Hello and Happy Holidays!

In the hustle and bustle of life, sometimes we do not take time for reflection, and we miss the opportunity to acknowledge ALL that we have accomplished. Reflection and acknowledgement of the positive endeavors of our organization leads to a strong, healthy, and dynamic foundation from which to grow.

The Council and staff have been working diligently on expanding the visibility of WASILC. Most importantly, we continue to strengthen our relationships. Some of this year’s highlights: 1) designating time at each of our quarterly meetings to provide the opportunity for community discussion through an interactive panel forum; 2) deepening our connections with the five Centers for Independent Living (CILs) who, along with WASILC, are the cornerstones of the Independent Living Network and promote the Independent Living Philosophy; 3) partnering and collaborating with our long term partners on new and exciting opportunities to create new partnerships across the state.

As part of our communication efforts we have printed an Independent Living Network brochure that illustrates how WASILC and the CILs collaborate and the direct service the CILs provide, created a new logo and branding design (revealed in this edition of our newsletter), created a newsletter (this is our sixth edition), and we are currently overhauling our website (due early spring) to keep you better informed and increase accessibility.

As I reflect on the past three years as Executive Director of the Council, I am proud of the work and achievements the Council and staff have accomplished on behalf of the people with disabilities in Washington State. A big thanks to all of you who have given your time and shared your passion & expertise to WASILC and people with disabilities.
ASSOCIATION OF PROGRAMS FOR RURAL INDEPENDENT LIVING (APRIL):
CONFERENCE REPORT

Alyssa Adwell, council member, and Kim Conner, Executive Director, attended this year’s APRIL conference in Grand Rapids, MI from October 25-28.

Of all breakout sessions attended, Adwell’s favorite was the “Bringing Youth into the Disability Movement” session, presented by Mels Felton. Felton emphasized the need for youth involvement at all levels of the IL and disability movement.

Adwell commented, “the youth community is growing in IL and it feels very nice to be surrounded with this level of representation 

...[the conference is] a good place to learn new things and operations of SILCs nationally.”

She continued, “Youth is taking a priority in the IL movement and they are incorporating intersectionality! It is exciting. Most SILCs I heard from are struggling at least a bit with youth engagement, however WASILC did get a congratulation on our good work via Luke Byram, a Youth Committee member. Thanks to Luke for spreading the word!”

CIEP: COME JOIN US AT THE TABLE
BY: JIM HOUSE, DISABILITY INTEGRATION MANAGER

This is the time of the year when we frequently gather around the table with our family and friends. Yet, many people with disabilities are not fully included in conversations, games, and other fun activities because of environmental barriers or ignorant attitudes. Their struggles are common and they live each day navigating around obstacles experienced by many with similar types of disabilities.

When it comes to inclusive disaster planning, the Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP), a statewide advisory group, is working hard to create a welcoming environment where people with disabilities and other access and functional needs can address their concerns and develop plans to ensure their survival in the event of a major disaster. CIEP is administered by the Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) and funded by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH).

CIEP brings together people with disabilities who are their own subject matter experts on inclusive emergency planning. In the past, emergency planning was done by experts that attempt to come up with different scenarios, but forget to consider the specific challenges that we face daily during routine activities. These challenges are compounded during disasters and often the best laid plans that omit our input go awry with serious consequences. Today, it is imperative that we have these discussions with them at the same table.

Contact Jim House at housej@dshs.wa.gov to be on the CIEP mailing list. You will receive the CIEP Alert quarterly newsletter and other announcements. You are also invited to join us at the CIEP Networking Meeting here in Lacey or over the phone.
NEW WASILC STAFF MEMBER

In August this year, we welcomed Jolie Ramsey as the new Executive Lead. Jolie brings over ten years of office administrative experience and a professional and educational background in special education and social work. After changing her major from Chemistry to Music Performance, then Special Education to Social Work, she (finally) graduated from Central Washington University in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in Family Studies.

She grew up in North Dakota and moved to Olympia, WA in her early 20s, where she met her husband of 16 years. They have four children. She has worked in behavioral health as a care coordinator on a team of clinicians who provided mental health services to young children in the foster care system.

She enjoys hiking the many trails nearby with her family and their dog, Tabasco, and tending to her vegetable and flower gardens. She also enjoys playing the piano and teaching two of her semi-willing children how to play.

YOUTH COMMITTEE REPORT
BY: ALYSSA ADWELL

The WASILC Youth Committee has focused on generating interest and responses in preparation to distribute a survey in early spring 2020. Look for the survey announcement to go live March 2, 2020. There will be two surveys in both English and Spanish; one survey for youth with disabilities and their families, and another for school staff and service providers.

At the conclusion of the survey, the youth committee will produce a written report, including survey results and recommendations to distribute to schools, service agencies, and other interested resources.

“We are seeking your support & collaboration in our efforts to hear the voices of youth with disabilities in every corner of Washington. Leveraging the vast network of allies & advocates in WA State, we want to get a survey into the hands of every youth.”

Quarterly Meetings 2020

January 21-22
Hampton Inn & Suites
4301 Martin Way E.
Olympia

April 2-3
Seattle

July 9-10
Ellensburg

October 8-9
Lakewood
INTERESTED IN JOINING WASILC?

We promote the Independent Living (IL) Philosophy by empowering communities through advocacy, education, and collaboration. This philosophy emphasizes the idea people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, deserving of equal opportunity to decide how they live, work, and take part in their communities.

HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

There are two ways you can participate with WASILC. You can join a committee or apply to serve on the Council. Current committees accepting applications are: the Legislative & Policy, Youth, and Education & Outreach Committees. If you are committed and passionate about the values and mission of WASILC or are interested and want more information, please contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at: kimberly.conner@dshs.wa.gov or 360.725.3695.

WASILC strives to ensure statewide representation of members who represent a broad range of individuals with geographic, disability, business, ethnic, service provider, advocacy and agency diversity. To apply, submit an online application to the Governor’s Office at: https://www.governor.wa.gov/boards-commissions/boards-commissions/apply-serve-board-or-commission