

# THE PATH AHEAD

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1  
CELEBRATING  
SELF-DIRECTION EDITION

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# SELF-DIRECTION IS FOR EVERYONE!

Choosing how you live your life is empowering. It means you make decisions about things that are important to you like where you live and who you live with, what goals you want to work towards, and how you spend your days. This is called self-direction, and it's what the Wisconsin IRIS program is all about.

At TMG, we believe that anyone can self-direct with the right support, and we listen and learn from you about the type of support you want. Your TMG IRIS Consultant will help you learn about the IRIS program and partner with you to build your individualized IRIS plan. You and your IRIS Consultant will explore the supports and resources to put your plan into action.

Thousands of people all over Wisconsin use the IRIS program to remain in control and as independent as possible. Read on to learn how people who partner with TMG are using self-direction in their daily lives!

## RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS IN IRIS

Self-direction doesn't mean doing everything on your own. Having the right support and tools can help you be successful in IRIS. Your TMG IRIS Consultant will help you learn about the program.

You can also find more information and resources on TMG's website at:

[tmgwisconsin.com/welcome-center-resources](https://tmgwisconsin.com/welcome-center-resources)

The IRIS Participant Education Manual is another great resource that can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website:

[dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01704lp.pdf](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01704lp.pdf)

However you choose to self-direct your life, know that you have resources to help you along the way!

# SELF-DIRECTION SUCCESS STORIES: MEET BROCK

Brock is a kind and caring young man who loves playing video games, doing voice impressions, and figuring out his dreams! He also enjoys helping others and spending time with his family.

Thanks to supports and people in his life, Brock's able to live the life he wants. He uses his IRIS budget to cover the cost of transportation to activities, reducing his need to solely rely on his parents and giving him freedom to be a part of his community. He enjoys attending various camps and participates in his local adult day service center. He loves fun activities like movies, karaoke, and cooking with friends.

**“IRIS has changed my life,” says Brock. “Being in the program has helped me work on my anxiety and try new things.”**

**I choose the things I want to do and don't have to do things I do not want to do. I get to meet new people and also see friends I might not otherwise see.”**

Brock is in charge of his days, and he chooses who provides his supports and services. He also knows that when he needs something, he can ask his TMG IRIS Consultant, Brian, for help. Brian helps Brock find and set up activities that teach him new skills or align with his interests. Brock's effective partnership with others in his life has been key to his success in creating a fulfilling and independent life.

**“I didn't have to understand everything about IRIS to be successful in the program,” says Brock. “I just have to know what I want to do and how I want to be involved in the community.”**



Brock appreciates having these tools to manage his life. He urges those interested in self-direction to consider trying it.

**Brock advises, “You decide on the supports and services you need to help you be happy!”**



# SELF-DIRECTION SUCCESS STORIES: MEET DANETTE

Danette is a self-sufficient woman who loves to read, laugh, listen to music and spend time with her family. She is also an animal lover and proud member of several organizations that are dedicated to preventing animal cruelty. As a person with spinal muscular atrophy who uses a motorized wheelchair, Danette says that she's grateful for the IRIS program since it lets her remain in control.

**“IRIS lets me live in my own home with dignity and allows me to be as independent as possible,” says Danette. “Through the power of my decision making, I choose how I live in meaningful ways.”**

Danette enjoys living in her own apartment, which she can do thanks in part to her three care givers, who Danette says are now



cherished friends. They assist Danette so she can do the things she loves, including cooking. With this support, Danette is very much in charge of her life. She enjoys making decisions on her own, but is also happy that she can ask her son or her IRIS Consultant, Julie, for help if she needs some assistance. Danette believes self-direction is an attainable goal for everyone.

**“One of the biggest myths is that if I am not of a sound body then I can't be of a sound mind. That because I am in a wheelchair I can't self-direct,” says Danette. “I have proven this untrue by advocating for myself in polite but assertive ways. I make decisions every day about how I spend my days and whom I spend it with.”**

Danette knows that making your own decisions is empowering. That's why she recommends the IRIS program for anyone who is in need of long-term support and services who wants to make their own choices!



# SELF-DIRECTION SUCCESS STORIES: MEET EASTON

Easton is an active college freshman who studies sports management. He enjoys being the student manager for his school's men's basketball team. During the summer, Easton works as an assembler at a manufacturing business. Easton likes to play video games with friends, watch sports with his family and go to a few pro and college games each year. He and his family enjoy fishing and relaxing by the lake in the summer.

Easton, who is enrolled in IRIS, says he's able to have a full and active life because he gets to choose the supports he needs to call his own shots.

**“IRIS has made it possible for me to live on my own on at college,” says Easton.**

**“I require help with daily living activities, but I can hire caregivers I trust and enjoy.”**

When Easton was getting ready for college, he and his mom started building his team. This includes 12 caregivers who work shifts that fit Easton's schedule. He also has a friend at school with similar needs as him, and it's helpful getting her advice on how to manage a team of caregivers. And of course, Easton's TMG IRIS Consultant shares ideas and resources, too.

Easton values making decisions about his life to work towards his dreams. The reason he's successful with self-direction is because he works hard to build connections with others. Easton also isn't afraid to ask for help and ideas about how to improve his life.



**“Working closely with your IRIS Consultant and support people will help you plan and prepare so that you can be successful,” says Easton. “I’m happy with the choices I have in IRIS.”**



# SELF-DIRECTION SUCCESS STORIES: MEET DALE & VELMA



Dale and Velma are a loving couple who have been married for 56 years. Dale is a proud Navy Vietnam Veteran. Velma is a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. They've built a beautiful life together and have 3 children and 7 grandchildren. They enjoy spending time with their family and friends. They also have fun getting outdoors and grilling,

as well as cheering on the Packers. Dale also enjoys watching his Westerns and history shows.

When Dale was diagnosed with dementia, he and Velma decided that the IRIS program was the best fit for him. Dale enjoys having input in his supports and services, and together, he and Velma collaborate closely with his TMG IRIS Consultant so that they can keep living life on their terms.

**“I can hire my own workers and decide how they help me and when,” says Dale. “But the most important thing is I get to stay in my own home.”**

Dale and Velma recognize the value of a good support system, and their family is happy to step in when they need extra assistance.

And Dale's TMG IRIS Consultant and Self-Directed Personal Care Nurse are also there to provide information about resources. Dale and Velma say it's a group effort, but knowing they can still call the shots while having support has been a good experience for the couple. They believe that with the right resources and information, anyone can practice self-direction.

**“If you have close family or friends, don't be afraid to involve them in your journey in self-direction,” says Velma. “Ask as many questions as you need of your care team. That's what they are there for. The IRIS program can open up a whole new world for you.”**



## Important Note About *The Path Ahead* Newsletter

Thanks for reading TMG's newsletter, *The Path Ahead*! Each year, we create three issues of this newsletter. In the past, we've mailed all three to your home. This year we're making some changes.

Now, once a year you will receive an issue of *The Path Ahead* that is mailed to your home, as well as an email to the digital version of that issue. The other two issues will be fully digital, and we will email you once those newsletters have been published. Do note that this will be the only mailed issue of *The Path Ahead* for 2025, and the remaining two issues will be digital. When new issues are published, you will receive an email from TMG, and the subject line will say "TMG's *The Path Ahead* Newsletter".

To make sure you receive notification of new issues of *The Path Ahead*, ask your IRIS Consultant to make sure they have your correct email address listed in your WISITS file. You can also find digital versions of past issues of *The Path Ahead* here: [tmgwisconsin.com/tmg-newsletter](https://tmgwisconsin.com/tmg-newsletter)

There you'll find issues covering topics such as financial wellness, electronic visit verification, integrated employment, and much more!

### Take Our Survey Now!

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and want to know what you think!

Visit [bit.ly/3EOsMxz](https://bit.ly/3EOsMxz) to share your thoughts by July 31, 2025 about our newsletter and your experiences with TMG.

Thanks again for being a valued reader!





2424 rimrock road, suite 230  
fitchburg, wisconsin 53713  
(844) 864-8987  
info@tmgwisconsin.com  
tmgwisconsin.com

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## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

A lot has been happening on TMG's Facebook and LinkedIn pages! Have you visited them lately?

There, you can read up on important news and events, learn about others who are living self-determined lives and see what TMG has been up to all across the state. Be sure to share your favorite posts and become part of a broader self-determined community in Wisconsin!



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