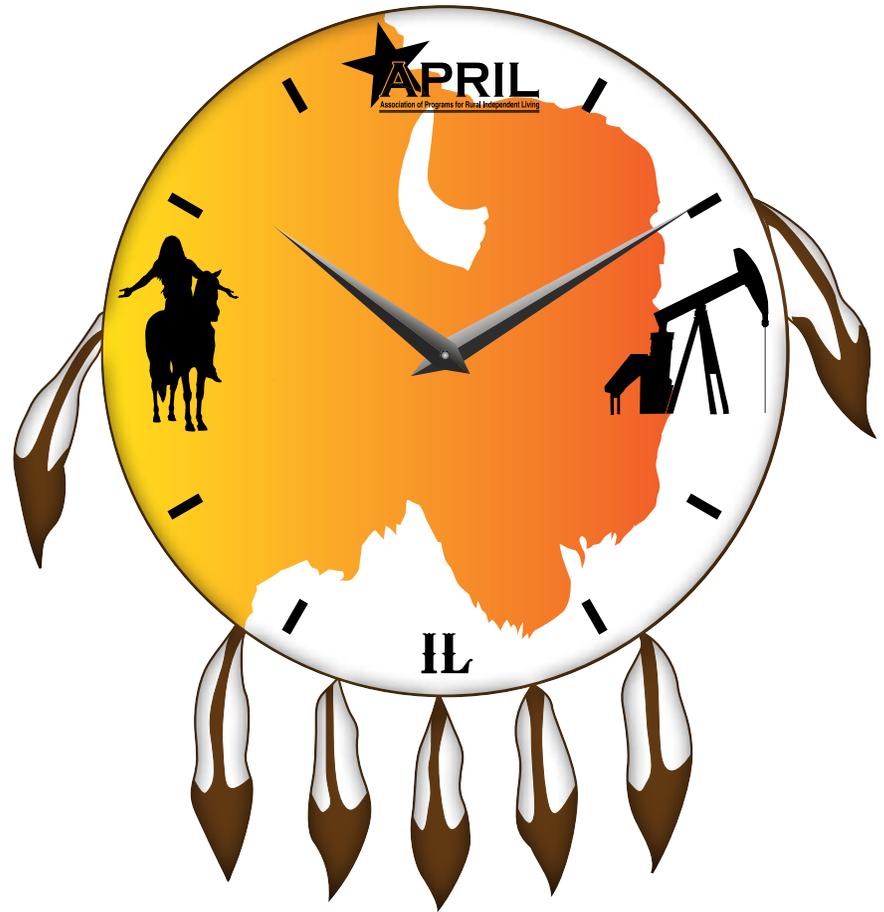




Association of Programs  
for Rural Independent Living

# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



*Independent Livin' on Tulsa Time:  
Honoring the Past and Celebrating the Future*

## **Independent Living: *Learn it! Love it! Live it!***

### **Who we are**

The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) is a national grassroots, nonprofit membership organization consisting of over 260 members from centers for independent living, their satellites and branch offices, statewide independent living councils, other organizations and individuals concerned with the independent living issues of people with disabilities living in rural America.

### **Our Mission**

APRIL provides leadership and resources on rural independent living. As a national membership organization, APRIL is dedicated to advancing the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities in rural America by serving as a center of resources and by leading systems change.

### **Vision Statement**

APRIL is the unified voice of independent living in rural America.



From left to right: Billy Altom, Kathy Hatch, Elissa Ellis

### **Staff**

#### **Executive Director**

Billy Altom

#### **Director of Operations and Conference Coordination**

Elissa Ellis

#### **Director of Training and Technical Assistance**

Kathy Hatch

## 2013 Board of Directors

### Officers

#### President

Liz Sherwin  
*Illinois-Iowa ILC - IL*

#### Internal Vice

#### President

Ronald Rocha  
*ARCIL - TX*

#### External Vice

#### President

Tiffany Clifford  
*Walton Options - GA*

#### Treasurer

Valarie Barnum-Yarger  
*Michigan SILC - MI*

#### Secretary

Frieda Kliewer  
*Sandra Beasley CIL - PA*

### Members At Large

Jim Whalen  
*The Adaptables CIL - NC*

Gary Maddox  
*Southwest CIL - MO*

Scott Burlingame  
*Independence Inc. - ND*

Susan Tink Miller  
*PIRS - CA*

Tim Sheehan  
*CIL of Western Wisconsin - WI*

John Johnson  
*Options CIL - MN*

Sara Minton  
*Crockett Resources CIL - TX*

Bob Maffit  
*Montana ILP - MT*

John Nousaine  
*North Country IL - WI*

Barbara Davis  
*Disability Partners - NC*

Mike Beers  
*Summit ILP - MT*

### SILC Rep

Molly Gosline  
*Florida SILC - FL*

### Youth Seats

Eddie Rea  
*CA SILC - SC*

Sierra Royster  
*Alliance of Disability Advocates - NC*

## 2013 APRIL Supporters

### 2013 Conference Sponsors

AMERIGROUP  
Corp AVP-Advocacy & National Partnerships  
Virginia Beach, VA

Arizona Bridge to Independent Living - ABIL  
Phoenix, AZ

Arkansas SILC  
Little Rock, AR

Centene Corporation  
St. Louis, MO

Crockett Resource CIL  
Crockett, TX

IndependenceFirst  
Milwaukee, WI

Michigan SILC  
Lansing, MI

SILC CONGRESS

University of Kansas  
RTC:IL  
Lawrence, KS

University of Montana  
RTC:Rural  
Missoula, MT

Walton Options  
Augusta, GA

Brain Injury Blog  
Talk Radio  
Walton Options  
Augusta, GA

### 2013 Youth Support

ARCIL, Inc.  
Austin, TX

Idaho SILC  
Boise, ID

Sandra Beasley CIL  
Enid, OK

The Adaptables  
Winston-Salem, NC

West-Central ILS  
Warrensburg, MO

Yoshiko Dart  
Washington, DC

### 2013 Exhibitors

Q90/CIL  
Management Suites  
Springville, UT

Easter Seals  
Transportation Group  
Washington, DC

Goodwill of the Finger Lakes/AgrAbility  
Geneseo, NY

University of Kansas  
RTC:IL  
Lawrence, KS

## 2013 Peer Mentors

### CIL PEER MENTORS:

Dee Barnard, ED  
Access to Independence, Inc.  
Madison, WI

Michelle Crain, ED  
Lifetime Independence for Everyone (LIFE)/RUN CIL  
Lubbock, TX

Andy Curry, ED  
Tri-County ILC  
Ogden, UT 8440

Barry Fox-Quamme, ED  
ILR  
Portland, OR

Ron Garcia, ED  
New Vistas CIL  
Santa Fe, NM

Roger Howard, ED  
Living independence Network Corporation (LINC)  
Boise, ID

Tiffany Clifford, ED  
Walton Options for Independence  
Augusta, GA

Kathie Knoble-Iverson, ED  
IL Resources, Inc.  
LaCrosse, WI

Gary Maddox, ED  
Southwest CIL  
Springfield, MO

John Nousaine, ED  
North Country ILC  
Superior, WI

Lee Schulz, ED  
Independence First  
Milwaukee, WI

Liz Sherwin, ED  
IL/IA CIL  
Rock Island, IL

### SILC Mentors

Ann McDaniel, ED  
West Virginia SILC  
Institute, WV

Pat Puckett, ED  
Georgia SILC  
Decatur, GA

Brad Williams, ED  
NY SILC  
Albany, NY

## 2013 Accomplishments

### **Rural People Rural Policy: an Update**

APRIL became a participant in W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Rural People, Rural Policy (RPRP) project back in 2006. The multi-year, national initiative was based on the premise that rural America has abundant assets and that its brightest potential emerges when a critical mass of rural people are stronger and more organized policy actors. Through 2013, as part of this network, APRIL continued to participate in NURV – Networks United for Rural Voice, meeting regularly both by phone and face-to-face. APRIL has been proud to bring the voice of people with disabilities who live and work in rural America to this diverse group of people from across the country.

The approach of the RPRP initiative was that systems, not symptoms, are the focus of policy action. NURV endeavored to maintain that focus and has successfully advanced the following:

- A common vision and vocabulary of challenges, opportunities and solutions that frame a consistent, more productive national dialogue on rural America.
- A nationwide network of rural advocates and organizations that collectively:
  - Advances local, state and federal policy that produces healthy, sustainable rural communities with widely shared economic prosperity.
  - Shares a platform that helps coordinate research, learning, resource development, expertise and communication.
  - Includes people and communities historically excluded from the policy formation and decision-making process.
  - Becomes a knowledgeable, creative, effective and powerful voice in rural policymaking.

NURV continued to work on five policy areas including healthcare,

transportation, broadband, entrepreneurship and small business and immigration reform. The 15 organizations in NURV split into smaller working groups to focus on these areas. APRIL continues to be primarily involved in transportation, but has also worked with the Entrepreneurship and Small Business and the Broadband working groups.

The transportation working group, now the National Rural Assembly's Transportation Working Group continued its work through contact with Transportation for America (T4America) putting its support behind reauthorization of the transportation bill, Map 21. It continues to work to influence regulations for the bill. Any new regulations developed for the 2-year Map 21 could quite possibly be used in new legislation that moves through Congress in the coming year.

## 2013 Accomplishments

### **Conference:**

APRIL's 19th annual Independent Living Conference was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2013. The over 270 attendees participated in 30+ events including topical discussions, plenary sessions, social events, workshops, a full day pre-conference and the 2nd annual APRIL Youth Conference. These included presentations on everything from PHARM dogs to veteran's issues and healthcare strategies, from deinstitutionalization and ADA regulations to building a youth program in your CIL. Highlights of the conference included a keynote address from Woody Osburn, Oklahoma native and past Executive Director of the Ohio SILC, who told a little about the history of early IL in Oklahoma as well as encouraging everyone to "keep up the good fight." The last session of the conference began with a tribute to Linda Gonzales, past Executive Director of APRIL, who passed away in July. The youth had the final word, closing the show

with comments about both their own and the main conference and challenging everyone to bring more youth to the 2014 Conference in Albuquerque.

### **2012 Awards Presented at the conference included:**

#### ***Earl Walden Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rural Advocacy Winner:***

Jim Brocato, Executive Director of RISE Center for Independent Living in Beaumont, Texas is an active member of APRIL and feels the IL Movement helped him find and develop his advocacy spirit. It has been the best way for him to understand and clarify his personal and professional values and to recognize his responsibility to the community. Jim has designed new and innovative programs to serve people with disabilities in fairly isolated rural areas through the use of current technologies.

#### ***Linda Gonzales Award for Outstanding Rural Youth Winner:***

Eryn Sanders is the Rural Outreach Coordinator in the Ottawa County office of the Ability Center of Greater Toledo. Eryn has developed community partnerships with organizations that provide services to youth and has made it her mission to ensure these organizations include all youth with and without disabilities in their programming. She works closely with 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and others facilitating workshops to teach inclusion to directors, leaders and staff. She has also helped make local youth camps accessible for anyone using their facilities.

#### **Youth:**

For nearly a decade, APRIL youth have been heavily involved in the planning, coordination and execution of an annual pre-conference, which last year morphed into a full-fledged Youth Conference, held

## 2013 Accomplishments

just prior to and overlapping with the main Conference. In 2013, “It’s OUR Time: Influencing and Creating Change Today!” was a huge success, with 65 young adults in attendance thanks to the generous support of several member CILs. ***This was nearly double the 2012 attendance!*** Keynote speaker, Stephanie Sanford of JusticeNow Consulting in Lawrence, Kansas created quite a stir among the youth as she coaxed them out of their comfort zones and into their advocacy spaces and to think about what part they can play in the future of IL. The history of the disability movement was discussed as well as the importance of clear communication in making REAL change come about. Participants created personal action plans to take back and use in their communities and heard from veteran advocates who’ve been part of the changes we see today. Rural youth with disabilities continue to make their presence known as members of the APRIL Board of Directors, at

the APRIL Conference and within rural independent living. The Youth Steering Committee (YSC) plans to actively pursue grant and scholarship opportunities and to encourage CILs to sponsor youth participation. They also will plan the 2014 Conference during monthly phone meetings. Youth-designed t-shirts sporting the Conference theme were a hit and brought a nice profit.

### **Training and Technical Assistance:**

#### ***Peer Mentoring Programs:***

As part of a cooperative agreement with the IL Net, APRIL mentors provided peer mentoring services to 12 CILs (2-day, on-site visit plus preparation/follow-up) in 2013. 3 SILCs also received technical assistance from APRIL peer mentors. In both programs, seasoned CIL and SILC directors provide on-site as well as follow-up assistance to those who request services.

2013 was another good year for the ***Youth to Youth Peer Mentoring*** program. With a very small budget and the support of CILs and one SILC, APRIL youth mentors provided technical assistance to 9 CILs in Florida (one 3-day session), plus a CIL in North Dakota. APRIL also was asked to present on the program at the Missouri IL Summit, providing a “mini-mentoring” to about 50 participants in a one-hour workshop.

Thanks to funding from the University of Kansas, RTC:IL’s Dr. Glen White, APRIL youth were able to continue this new program. The purpose of the mentoring is to assist Centers to develop their own youth-centered programs. These programs would bring young people in, not only for services, but also for the camaraderie of meeting with other youth with disabilities. Youth updated and added to their training materials and information in issue

## 2013 Accomplishments

areas including: Recruitment and Retention, IL History and Philosophy, Leadership, Transportation and Sexuality and Healthy Relationships. As a result of the Florida mentoring, 2 CILs have since started new youth programs and one participant acquired a new job as a Youth Specialist in another state. In North Dakota, the coordinator of the youth program is now working with 10 schools in her area on disability-related issues among young people.

### **Staff Presentations and Facilitation:**

APRIL staff was in high demand throughout the year, speaking about APRIL, transportation and other IL topics in several locations. Following is a list of those presentations.

- ED Billy Altom and Board member, Michael Beers presented on the APRIL Youth initiative at the January 2013 SILC Congress in San Diego, CA. Altom also

gave a brief overview of APRIL and the services offered and Michael went into detail about our youth program. His presentation was very well received and people were eager to know how they could replicate it or have APRIL provide technical assistance.

- In February, Altom was interviewed by Les Paul Morgan (Walton Options) on his Brain Injury Network radio program. They discussed the need for developing new/young leaders and the power of peer support. And of course, with the name Les Paul, we talked about music and its ability to unite people.
- In May, Altom was appointed to the Rail Vehicles Access Advisory Committee of the United States Access Board. The committee's role will be to make recommendations to the Access Board for revisions and updates to current ADA accessibility guidelines for transportation

vehicles (specifically, the parts addressing rapid, light, commuter, high speed and intercity rail).

- In June, Altom was the luncheon keynote speaker for the Missouri Independent Living Conference via SKYPE. He gave a general overview of APRIL, with a focus on the importance of youth involvement in the IL Movement.
- Kathy Hatch and Board member, Sierra Royster also presented at the IL Summit in Missouri. They answered questions about APRIL and presented a "mini-youth mentoring" to about 50 participants.
- In November the Rail Vehicles Access Advisory Committee met for the first time. Altom was appointed chair. The Committee's primary focus is to identify barriers that preclude people with disabilities from enjoying all the amenities offered in rail cars, with emphasis

## 2013 Accomplishments

on the car itself. Issues range from communications/signage to access to observation cars.

- In November, Altom joined a group of disability rights advocates (CCD) at the Department of Transportation to meet with Secretary Anthony Foxx. He spoke with Foxx about issues related to transportation in rural areas. These included the need for regulations and clearer definitions of crucial terms such as unavailable, insufficient, inappropriate and enforcement.

APRIL coordinated and facilitated 5 *IL Conversations* throughout the year. These are conference call-like trainings with a facilitator, presenters and participants discussing current IL topics. This year's lineup included:

- “Rural Housing Solutions” Presenters included Debie Fiddler, Housing Specialist, Progressive Independence, Inc. in Norman, OK – Pam Pulchny, Executive Director of Oklahomans for IL in McCallister, OK and Craig Henning, Executive Director of Disability Resource Association in Festus, MO. (50 + participants)
- “Assistive Technology Reuse: Pass It On!” Presenters included: Carolyn Phillips, Consultant, Pass It On Center, Atlanta, GA – Tiffany Clifford, Executive Director, Walton Options, Augusta, GA and Jim Beck, Executive Director, Access Alaska, Inc., Anchorage, AK. (45 participants)
- “Increasing Financial Capability: Growing Consumers’ Personal Wealth” Presenters included Thomas Foley, Deputy Director of the World Institute on Disability (WID) and Jacqueline Wilks, Outreach Specialist with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Office of Financial Empowerment, Washington, DC. (25 participants.)
- “Visitability: Advocating for Basic Home Access” Presenters included Darren Larson, IL Specialist at Summit Independent Living Center in Missoula, MT and Dot Nary, research associate at the Research and Training Center on Independent Living at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. (50 participants)
- “Fun & Fit: Recreational Opportunities for People with Disabilities” Presenters included: John Nousaine, Director and CEO of North Country Independent Living, Superior, WI - Gary Maddox, CEO and Lacey Thompson of Southwest Center for Independent Living in Springfield, MO - Monique Stamps, Peer Advocate at Disability Rights & Resources in Charlotte, NC. (50 participants)

## 2013 Accomplishments

### Other Items of interest:

- Throughout the year, APRIL worked with NCIL to advocate for re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act (WIA). Together, they were successful in getting S1356, which would create an Independent Living Administration, out of the HELP committee. The next step is passage by the full Senate and from there to the House.
- Altom and colleague, SeRonna Rodgers with the Disability Rights Center in Arkansas performed accessibility surveys on 3 Amtrak stops in Arkansas. The Little Rock stop has level boarding and the facilities are moderately accessible, while 2 other stops lacked any form of accessibility.
- Altom worked with Easter Seals ProjectACTION to develop a brochure entitled, An ADA Guide for Rural Demand-Response Operators.
- Altom provided comments to the National Dialogue on the USDOT's new strategic plan. His comments were directed at the need for clear definitions of the transportation terms unavailable, insufficient and inappropriate.
- Altom served on the Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) to evaluate proposals and select agencies to conduct research for the TRB. TCRP's charge was to select an agency to study the Impact of the Trend Toward Separate Statewide Medicaid Transportation Brokerages on Human Services Transportation Coordination.
- APRIL worked collaboratively with the United States International Council on Disability (USICD) to promote the passage of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. We have assisted in sending targeted emails to states with a potential positive vote and asking them to contact their Senators, as well as sending letters of our own.
- After more than two years of work, an official Memo of Understanding (MOU) now exists between APRIL/NCIL and the Veterans Administration to enhance services to veterans and find ways CILs and local/regional Veterans offices can work together to that end.
- The Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF) and APRIL submitted a Letter of Interest, describing our interest in conducting Into and Around Town: Transportation Accessibility Update. This project would build on and update the original report DREDF had a significant role in creating, The Current State of Transportation for People with Disabilities in the United States (2005). We were eager to re-examine the recommendations in that

## 2013 Accomplishments

report to identify which have and have not been addressed successfully, and further, to identify the barriers that remain for people with disabilities in accessing transportation. The final product will emphasize rural and outlying urban areas, as well as inner-city transit issues related to subways, buses, taxis and other systems such as paratransit. (Contract was awarded and project began in late September)

- Staff distributed information articles daily on upcoming events, trainings, news, etc. through the APRIL membership listserv.
- The website was updated regularly with current events, important dates and other items of interest.

### Short Note About Linda Gonzales

*With gentle grace and elegance, Linda Gonzales spent most of her life furthering the philosophy of Independent Living. APRIL was her brainchild and it is her legacy to the IL Movement. As many of you may know, we lost Linda in July 2013. The impact she had on the IL Movement, on APRIL and on everyone she came into contact with will be felt for generations. Her spirit is woven into the fabric that makes up APRIL and the disability move-*

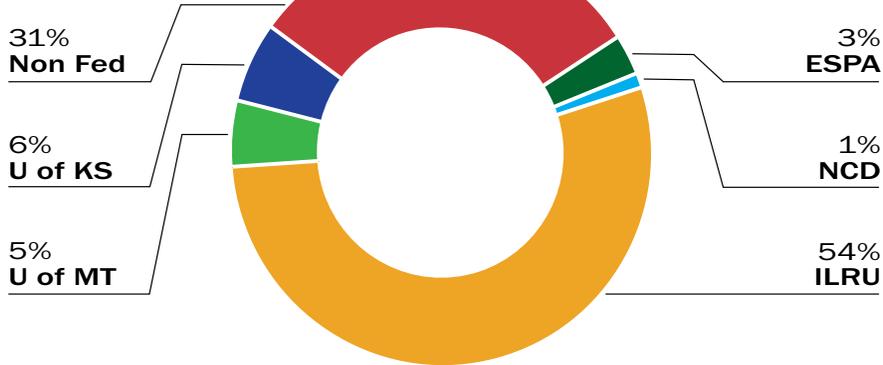


*ment. Linda touched lives in very profound ways. We miss her terribly but we are all better for having known her. Her contributions to IL and to APRIL are historic. Linda was so proud of APRIL and when the Executive Director torch was passed to Billy Altom, she was resolute in her support of him and his abilities to continue to move APRIL forward. We feel her spirit in all that we do and hear her soft, confident voice in every decision we make. We miss you, we love you, and we thank you!*

# Financial Report

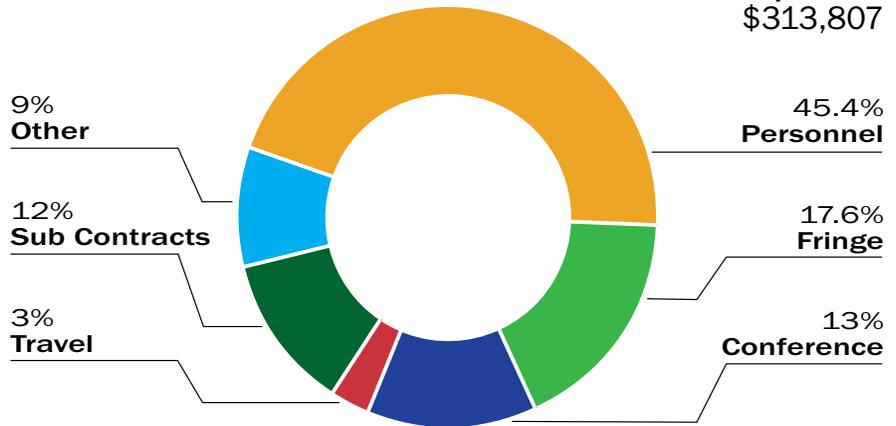
Total Income:  
\$313,950

## INCOME



Total Expenses:  
\$313,807

## EXPENSES





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