



2021-2022

Annual Progress Report

- Advocating for people who need help
- Connecting people to fiscally responsible resources
- Respecting everyone in the process



Advocacy Links



**Resource &
Advocacy
Center**

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Accomplishments

Advocacy Links received another 3 year accreditation award from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) with special certification in the following:

- Services Coordination
- Services Coordination for Children & Adolescents
- Services Coordination for Medically Fragile
- Services Coordination for Older Adults
- Services Coordination for Older Adults/Dementia Care

The Claudia Clarice Marie Thomas Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Valerie Cassity in recognition of her years of dedication to supporting people with disabilities.

Created Advocacy Links Resource & Advocacy Center, Inc.—Not For Profit, 501 ©(3) branch of the business.

Developed the industry's first online Housemate Finder tool to empower individuals with more control over finding potential housemates with whom they will live and share expenses.

Rebuilding Year

A “rebuilding year” for Advocacy Links. In the fall of 2021 we learned that we would have an unplanned opportunity to redesign the company to provide a new array of services. While this was not the direction we had worked to prepare for in 2021, we accepted the change and respected everyone through the transition process.

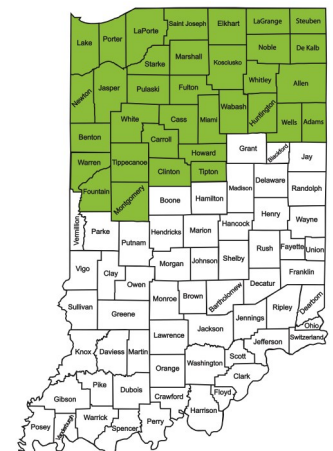
While we no longer provide Medicaid Waiver Case Management services, our rich history and strong connections with people throughout northern Indiana prevails. After being an industry leader for over a decade, we learned a lot about the needs of those we supported. We've used that knowledge and experience to shape the future for Advocacy Links.



We recognized that individuals and families need to be allowed to take charge of finding housemates that they prefer rather than being assigned someone. We created a secure, HIPAA compliant online tool individuals can control the information they share with others, and connect with a group of individuals who are also seeking housemates. Individuals can create their own profiles and they can choose to share as much or as little personal information as they prefer. The online tool also has the ability for professionals to create profiles on behalf of individuals who may have cognitive or technological barriers to using the tool themselves. This tool is regularly updated by the profile owners and doesn't rely on the distribution of an excel spreadsheet to be emailed out.

Through our long term support of individuals and families all across northern Indiana, we have learned:

- There is an enormous need, especially in rural areas, for interesting things to do in local communities.
- Reliable and consistent transportation for folks to get from their rural communities to urban areas that offer more activities, is a huge challenge.
- Access to support provided by local service providers has been a challenge due to staff shortages. Individuals are regularly added to waiting lists or only able to get help a couple hours each week.
- Individuals finishing high school are looking for meaningful work and activities just like other people their age.



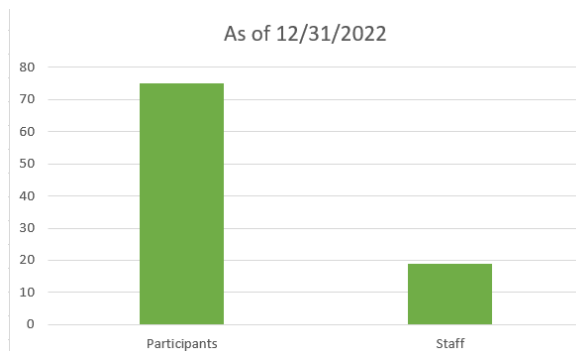
Rebuilding Year

Therefore, we've created PLACE (Purposeful Life And Community Engagement). PLACE activities and events are designed to bridge the gap in supports/services and create opportunities for ongoing relationships to build natural supports in local communities. Through partnerships with local businesses and service organizations, we will be helping traditional providers address their lack of staffing while still helping individuals pursue their best lives.

For over 10 years, Advocacy Links was known throughout northern Indiana as the place to go if you needed help with a disability-related matter. We are proudly maintaining that legacy by providing Resource and

Connections, not only to people with disabilities, but also to anyone who needs help regardless of age, diagnosis, geography, finances, or any other eligibility barrier. Our experience in advocating for people and connecting people to resources has positioned us as a valuable community partner. Resource & Connections can help parents of children who have received a new diagnosis; people who have aging parents that need help in their home but don't qualify for Medicaid, etc. We help individuals in all life stages through a variety of person centered supports and services to support them in both short term and long term capacities.

For many years, individuals with dual diagnoses of Intellectual/ Developmental disability and mental health conditions have had limited supports and services. Advocacy Links is proud to have always been at the forefront of helping individuals, families, and their children experiencing this unique situation. It was an honor to be invited by the Division of Mental Health and Addictions to provide Child Mental Health Wraparound services and we look forward to continuing our partnerships with youth and families throughout northern Indiana in the coming years.



During our research and development in 2022, it was evident that Advocacy Links needed to adjust our business classification to be able to sustain operations in a cost effective manner. We launched a Not-For-Profit arm of the business in late 2022 called the Advocacy Links Resource and Advocacy Center. The

Core Values

Advocacy Links personnel are committed to:

Listening to individuals and their families to fully comprehend their wants and needs so we can customize services to meet each individual's needs.

Integrity and honesty in conveying correct information to individuals and families in a timely fashion. Employees respect the privacy of all protected health information.

Networking with service providers, state entities, and local resources to connect individuals with crucial supports that meet their needs.

Knowledge of current and upcoming resources options is achieved by Advocacy Links staff through ongoing systematic training.

Support advocacy and personal contact.

NFP designation allows additional revenue streams. The Resource & Advocacy Center can now pursue grants, sponsorships and donations to offset the costs for services provided to people who aren't able to pay for their support/services.

One of our crowning achievements in 2022, was the receipt of another 3 year accreditation award (the highest possible award) from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). This is our fourth consecutive 3 year award from CARF. The surveyors this year summarized the experience best:

“Advocacy Links is commended for shifting its gears in response to the unexpected loss of its contract to provide case management services in 2021. As this was a shocking turn of events for the organization, the organization is commended for its decision to move forward and reframe this event (which involved a major change in contracting and a profound reorientation of service within a very short period of time) as an opportunity for growth. Leadership is complimented for pivoting to identify and develop programming based on a new service delivery model within a very short period of time. Advocacy Links continues to demonstrate remarkable tenacity and an unwavering commitment to the persons served and their families, staff members, and the broader community. Its efforts are already bearing fruit.”

It has taken us longer than we hoped to regain financial solvency, but we are grateful for our wise counsel and faithful stewardship in previous years to position us well for this season. We remain debt free but are eager to see revenue exceed expenses in the coming months.

Here are the ultimate outcomes we are working towards for 2023:

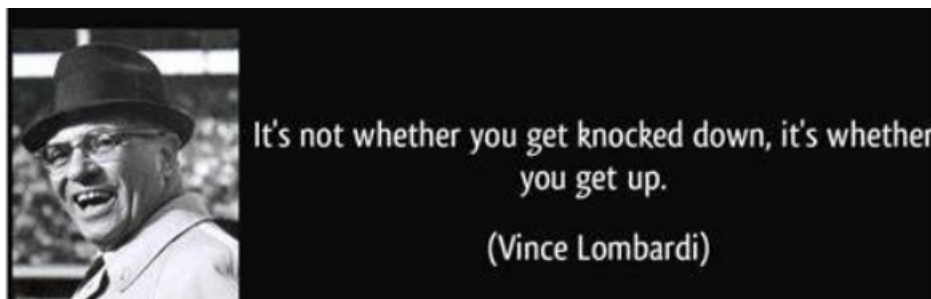
1. Focus on 4 service lines:

- Child Mental Health Wraparound
- MyLinks/Housemate Finder
- Resource & Connections
- PLACE

2. Have revenue must exceed expenses

3. Build/maintain positive connections

4. Implement consistent QA/QI systems for all divisions



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