



THE WIL INDEPENDENT

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Our Mission: Advancing independence, dignity and a world without barriers where people with disabilities are empowered to participate fully in our communities and our individual life choices.

CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT

Larry Sodders from Gillette fought and survived male breast cancer in 2009, but the battle left its mark through a series of strokes weakening him to the point he could no longer bear his own weight. It was important to him to emphasize the point of male

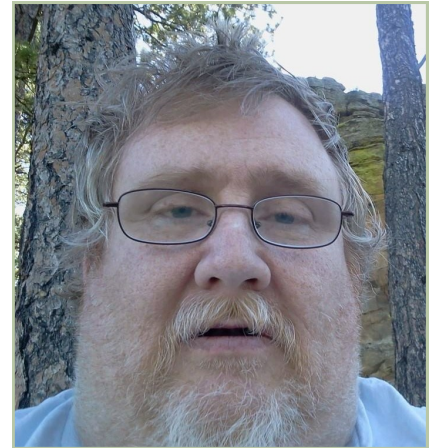


Photo provided by Tina Bennett

breast cancer being not only deadly but perhaps more so due to the stigma that men face with such a diagnosis, but did point out that his struggle coincided with that of Peter Chris of KISS fame battling male breast cancer.

Larry stays capable, mobile, and productive through the use of assistive technology obtained by WIL's Independent Living program and other resources. He first learned of WIL about 4 years ago while researching disability resources online. He completed the Living Well With a Disability workshop and not only speaks highly of it but began making informative YouTube videos including LWWD information under the username **DisAbility No Way sodders**.

He says his main expectation when approaching WIL was information and **“having someone around that knows what’s going on...and how to work within the system to get your needs met. When I first started talking to Tina she had all the resources right there in her head.”** Though his health has declined his mobility and social interaction has increased. **“I was not living. I was existing. Now I’m actually being able to...have some sort of say so on what my life’s supposed to be.”** He wishes to continue contributing and promoting WIL online and locally.

Full Solar Eclipse on August 21st, begins 10:22 am, **PEAKS 11:42-11:45 AM**, ends 1:09 pm.
View Safely! For information visit www.travelwyoming.com/eclipse or eclipsecasper.com

CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED

Earlier in life Larry was an EMT, firefighter, police officer, and worked with the developmentally disabled in Higginsville, Missouri. There he met Donald, an elderly patient with very limited mobility and vocabulary but a perpetual smile and an abundance of kindness. From their first meeting a bond was forged with Donald's friendliest greeting of "I honk at you," a bond which grew over the next 2 and a half years until Donald's passing and continues to inspire Larry to this day.

Larry says the best advice he can give people trying to cope with disabilities is, **"You have to talk. You can't hold things within you and expect people to give you the answers."**

Written by Ant

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



Photo by Tina Bennett

Tina Bennett is a Wyoming native, born and raised in Fremont County. Tina began her career in the field of disabilities in 1989 as a Direct Care Staff at the Wyoming State Training School in Lander, WY. WSTS was the state institution for persons of all ages with various disabilities. Tina began during the time when the institution was transitioning from large cottage-style residences that housed many persons to smaller group home residences. Tina worked at the first residence to become ICFMR (Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded) certified. Although she worked at the ICFMR, she also was able to see first-hand the environment of an institution "warehousing" persons with disabilities and the consequences of such.

After working at WSTS a few years, Tina left to pursue her degree in Human Development Services, and began working at Community Entry Services in Riverton, WY. Tina worked at CES for 8 years with persons with developmental disabilities and adults with traumatic brain injury. As the Community Education and Integration Coordinator for Fremont county, Tina was responsible for coordination and oversight of all activities and day work sites (day hubs, sheltered workshop, supported employment, etc.) in the county for persons with disabilities.

In 1999, Tina moved to Gillette where she began working at Western Nursing Open Doors, a community provider for adults with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injury. At WNOD, Tina was both case manager and staff trainer. In March of 2005, Tina began working for Wyoming Independent Living. For the first 7 years of her employment with WIL, Tina worked full time in the Visually Impaired Program. For the last 5 years, Tina has been working in the Independent Living program as well. Tina works in Campbell, Crook and Weston counties. Although Tina's official title is IL/VIP Specialist, she considers herself a "life coach" - helping people get from one point to another. "As a Specialist, you are a kind of jack of all trades".

Tina is a helper at heart and loves doing things that make a difference in someone else's life, large or small. Some of the accomplishments Tina is most proud of are coordinating and organizing events such as the Wyoming Council of the Blind state convention for 2 years, and numerous assistive technology and resource fairs. Currently, Tina is actively studying for her ADA coordinator certification. For the past several months, Tina has been working diligently to get the Center in Gillette up and running. Opening day was Thursday, July 20th.

Written by Tina Bennett

WIL NEWS & EVENTS



Harry Russell, a long time consumer at Wyoming Independent living passed away on July 3, 2017. Harry was 105 years old at the time of his death and had worked with Wyoming Independent Living since 2008. We will miss our oldest participant for his outrageous storytelling and his fierce independence.

Harry was born in 1911 on the Snake River Valley where his family homesteaded in the late 1800's. Until his death, he lived on the ranch he worked his entire life. Most days of the week he could be found playing cards at the Dixon Senior Center. Up until his 105th birthday, Harry still cooked, cleaned and took care of his garden.

During nine years of working with WIL, Harry participated in Independent Living services, the Transportation Program and the Medicaid Long Term Care Waiver. He lived alone with the support of his community and dedicated caregivers. His main caregiver Rose Norris, even traveled with Harry to New Zealand to see his daughter.

Harry told Wyoming Public Media in 2015, "I have a good life. I've got friends around me. The only thing I don't have is my saddle horse. I'm not busy working and I like to work." We hope he counted those at WIL among his friends. We will miss sitting around his kitchen table listening to stories about sheep camp and bears.



Written by Beki Roberts. Photos used with permission from Barb Moss

WIL Employee Anniversaries!

We wish to recognize and celebrate the ongoing efforts and contributions of the following people...

July

Amy Burns
9 years
Erwin Reitsma
3 years

August

Jude Davidson
4 years
Tauna Eberhard
1 year
Nicholas Wiseman
5 years

LINKS WORTH SHARING

Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation

<https://www.christopherreeve.org/>

Early Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder May Be Possible

<https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/awareness/awareness-dates.php>

Tips for the Newly Disabled

<https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/newly-disabled-tips.php>

Driving School Offers Teens with Disabilities Path to Independence

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2017/06/14/driving-school-path-independence/23812/>

Water Park for Those with Special Needs Set to Open

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2017/06/15/water-park-special-needs-open/23817/>

Supreme Court Expands Rights for Students with Disabilities

<https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2017-03-22/supreme-court-expands-rights-for-students-with-disabilities>

GET INVOLVED!

(* Indicates Council, Board, or Advisory positions open. Details at provided website)

*WIL Board Meeting

September 15, 1 pm

Casper WIL office, 305 West 1st St, Casper

wilr.org/about/board-information

*Statewide Independent Living Council

August 15, 1-5 pm, Joint Meeting with SRC

August 16, 8:30 am-5 pm

Workforce office, 851 Werner Court, Suite 120, Casper, WY 82601

<http://wyomingsilc.wyo.gov/>

*State Rehabilitation Council Meeting

August 15, 1-5 pm, Joint Meeting with SILC

August 16, 8:30 am-5 pm

Workforce office, 851 Werner Court, Suite 120, Casper, WY 82601

To join the conference call, dial **877-225-4133**

wyomingworkforce.org/workers/vr/src

Casper, City Council Meeting schedules: every 1st and 3rd Tuesday

August 1 and 15, 5:50 pm

Casper City Hall, 200 North David St, Casper, WY 82601 (307)235-8400

casperwy.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=63067&pageId=95232

Cheyenne, City Council Meeting schedules: every 2nd and 4th Monday

August 14 and 28, 6 pm

Cheyenne City Council, 2101 O Neil Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001 (307)637-6357

cheyennecity.org/140/City-Council-Meetings

*Cheyenne, MCPD (Mayor's Council for People with Disabilities): every 2nd Wednesday

August 9, 11:30 am, City Hall #122

Cheyenne City Council, 2101 O Neil Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001 (307)637-6200

cheyennesmcpd.org

Laramie, City Council Meeting schedules: every 1st and 3rd Tuesday

August 1 and 15, 6:30 pm

Laramie City Hall, 406 Ivinson Ave, Laramie, WY 82070 (307)721-5200

cityoflaramie.org/index.aspx?nid=68

Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

wgccd.wyo.gov

WIL CASPER ACTIVITIES

305 WEST 1ST STREET
(307)266-6956

August				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
	Coloring Therapy 12-2 pm Film Fest 2:30-5 pm, 5:30-8 pm	Crafts N Creations* 1-3 pm		
7	8	9	10	11
Problem Solvers Club 2-3 pm The Write Club 3:30-4:30 pm	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice
14	15	16	17	18
SDC Workshop 1-3 pm	Coloring Therapy 12-2 pm Film Fest 2:30-5 pm, 5:30-8 pm			
21	22	23	24	25
Solar Eclipse Schedule 10:22-11:42-11:45-1:09 The Write Club 3:30-4:30 pm	Coloring Therapy 12-2 pm			Bowling ** 2-4 pm
28	29	30	31	
	Coloring Therapy 12-2 pm			

Some regularly scheduled activities may have been rescheduled due to Inservice

Coloring Therapy: every Tuesday

Film Fest: every 1st and 3rd Tuesday 2:30-5 pm and repeat showing 5:30-8 pm. Call to Reserve Seating!

Crafts N Creations: every 1st Wednesday

*This month's craft: **Photo Calendars**

Problem Solvers Club: every 1st Monday

The Write Club: every 1st and 3rd Monday

SDC (Self-Directed Care) Workshop: every 2nd Monday

Bowling: every 4th Friday

**El Mark-O Lanes \$2.00 per game, Free shoe rental if you state that you are with the WIL group!

WIL CHEYENNE ACTIVITIES

1609 EAST 19TH STREET
(307)637-5127

August				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
	Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm			
7	8	9	10	11
	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice
14	15	16	17	18
	Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm	Intro to Safety/Mobility Equipment 10-11 am		
21	22	23	24	25
Solar Eclipse Schedule 10:22-11:42-11:45-1:09	Resume Building 10-11:30 am Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm	Better Health=Better You 1-3:30 pm	Grab Bar DIY 10-11 am	
28	29	30	31	
	Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm Understanding Medicaid 2:30-3:30 pm	Intro to Container Gardening 10-11:30 am Better Health=Better You 1-3:30 pm		

Some regularly scheduled activities may have been rescheduled due to Inservice

Keep Calm and Color On: every Tuesday (new name, same great coloring)

Intro to Safety/Mobility Equipment: regularly every 2nd Wednesday

Better Health=Better You (PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED): every Wednesday from Aug 23-Sep 27 This workshop by Stanford University’s School of Medicine focuses on helping people take charge of their chronic health problems and to get relief from their pain, fatigue, and other symptoms. This is a free workshop sponsored and facilitated by the Southern Wyoming Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

Grab Bar DIY: every 4th Thursday

Understanding Medicaid: This presentation will consist of having a Medicaid eligibility specialist and a Medicaid benefit specialist give an overview of Medicaid and will have a question and answer session that will follow the presentation. No pre-registration required.

Intro to Container Gardening

WIL GILLETTE ACTIVITIES

*707 BRIDGER STREET
(307)686-8251

August				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
Living Well Class: Pre-registration required by August 17 for 11-week class. Call for more information.				
7	8	9	10	11
	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice
14	15	16	17	18
			Anxiety Support 10-11 am Arts/Crafts 11-12 pm Living Well 12-2 pm	
21	22	23	24	25
Solar Eclipse Schedule 10:22-11:42-11:45-1:09			Vision Support 10-11 am Arts/Crafts 11-12 pm Living Well 12-2 pm	
28	29	30	31	
			Disability Support 10-11 am Arts/Crafts 11-12 pm Living Well 12-2 pm	

***Activities are being hosted at Abiding Grace Church's Fellowship Hall**

Some regularly scheduled activities may have been rescheduled due to Inservice

Arts/Crafts: Bring your favorite art/craft activity and socialize. Some art/craft supplies provided.

WIL LARAMIE ACTIVITIES

1050 NORTH 3RD STREET, SUITE G
(307)721-4071

August				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4
	Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm		Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm	Coloring Group 2-3:30 pm
7	8	9	10	11
Fishing 8 am-1 pm	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice	Closed for All-Agency Inservice
14	15	16	17	18
	Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm	Bowling 2-4 pm	Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm	Coloring Group 2-3:30 pm
21	22	23	24	25
Solar Eclipse Schedule 10:22-11:42-11:45-1:09	Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm Movie Night 6-8 pm		Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm	
28	29	30	31	
	Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm		Adulging 101 3:30-5:30 pm	

Some regularly scheduled activities may have been rescheduled due to Inservice

Adulging 101: every Tuesday and Thursday from June 6 to September 27. **CALL to REGISTER.**

Coloring Group

Fishing: Call for Details

Bowling: Laramie Lanes

Movie Night

BEHIND THE SCENES

Advocacy. When used correctly, it can be a powerful catalyst for change. Change about misconceptions, access, service delivery, and individual rights. Advocacy is all around us. People advocate for their rights and the rights of others in numerous ways. From the mother at an IEP working to ensure full inclusion for her child in the school system, to the man protesting on the steps of his senator's office about his right to healthcare coverage, to the teen standing up to her bully in cyberspace, and the blind man requesting accessibility at his poll place during elections.

There are many ways to advocate for individual rights or systems change: writing a letter, discussing the issue in-person, organizing a protest, or using social media to recruit others to your cause. No matter the action, you know that your approach is important in order to be influential. Effective change involves these steps:

1. **Defining the issue:** Be specific. Answer these questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How? What is the issue you want to address? Who does the issue affect? Who can influence change? When is the best time to advocate? Where should you direct your energy? How should you advocate; what is your plan? Why does change need to occur?
2. **Implementing your plan:** Carry out the strategy you outline in your planning stage. Enlist help; additional advocates, stories from others affected by this issue; connect with people that believe in your cause. Be in the right place at the right time and direct your efforts to the right people.
3. **Observe, Regroup, and Assess:** Are your actions effective? If so, what's the next step? If not, how can you change your approach to get better results? Enlist feedback from others to get other perspectives, help you brainstorm, and develop your next plan.
4. **Modify or Continue:** Modify your actions to continue addressing your issue. Go back to Step 1 or 2 as needed, until the objective is achieved. Or if you have affected change, work on your next steps to keep the momentum going.
5. **Celebrate:** Whenever you reach a milestone on your journey, stop to celebrate even the smallest victories. Believe in your cause and continue to move forward in your advocacy efforts until you realize your goal.

Are you trying to make changes in your life or the life of someone else? Or have you been effective and want to share what strategies you've learned? When it comes to advocacy for the rights of individuals with disabilities, the Independent Living Specialists at Wyoming Independent Living can be a resource for you, whether you need support in or want to share you experience with being an advocate. Advocating for the rights of individuals and for systemic change is one of our core services, and we are here to support, guide, and connect you with others who desire the same change.



Respectfully,

Amber Alexander

Independent Living/ Youth Transition Coordinator

CONNECT WITH US!

Casper

305 West 1st Street

Casper, Wyoming 82601

307-266-6956/ Fax: 307-266-6957

Laramie

1050 North 3rd Street, Suite B

Laramie, Wyoming 82072

307-721-4071/ Fax: 307-745-8661

Cheyenne

1609 East 19th Street

Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001

307-637-5127/ Fax: 307-634-9004



Website: www.wilr.org



Facebook: www.facebook.com/WyomingIndependentLivingRehabilitationInc



Twitter: [@Wyo_Independent](https://twitter.com/Wyo_Independent)

Ask your local WIL representative about volunteer opportunities!



Casper

305 West 1st Street

Casper, WY 82601

307-266-6956

Laramie

1050 North 3rd Street

Laramie, WY 82072

307-721-4071

Cheyenne

1609 East 19th Street

Cheyenne, WY 82001

307-637-5127

To be added to our mailing list,
please call [307-266-6956](tel:307-266-6956)
or email aalexander@wilr.org.

