

# THE PATH AHEAD

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Let's clear the path ahead.

[tmgwisconsin.com](http://tmgwisconsin.com)

# EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Everyone deserves to find meaningful work, and one of the biggest resources you have is your TMG IRIS Consultant. Together, the two of you can map out how to get started. Ready to check out some great resources? Visit [tmgwisconsin.com/tmg-employment-resources](http://tmgwisconsin.com/tmg-employment-resources), or if you are reading the online version of *The Path Ahead* simply choose the titles below Good luck with your job search!



## RESOURCES

### IRIS Employment Toolkit

This toolkit is the first step in helping you figure out where you want your job path to go!

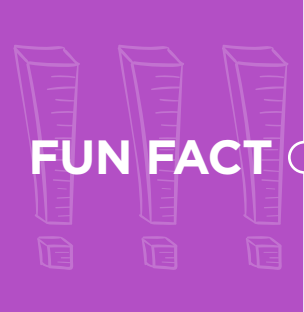
*This is not available online, so ask your TMG IRIS Consultant to print out a copy of the IRIS Employment Toolkit for you!*

### Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

APSE has provided a huge list of resources for people with disabilities who are looking for meaningful work.

### abilityJOBS

This job board is specifically for people who have a disability, and shares information about a wide variety of jobs.



**FUN FACT** ○

**Nearly 95%** of TMG participants who responded to TMG's 90-day and Annual Participant Surveys feel that their TMG IRIS Consultant understands them as a person.



## PROGRAMS

### Project SEARCH

A national program that provides on-the-job-training for young adults with disabilities, Project SEARCH has local sites across Wisconsin.

### Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

DVR counselors can help you discover what type of work best fits your talents and how to get training for that work. It also helps you find a job, gives you support for starting a business and provides potential funding for accommodations, job development and supports for community employment.



*Don't forget to mark your calendars!*

## **Your Meeting Place:**

### **Connecting you to your Community**

TMG is hosting new events called Your Meeting Place! These events are fun and casual open houses for self-advocates, providers, families and caregivers to connect, share information and learn together. Come and spend time with local providers and other people using the TMG ICA in your community to learn from each other, enjoy some free food, fun activities and a chance to let TMG staff know how we can help make self-direction better for you. Learn more and register today at: [tmgwisconsin.com/events/your-meeting-place](http://tmgwisconsin.com/events/your-meeting-place)

#### **Your Meeting Place at the Zoo: Milwaukee**

**October 18, 2017, 3 - 7 p.m.** (Open House)  
*Zoofari Conference Center - Milwaukee County Zoo*

#### **Your Meeting Place at the Ballpark: Appleton**

**November 6, 2017, 3 - 7 p.m.** (Open House)  
*Timber Rattlers Stadium - Appleton*

#### **Your Meeting Place at LilyWorks: Waukesha**

**November 29, 2017, 3 - 7 p.m.** (Open House)  
*Easterseals LilyWorks Conference Center - Waukesha*

## **Disability Rights WI (DRW) 40th Anniversary Gala**

DRW, Wisconsin's designated protection and advocacy organization for people with disabilities, is turning 40 this year! TMG is a proud sponsor of this wonderful evening of art, entertainment and amazing advocates from across the state. We hope to see you there! Learn more and register at [disabilityrightswi.org/drws-40th-anniversary-celebration-gala](http://disabilityrightswi.org/drws-40th-anniversary-celebration-gala)

**October 14, 2017, 5:30 - 9 pm**  
*Monona Terrace - Madison*

## **Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference**

Get ready for the 10th anniversary of the largest gathering of self-determination advocates in the state. The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, People First Wisconsin, InControl Wisconsin and the Waisman Center are hosting the conference again this year. This year's event, which TMG is proudly sponsoring, focuses on health and wellness and is a great place to meet self-advocates, learn about tools to help you continue living a self-determined life, and celebrate all the amazing things that make a great life possible. Learn more and register today at [wi-bpdd.org/index.php/wisconsin-self-determination-conference](http://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/wisconsin-self-determination-conference)

**November 1-3, 2017**  
*Kalahari Resort - Wisconsin Dells*



## MEET MELISSA: USING SELF-DIRECTION TO FIND HER DREAM JOB

Sometimes great opportunities come to us in surprising ways. Melissa Rademacher of Sauk City, Wisconsin, knows this all too well: Several years ago, she found that when one door unexpectedly closed, another door opened, leading her to a job she loves and a new community that values her.

Melissa is your average young adult. She is bright and hardworking, has a sweet laugh and quiet charm. Everyone immediately likes her. She enjoys living with her parents, Tracy and Joe Rademacher, but plans to get her own place someday. Melissa is both a girly-girl who loves dressing up, and a tomboy who's a fan of NASCAR and riding on fourwheelers. She also has a developmental disability that she refuses to let slow her down, and has partnered with the TMG ICA since 2010, when she became eligible for IRIS, to help achieve her goals.

In 2012, Melissa, now 25, found work at a local fast food restaurant. While it wasn't her dream job, she didn't mind it and enjoyed the opportunity to get out of the house. In late 2014, Melissa came to work and saw a "Closed" sign on the restaurant. Without warning, Melissa found herself jobless and unsure of what to do next.



*Melissa (center) with her boss Kim (left) and her mom Tracy (right).*

**“When the restaurant closed, I just sat at home,” says Melissa. “I had no friends to talk to. That made me sad.”**

Fortunately, one of Melissa's former teachers knew that Melissa needed work, and told her family about a program called Project SEARCH. The program, with sites located across the U.S. and in five other countries, helps recent high school graduates learn the skills they need to get the jobs they want. Through Project SEARCH, students have the opportunity to try several different jobs at a local business to see what they like to do.

Melissa started with Project SEARCH in June 2015 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. She did several jobs that interested her including housekeeping and working in the bakery. Her favorite job, however, was at the Spa Kalahari. Kim Scott, the spa director, says that her other employees felt Melissa became part of their team right away, and told Kim that they wanted to hire Melissa. Kim offered Melissa a job shortly after that, and in September 2015, Melissa became an employee of Spa Kalahari. Kim says it's one of the best hiring decisions she's ever made.

**“Melissa wasn’t a project for us, she was an employee,” says Kim. “She comes ready to work with an attitude of gratitude every day.”**

At Spa Kalahari, Melissa is a spa attendant. She greets guests and takes them to the relaxation room, stocks shelves, changes out the spa robes and puts guest information into the computer. Melissa has quickly become a valuable employee and continues to pick up new skills. Melissa's mom, Tracy, says that working at Spa Kalahari has been a life-

changer for Melissa. Since she's started, Melissa has gained confidence and independence, lost weight, become more social and made life long friends with her co-workers at the spa.

**“She’s transformed incredibly,” says Tracy. “The connection with Kim and the ladies here is overwhelming. It just fills your heart. She loves every one of them and they love her.”**

Today, Melissa is thriving at the spa and living a full life. Even though she was afraid when she first started Project SEARCH, she knew she had to just keep moving forward. This led her to a wonderful job and a fantastic community of people that she couldn't imagine her life without.

**“A new job is scary, but it gets better,” says Melissa. “I was very scared when I started the Project SEARCH program, but I made a lot of new friends.” Her advice to others? “Keep looking for a job that makes you happy!”**

To learn more about Project SEARCH, visit [projectsearch.us](http://projectsearch.us).



## FUN FACTS

### 9 out of every 10

TMG participants who responded to TMG's 90-day and Annual Participant Surveys would recommend their TMG IRIS Consultant to a friend enrolling in IRIS.

### 99%

of TMG participants who responded to TMG's 90-day and Annual Participant Surveys say their IRIS plan supports their goals.

# PHIL'S STORY: EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

Direct Support Professionals Week is September 10-16, and that means it's time to give thanks to your participant support workers! Phil Swartz – who uses the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA) – is especially grateful for his support workers, and he's come up with a special way to make sure they know just how much he appreciates them.

For the past several years, Phil has thrown an annual thank you party at his home in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, for his workers, Tina Minkel and Terry Sleger. The celebration, which took place this year on August 10, is a chance for Tina and Terry to spend a fun afternoon with friends and family members, enjoy great food and be honored for supporting Phil.

**“I'm not the easiest guy to get along with; I'm a crab and moody,” jokes Phil. “I just wanted to show a little appreciation. Sometimes the little things mean a lot.”**

Both Tina and Terry have been a big part of Phil's life for many years. In 2005, Phil met Tina when she was working at a local bar. This was around the time Phil had lost his sight and was going through a divorce. Tina saw just how hard of a time he was having, and she offered him support. For many years, Tina supported Phil even though he couldn't afford to pay her. When Phil began using the IRIS program in



*Phil (center) with his supports Tina Minkel (left) and Terry Sleger (right).*

2009, he was excited that he could pay Tina for the work she was doing for him.

**“She went out of her way to keep me alive,” says Phil. “She’s like a mom to me.”**

Terry and Phil's relationship goes even further back. The two met when Phil was a kid and Terry would take care of Phil's parents, who were both blind. Terry has also been Phil's landlord since the early 1990s. Over the years, Terry began providing care to Phil as well, and has become another important support in Phil's life.

**“Once, Terry got woken up at 1 o'clock in the morning to take me to the hospital in Green Bay,” says Phil. “He’s done a lot of that kind of stuff for me.”**

Without Tina and Terry, Phil knows things would be very different. That's why throwing the thank you party in Tina and Terry's honor is important to him. It makes Phil happy that he can give a little joy back to the people who have stood by his side for years. He encourages others who self-direct their long-term services and supports to find their own special ways to thank their workers.

**“Show your workers that you appreciate them,” says Phil. “It makes them happier and makes a better work environment.”**



## Are you an artist or photographer? We have a contest for you!

TMG is constantly blown away at how talented you are! So, **we're running a little contest** for people enrolled in the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency. We often find ourselves in need of great pictures, art, or illustrations to use on TMG materials – things like holiday cards, thank you notes, our website and *The Path Ahead*. **We would love to be able to show off your talent!**

### Here's how it works:

- If you have a favorite original photograph, drawing or illustration that you'd like to submit, email it to Jennifer Brown at [JDBrown@tmgwisconsin.com](mailto:JDBrown@tmgwisconsin.com), using the subject line, “TMG Photo/Art Contest.”
- Please only submit your own work.
- Send us your work by **October 31, 2017**.
- By entering this contest, you are giving TMG permission to publish your work. Winners will be notified by mail.

**Keep those creative juices flowing and show us what you've got. We can't wait to see your entry!**



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## WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

At the TMG IRIS Consultant Agency (ICA), we value the fact that our employees live and work in communities all around Wisconsin. Our Area Associate Directors provide local leadership for our IRIS Consultant Teams throughout the state. If you have questions about TMG and the services we provide, please visit our website at **tmgwisconsin.com** for more information.



Questions about IRIS,  
call: **1-800-223-6048**



For information about the  
TMG IRIS Consultant Agency,  
visit: **tmgwisconsin.com**