

Lane Independent Living Alliance (LILA)

99 W. 10th Ave, Ste 117, Eugene, OR 97401 Phone: 541.607.7020 Fax: 541.345.7021 www.lilaoregon.org

In support of HB 2971 for Independent Living Funding

Consumer Letters and emails:

Received by email March 7th 2013

1) LILA has helped me take classes for learning better knowledge on getting a job. They were very helpful and I learned a lot about Master Skills and writing a resume. I appreciate their help very much and without them I would not be well on my way to working once again.

Sincerely,
Travis Aldridge

2) Hi,

LILA is a very critical service to me in that I was able to get lots of help utilizing resources that is helping me survive as an alterable person. This is no time to be cutting services for the vulnerable and poor people! I urge very strongly for LILA services to continue. Ceila Levine

3) To Whom It May Concern:

You have helped me with my travels by assisting me to get a bus pass.
D. C.

4) I'm currently an employee of a CIL and have been employed for a little over two years. Due to the nature of my disability and the job accommodations I have required, this is the longest I have been employed at any one organization. In my time working at a CIL, I have been supported in learning to take the bus when possible, obtaining my own medical insurance, and getting my own apartment, among other things. I have developed job skills that I did not have when I started working. I am so grateful for having a CIL help me become more independent and for getting to work with consumers. EB

5) To whom it may concern.

I received counseling from LILA that was very beneficial for me.

I would hate to see a good organization like this go.

Sincerely,
Nichole Dashney

6) Lila was very helpful for providing assistance with employment training. I was able to get the training I needed from a month long "employment readiness" class. The class was taught by 2 very helpful instructors and there were several informative videos about obtaining and maintaining stable employment. After I was finished with the class, I felt much more confident about interviewing for jobs. A few weeks later I landed a full time job with Goodwill Industries.

-Sincerely
M.R.

Received by email March 8th 2013

7) LILA Peer Club offers us interesting useful activities: opinions in comedy group members and general member's meetings and men's or ladies time.

LILA Peer Club offered us support for stressed friends, weekly mental health groups and support for our friend at U of O track for his Paralympic race.

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My friends in Salem, without an independent living center or an adequate city bus service and waiting room, spend too much money and time in coffee shops downtown, buying and drinking snacks.

Nicole T.

8) LILA is the most caring, discipline, and resourceful agency. LILA helped me and supports with my mental illness issues and living situation, especially I am deaf and moved to Oregon on my own, no families or friends. They gave me good information, directions, and good listener. If without them or haven't heard about them, I would be lost and in worst situation. Am very grateful for that and to the staff at LILA!! At this present, I am in East coast but want to support LILA and send a Message to the Legislature,.. Please don't shut them down!, Eugene community will need LILA's Caring, Discipline, and Resourceful services! Go LILA! :) :)

T.L.

9) My name is Emma L.

I have been employed by a CIL for the past 6 years. I have been directly and indirectly connected to many success stories. Some of these have brought tears to my eyes and continue to do so as I see the profound impact Centers for Independent Living (CILs) have on someone's life.

Many of my consumers come to me thinking they will never be able to be a productive part of society and of our local community again due to their disability which they often perceive as a barrier to their professional and personal growth as an individual.

As I work with consumers I will refer them to many of the several services offered by our CIL, Lane Independent Living Alliance. Consumers will be able to work on their independent living skills by becoming part of a support group, or by learning about housing, or by learning about financial responsibility, or by learning about how to become employable, or/and by learning about work incentives to help them earn more money.

I regularly witness consumers' independent living skills grow and flourish as they need the help from their families or social services less and less. They gain part-time or full-time employment which then allows them to move out on their own and they even will begin to save money to become homeowners and by doing so they gain confidence, grow independent skills, lose the need for food stamps or social security and feel as their disability is no longer a huge insurmountable barrier but just a part of their own individuality. They feel a part of our local community again and most importantly they learn to believe in themselves again and feel pride and happiness.

Please allow for additional funding to allow us to continue providing Independent Living services to people with disabilities in Oregon. I support Bill HB 2971 as it will continue to allow consumers to feel as a part of our community by supporting them in their efforts to grow their independent living skills.

Sincerely,
Emma L.

10) Dear Legislators

I am appealing to you to continue funding our states Independent Living centers through HB 2971. At our local Independent Living center (LILA ,in Eugene)

I have seen the effect of one program in particular (Peer Support Club) which has made an extremely positive impact on hundreds of local mental health consumers.

This not only is consumer driven ,addressing individual needs, but saves the state of Oregon money by promoting independent living which can result in the deinstitutionalization of people resulting in tax creating citizens ,at work ,rather than being warehoused at HUGE cost both in terms of the individual and their ability to choose and to the general pocketbook of taxpayers who pay for grossly inefficient and barbaric warehousing .

Received by email March 9, 2013

11) LILA has given me the opportunity to continue my calling which is to serve and advocate for our people with disabilities. Every time I hear a "thank you" from one of my clients, it reminds me why I am here. Every time I get a call from a client asking for help or assistance, I am reminded how much LILA is needed and believe me, my phone rings often. LILA

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has help grow not just professionally but personally. With each new client I meet and serve, I feel a better person because I know my clients can rely on me because I am giving them 100% and they are also giving me their 100%. With out organizations like LILA who else will help our community with disabilities give 100%? Who else will assist and help our clients reach their full potential? If LILA has help me grow as an employee, just imagine how LILA has helped our clients. J.N.

12) It's hard being disabled. Add to this the frustration brought on by dealing with the mazes of support services with their requisite paper trails to get one's needs met is enough to add Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to anyone's diagnosis. LILA is giving me guidance and support through these mazes, be it insight regarding elder abuse or sharing small business expertise. As a Reagan-era Republican, I value getting a good return on my investment in tax dollars. LILA, with much of its staff being disabled, is ideally equipped to help other disabled folk and the "pre-disabled" (if one lives long enough, one will become disabled) to handle the challenges we face. Please support HB 2971.

Thank you,

Geoff of Eugene

13) I use a wheelchair due to my disability and Lane Independent Living Alliance has been vital in assisting me to becoming independent again. It took me years to get try to get into the workforce again, and thanks to LILA's continuing support and encouragement as I struggled through this difficult transition, I have felt empowered to seek out employment that I wanted, and enjoyed. I am now employed part time, and have stayed employed thanks to the staff employed that LILA. I do not believe that I would be enjoying the independence that I now have if wasn't for LILA.

Johann M.

Received by email March 11, 2013

14) I am Latino/Hispanic. I have a learning disability. I have attended Job Corp for 1 year and four months. Since my graduation, it has been really tough for me to get a job and keep a job all of my life. Also interviews have been tough for me. The longest job that I have had was at Taco Bell, in Cottage Grove, OR for about a year. The reason I quit Taco Bell is because I went to Job Corps to try and further my education. At Job Corps I took receptionist training, and ever since I graduated it has been hard for me to find a job. The reason it has been hard for me to get a job, is because I think that the people who do interview me can see that I have a disability and they don't think that I can do the job, and also I don't know what to say in the interview, before training at the LILA CIL. I had applied for many jobs in Eugene in the past year. If interviewers do give me a chance they usually let me go right away because I'm too slow. So I got reconnected with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to see if they could help me find a job. My VR Counselor sent me to take the Job Readiness class through Lane Independent Living Alliance. During the Job Readiness class I had handed the teacher a resume and they saw my typing speed and that I had a receptionist training. She told me that I should become a volunteer receptionist at LILA, because the previous receptionist was out and they were looking for volunteer receptionist while she was out. So I started volunteering in November of 2012 and have been doing it since then. Since starting to volunteer here the previous receptionist quit, and they really liked me and thought I was doing a good job so they have gave me some Job Coaching to help learn better communication skills, build my self confidence, learn each staff role is at the LILA office. Therefore, I direct the phone call, receive individuals who enter our office to the right staff and who to send the messages to. I understand what LILA and Independent Living Centers are about. Now that my Job I like working for LILA because they understand and know how people function with different disabilities. I think that it's harder at other job because I don't think that they understand how people with disabilities work, and I don't think other job give people with disabilities a chance to show how good of workers they can be. I am thankful for LILA for giving me a chance with a job after I lost all hope because I was trying really hard to find a job but was unsuccessful.

LILA is also helping me find my own housing in the Eugene, OR area. They have helped me apply for HACSA, and I have taken the Housing 101 Class. Now I am just waiting until I start getting money before I start looking and applying for housing.

I am thankful for everything that LILA has done for me and I don't think that I would have gotten as far as I have without them.

A.S.

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Received by email March 12, 2013

15) Dear Ladies and Gentleman:

I am writing in support of Legislative Bill HB 2971, a bill to continue funding for the CILs of Oregon.

I have been employed by Lane Independent Living Alliance since 2007. My title here is that of Independent Living Specialist. Each day I work with persons with various disabilities who wish to live independently. For most this can easily be a reality made possible through advocacy, peer mentoring, and resource and referral.

Fiscally speaking it is much more cost efficient to allow a person to live in their own home rather than in an institution such as foster care or a similar facility. In fact, the majority of Consumers I assist prefer their independence over assisted living. I find that landlords are savvy to the needs of the disabled and can offer accommodations that make living independently possible.

In addition to housing we offer many more services which include classes that lead to employment, budgeting, counseling and counseling related issues as well as independent living skills. We are truly a place that people can come to for the services they need to make positive and lasting changes in their lives. We have had numerous successes working with individuals who have been told "no" so many times they have almost given up. Many of these people are the ones you might see living on the streets, perhaps hoping to be arrested for access to shelter.

Lane Independent Living Alliance allows Consumers to make decisions for their own lives and then provides the tools they need to be successful.

I realize that financial times are tough and that difficult choices must be made. But please consider the services we offer and the work we do as vital and cost effective.

Sincerely,
Cindy Overlandmiller
ILS @ LILA

Received March 13, 2013

16) Dear Legislators,

I am writing in regard to funding for LILA. This organization is very important to people who need support and assistance for independent living. I believe funding for LILA is critical so that people can continue to get help that is needed.

LILA offered a class that taught me how to function independently as well as in relation to others. This 6 week course was a real in-depth opportunity to work through some barriers that were causing me difficulty in functioning. I learned many valuable skills and tools that I still rely on today. Courses offered to those in need in our community will make us stronger, better able, and more capable to function.

Thank you for your time,
Heather Drake