to contact your legislator check out this website:

<http://www.kslegislature.org/legsrv-committees/index.do>

For more information about the freeze, check out this website:

www.stopthefreeze.com

Director's Note

Three Rivers
helps people
with all
disabilities of
all ages.

January 2009 is the start of a new legislative session and unfortunately the start of serious budget reductions for Kansas. Your input is needed now. Please read the advocacy alert by Anne Marie Hughey, on pg 8. It seems like every issue I remind you to stay in touch with your legislators. Well, all that contact was just a warm up. If we do not act now, thousands of Kansans will be forced into nursing homes. Many more will choose to stay in their homes rather than endure this indignity and some of those individuals may die as a result of this horrendous freeze.

I am reminded that during the last PD Waiver freeze, a local young man did die while waiting for PD services. His physical needs were not being met and he waited too long to access medical care. We can not let this happen again! Contact your legislators, the Governor and the Secretary of SRS. Demand that the rights of people with disabilities are upheld. If money can be found to pay for nursing homes, it can be found to pay for PD Waiver services.

If you have questions or need assistance in making phone calls and writing letters or e-mails, please contact Three Rivers' staff. I always close with the quote, "Get involved in politics as if your life depends on it, because it does." - *Justin Dart*. Well, this spring, it truly does.

Audrey Schremmer-Philip, Executive Director

CONTACT US

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What we did in 2008!!

Three Rivers Inc. served more than 1000 individuals in 2008. Three Rivers' communities have become more accessible through services provided by our Accessibility Specialist. We advised businesses, organizations, churches and schools on ways to meet accessibility guidelines. Our Specialist provided home modification advice. Our Personal Attendant Liaison helped coordinate the employment of more than 600 personal attendants. A volunteer committee formed in Pottawatomie County to increase access to transportation. To find out more information about Three Rivers' services contact us. We look forward to a fine 2009!!

New Years Resolutions

As a new year starts, everyone is making their new year's resolutions. A new year's resolution should be something attainable. Here are a couple of suggestions:

- Live the best independent life possible
- Respect everyone around you
- Eat healthy and exercise daily
- Smile—it makes you and everyone around you feel better!!

Is your house accessible? Do you need house repairs?

Talk to your counselor about applying for ERP (Emergency Repair Program) and KAMP (Kansas Accessibility Modification Program). These programs help make your home more accessible and efficient.



From Consumer to Employee

Reprinted from The Courier-Tribune, Seneca Kansas

Mike Huber, like most young folks, thought he was indestructible. Unfortunately he found out differently late on the night of November 16, 2003. Driving home that night, admittedly after spending the evening partying, he lost control of his vehicle, hitting a light pole and slamming into a bank. Anyway, that's what he has been told. He has no memory of any of it, and very little of the months to follow.

The family would find out, that as a result of the accident, Mike had suffered a severe brain stem injury that would change life as he knew it. "I remember being in KU Med Center but I don't remember any details about it," says Huber who would remain there until February of 2004.

His next step on the road to recovery was a three month stay in a rehabilitation center in Gardner, Kansas. His parents, Mick and Virginia Huber, along with Mike's daughter, Casey, were weekly visitors to him during that time. They also took him home for weekend stays until technicalities in his insurance coverage no longer made that possible. Frustrations mounted as a result and his parents decided to bring him back to Seneca to continue his recuperation.

In order to bring him home, his mother knew they would have to have help, so she checked into Three Rivers Inc., and what they could offer Mike through the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver. Within days he was on their services, enabling him to be in his home surrounded by his family.

"Three Rivers services supplied me with a ramp because I was still in a wheelchair. I had a skills trainer who made me walk every day and helped me to relearn some of the skills I had lost," says Mike. "I had to learn simple household chores and how to manage money so I could someday live by myself again."

Mike has had to endure a lot of physical and speech therapy, two things he still has to do today. He has made many strides that the doctors didn't think he would accomplish, including learning to walk again. One of the things he has lost is much of his memory from before the accident. "I don't remember many of the good things that happened in my life. I don't remember my daughter being born or being best man in my brother's wedding. Sometimes though I will hear a song and remember the words. It's strange."

Mike's hard work and diligence has obviously paid off. Today Mike, at 29, is not only walking, but is again able to drive. He's also proud to say that he can help care for his two daughters, Casey who is now seven, and Emmery, two, and is working 20 hours a week at Three Rivers as a receptionist. "I feel good about being able to work. As a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, it's important to me to not have too much time on my hands. I want to feel useful."

And useful he is. "Mike's story makes me proud," states Lynn Niehues, Mike's Targeted Care Manager with Three Rivers. "I knew Mike and his parents before he had his accident, so it was heartbreaking to see him go through his recovery. I remember the day I was driving by his house after he had been on our services for a while, and I saw him out mowing his lawn; it was refreshing!" Lynn adds that just as refreshing was watching Mike give one of his presentations to legislators at the state capitol. "Mike told them that here he was, three years ago he was a consumer, now he is able to work on our staff."

Lynn also points out that seeing a success story like Mike's makes budget cuts that much harder to accept. "Kansas has been so fortunate to have programs like these and it is going to be a real shame to lose these services because of the extreme budget cuts that are being imposed."

As for Mike, he is happy to have regained many of the functions he was told he may not. He chooses today to present himself as a positive role model and give words of encouragement to others who may think that they too are indestructible, including giving a presentation to a high school religion class recently. "You may think you're just out for a night having fun, but being irresponsible can really throw a kink in your life. No one is invincible. People may think that I'm not so smart because of my injury, but I'm a lot smarter today than I was then."

By Clara Reinecke Seneca Courier-Tribune staff

The H.O.M.E. Program

Our H.O.M.E. Program provides professional, affordable care in your home. Thinking about moving into a nursing home? Are you caring for an elderly parent? This program may provide the relief you need. HOME attendant care services are individually tailored to meet your needs and may include house and yard work, meal preparation, personal hygiene, running errands, respite care and other non-medical services. HOME services can also provide temporary assistance for individuals recuperating after medical procedures such as knee surgery or a hip replacement. Call us today!

Medical Equipment Loan Program

Our Medical Equipment Loan Program collects donated medical equipment and provides it free of charge when someone needs it. It is not financially based, anyone may borrow medical equipment. If you have medical equipment that is not being used and would like to donate it, please let us know. After someone no longer needs the medical equipment, it is returned for someone else to borrow. Our inventory varies and depends on donations, but can include walkers, wheelchairs, canes, hospital beds, shower chairs and more. Let us know if you are in need of borrowing medical equipment. We are here to help!

*Spread the
word...
Three Rivers
has a lot to
offer!*

IS YOUR HOUSE WEATHERIZED?

**Plastic on Windows
Electrical Socket Insulators
Rubber Caulking Around Doors**

Pottawatomie County Residents can get Weatherization Kits at the Wamego office. These Weatherization Kits are provided by NEK-CAP Pottawatomie Advisory Committee. Clay and Washington County Residents can contact our Clay Center office for Weatherization Kits. Everyone can contact their counselor for resource information about Weatherization Kits and Weatherization Programs.

Ask your counselor if you qualify for LIEAP.

Resources

www.threeriversinc.org ~ Three Rivers Inc.
www.kacil.org ~ Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living
www.silck.org ~ Statewide Independent Living Centers of Kansas
www.agingkansas.org ~ Area Agency on Aging
www.srskansas.org ~ Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
www.kscoalitionforautism.org ~ Kansas Coalition for Autism
www.gettinghired.com ~ Careers & Community of People with Disabilities
www.http://www.kansastap.org ~ Kansas Telecommunication Access Program
www.stopthefreeze.com ~ More information about Waivers that the gov't is freezing

**Do you or someone
 you know need
 medical equipment?
 Call us.**

*Everyone should
 have access to the
 best opportunities.*

**DTV
 CONVERSION
 FEBRUARY 17,
 2009**

DIGITAL TV TRANSITION—2009

Reprinted from an article at http://www.dtv.gov/outreach_article_disabilities.html

The transition from analog to digital television broadcasting will be historic. After February 17, 2009, the country's full power broadcast television stations will stop broadcasting in analog and broadcast exclusively in digital, as mandated by Congress in the Digital Television and Public Safety Act of 2005.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is continuing a multi-faceted approach to informing people with disabilities about the DTV transition. The approach includes DTV workshops dedicated to issues facing people with disabilities, collaboration with disability advocacy groups and outreach organizations, and the publication of educational materials and advisories for people with disabilities.

Consumers who receive their local broadcast stations through a paid provider such as cable or satellite TV are already prepared for the DTV transition. Consumers who rely on free, over-the-air television programming by using rooftop antennas or "rabbit ears" on their sets have two choices to be ready for the DTV transition: (1) they can purchase a digital television (a TV with a built-in digital tuner) or (2) they can purchase a digital-to-analog converter box for each of their analog TVs so they can continue to receive free, over-the-air programming on them.

Buying the Right TV: What Every Consumer Should Know

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/dtvlabels.html>

The Digital TV Transition

<http://www.dtv.gov/DTVOne-Pager.pdf>

Setting up Your Digital to Analog Converter Box for Viewing Analog

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/setup-converterbox.html>

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

A letter from our Business Manager

December 23, 2008

Steve Ortiz, Tribal Chairman
Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Government Center

Dear Mr. Ortiz,

On behalf of Three Rivers Inc., thank you to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation for the generous contribution made to our agency to further the impact we are able to make on the reservation.

With the help of our area communities and supporters such as the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Three Rivers is able to provide independent living options to individuals with disabilities throughout nine counties in northeast Kansas. We have been promoting independent living through education, advocacy, training, and support for more than 20 years.

Again, thank you for your generous monetary contribution.

Sincerely,

Cindy Diederich
Business Manager
Three Rivers Inc.

Transportation

Transportation is a huge issue in all of our service areas. After our Disability Summit, committees were formed to tackle the obstacle. We are starting with transportation in Pottawatomie County and will work throughout all nine counties that we serve. Committee members are working with Pottawatomie County Commissioners to get our transportation system working better. If you have tried or do use Pottawatomie County Transportation, please call Stacie, Community Outreach Specialist for Three Rivers at (785) 456-9915 ext 122 to let her know your story. We have also started working with Riley County ATA Bus to see if there is a way for Pottawatomie County to connect to it. Riley County ATA Bus is working to make a fixed route. This will help area residents make doctor appointments, employment and shopping trips easier.

The election is over, 2008 is over, but the hard work has just begun. We must educate all of our new politicians and reeducate all of the returning politicians. They need to know how important it is to live independently.

Advocate After 2008

By: Anne-Marie Hughey, Legislative & Policy Advocate
SKIL Resource Center

ADVOCACY! ADVOCACY! ADVOCACY!: This Year is Going to be a Tough One!

Even though the 2009 legislative session has not yet begun, it is time to tool up for our biggest advocacy drive ever! As we are already feeling the devastating effects of the State's financial crisis. The State's budget for fiscal year (FY) 2010 is going to be ONE **BILLION DOLLARS SHORT**, and it is required by the Kansas constitution for the State to have a balanced budget, the state will be looking to agencies to cut 11% to 22% from each of their FY 2010 budget.

The first significant effect of the budget crisis came on December 1, 2008 when Social and Rehabilitation Services put a freeze on the Home and Community Based (HCBS) Waiver for People with Physical Disabilities. **What does this mean?** That as of December 1, individuals with physical disabilities who need and are eligible for PD Waiver HCB services will be put on a waiting list until potentially June 30, 2009 or longer.

The consequences of such a decision is devastating to persons with disabilities who are utilizing the program. It is disheartening to members of the families and advocates. Also, it means we will see an increase of persons going into nursing homes. The financial and health condition of eligible persons is the same for both programs. The nursing home program is an entitlement program that means for every two persons maintained in HCBS, it will cover the cost of only one in a nursing home. This is a break with the State's historical precedent over the last 25 years of emphasizing individuals being in their own homes and community. It is also contrary to any kind of health care reform if health care reform is thought of in terms of lessening the need for expensive institutional care.

We also know that when people with disabilities are able to receive home and community based services through the waiver, the likelihood of them obtaining and/or maintaining integrated and competitive employment, and thereby becoming tax paying citizens of the state is much higher.

That is why all of us must immediately develop a positive working relationship with our Representative and Senators, share with them the SILCK/KACIL Budget and Policy Priorities, and educate them on how funding the following budget requests will help Kansas AVOID more costly services.

2009 SILCK/KACIL Policy Committee Budget & Policy Priorities



To prevent people with disabilities from having to go to a nursing facility we need to RESTORE services to the physically disabled.

We ALL need to talk with our legislators and ask them to:

- **Support SRS supplemental budget request for \$5.5M SGF to eliminate the freeze (waiting list) for the FY 2009 PD waiver.**
- **Support SRS budget request for \$3.5M SGF to maintain no waiting list policy for the PD waiver in FY 2010**
- **Support SRS supplemental budget request for \$2.0M SGF to maintain the current number of persons on the DD waiver.**
- **Support KDOA budget request for \$700,000 to maintain no waiting list for the FE waiver in FY 2010.**
- **Support SRS budget request for \$7.3M SGF to reduce DD waiver waiting list**
- **Restore funding \$375,000 to the AT program**

Also, let them know we appreciate the increase set forth last year by the legislature and Governor related to the Protected Income Level (PIL). However we need continue to work to insure that the 2009 SSA cost of living increase goes to consumers, not the state general fund.

KACIL

The Kansas Association of Centers for Independent Living is an association representing member Centers for Independent Living (CILs). Centers provide services to people with disabilities of all ages. CILS advocate at a state and national level for the rights of all people with disabilities to live in the communities of their choice.

SILCK

The statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas. They develop a state plan that insures independent living and advocate for that state plan.

The two organizations are separate, but do work together, along with Centers for Independent Living in Kansas to accomplish their goals.

**THREE RIVERS
PO BOX 408
WAMEGO KS 66547**

Access to Independent Living

The staff at Three Rivers wants you to be safe!

**Keep a first aid kit
in a waterproof
box, like a tackle
box.**

Make sure you are prepared for all emergencies!

**Plan ahead for an
emergency.**

Your lifeline has battery back-up. Don't assume it won't work in a power outage.

**Keep important
papers in a
waterproof box.**

Make sure your portable oxygen is full.

**Most importantly if
you can't take care
of yourself in an
emergency, ask for
help. Your local
emergency
responders don't
know you need help
unless you ask.**

Have a landline phone, cordless phones don't work when the power is out.

Keep an emergency number of someone with a generator for use in an emergency.

Keep a list of back-up Personal Attendants.

Make sure you have enough food, water, medicine and other necessities to last 2 weeks.