65 year old Mark Largent is a long time cattle rancher born in Texas, who has been running his 9000 acre ranch in Kaycee since the late 80’s. He is the pastor of Faith Community Church in Gillette, and facilitates a Celebrate Recovery program for the Newcastle prison ministry. He has been stalwartly coping with severe macular degeneration for half a decade but faces it with a positive and hopeful attitude with the help and strength of his faith, his community, and his large family including his kind and jovial wife Cathy. He first learned of WIL from Tina Bennett , his close friend from WIL’s Gillette center, while at a health fair. For about a year, he’s been a consumer of WIL’s Robin Miller in Gillette, benefitting greatly from assistive technology, such as specialty glasses allowing him to tend to his ranching duties and readers allowing him to view scriptures for his sermons.

Though his vision has decreased, he says he can still enjoy watching the weather, the news, and old westerns on television, but admittedly gets frustrated watching football on TV or at the games of his grandson. He was never a specific advocate for people with disabilities but says, “Of course, being a pastor, I deal with all issues of life...so I’ve had a heart for folks with medical and physical issues.” He and Cathy went through their own emotional but manageable period when doctors first diagnosed him, saying “They basically painted a picture ‘You’re going to be blind in 10 years’...and that was kinda hard. But we found out a lot more about macular degeneration... and I am a man of faith and I just believe God’s gonna help me get by, and I think Tina and Robin and [others who helped], I don’t think any of those were coincidences. I believe that’s just the Lord’s guiding it and helping me to cope and be functional.” He freely admits, “I’m scared to death of not being functional. Ranching and pastoring both take a lot of eyesight.”

“Going back to praising you guys and your organization and the people you have, such as Tina and Robin, definitely my quality of life is way more because of you guys than it could have been, and I’m so grateful because, like I say, I’m fairly independent and functional.”

He strongly suggests getting tested if you think you have a problem, especially if you know you have a family history of a possibly genetic condition, to catch it and begin treating it early.
Robin Miller and Cindy Livingston are the heart and soul of WIL in the greater Sheridan area, and are excited to be preparing for the opening of the new WIL Sheridan Center. Robin is the Independent Living /Visually Impaired Program Specialist and a case manager for the Community Choice Waiver, while Cindy is the Transportation Specialist. They work together and complement each other so well it may be easier to view them as one team, a sort of a dynamic duo, but without the capes and masks.

After following her dad’s construction career through several places like Colorado, Nebraska, Canada, and Alaska, Robin moved to Fort Laramie, Wyoming around the age of 6. She grew up, as she describes it, pigeon toed with severe stuttering, but was able to overcome these with speech therapy and foot braces improvised by her father. After years of dedicated efforts and support she says, “Not only did I walk, I ran, I played sports, I played college sports, volleyball and basketball!” As an adult she struggles with diabetes and painful neuropathy in her hands and feet. Like myself though, she does find that lotion helps ease neuropathy foot pains when trying to get to sleep.

Robin attended Sheridan College and the University of Wyoming and has a degree in physical education and health and an associate’s degree in electrical maintenance. She lives on an 1100 acre ranch outside of Parkman, WY. Though she had originally hoped to be a Phys Ed teacher, lack of positions available led her to an unexpected opportunity. She first worked with people with developmental disabilities, followed by a time working with single mothers at risk of losing their children, but eventually applied for a job at WIL about 8 or 9 years ago. She says her main role for WIL is, “helping connect people with resources” but states confidently, “I don’t promise anything I can’t deliver.”

Another valuable resource Robin brings to WIL in Sheridan is her husband Everett Miller. She says, “My husband helps me all the time. He donates all kinds of time for labor and to assemble ramps and stuff.” Also giving much credit to Cindy, she says, “She has helped me on IL projects and never batted an eye. That’s what’s been really nice about the relationship up here, is that I already know that I can count on her to help facilitate workshops.

Cindy lives in Sheridan but was born in up-state New York. As she puts it, “I have always kinda been a small town person, always lived in small towns. Even when I lived in New York we did not live in the city, we lived upstate in a small town.” Like many of the WIL staff Cindy has first-hand experience with disabilities. “I was thrown off of an embankment by a horse,” she says, “It messed up my back...so my neck has been fused, and I just live with chronic pain in my lower back.” But she also discourages premature surgeries for injuries, “There’s just a fine line, and once you’ve injured your back, surgery can actually make it worse, so I’m not rushing in there...Don’t rush into surgery. Find a doctor you trust and then trust him or her.” She adds, “I definitely feel my experience has been helpful in my job.” Aside from the pain she had lost some of the use of her hands but has since gotten a lot of it back.

Cindy has bachelor’s degrees in psychology and sociology and a master’s in addiction therapy. She says, “I was an adult student...I had two children when I started college. I wanted to go into counseling, and when I started you could counsel with a bachelor’s degree,” but she laughs saying, “right before I graduated they changed the law and you had to have a master’s degree.”

She also gained experience with disabilities through family members, saying her sister was born with scoliosis, though not severe, and she had a cousin born with developmental disabilities. At 19, she began working in nursing homes and gained a lot of experience working with people with disabilities. Later in life she did more physical work, but complications with her wrists led her to look for other opportunities. “I really think that was a God thing...I did not have any idea what Wyoming Independent Living was...no clue...and I just thought whatever it is I was going to try it. I ended up getting an interview and I was actually in the middle of getting surgeries, and they waited for me to get done with my surgeries and get cleared for work, and been here ever since.
**WIL News & Events**

Join our Youth Focus Group!
We'll provide the pizza if you’ll provide your time and ideas! Looking for youth (teen to 20s) to help us create meaningful opportunities for youth with disabilities. Youth needed in Gillette, Casper, Laramie and Cheyenne. Call Amber for more information! 307-266-6956.

Are you a parent of a child with a disability?
Our Casper location will be starting a Parent Support Group for those wanting to learn how to support their children, learn about resources, develop friendships and have fun with others! Not in Casper? Let us know if you’d like to see one in your area too. Call Celine at 307-266-6956.

**Links Worth Sharing**

- Social Isolation and Loneliness A Great Threat to Public Health Than Obesity

- Car Dealerships to Provide Hand Controls for Test Drives for Individuals with Disabilities

- Developmentally Disabled, and Going to College

- Doctors with Disabilities, and Why They’re Important

**Get Involved!**

(*) Indicates Council, Board, or Advisory Positions Open

**WIL Board Meeting**
  - September 15, 1 pm
  - Casper WIL office, 305 West 1st St, Casper

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting:** Conference Call, every 3rd Tuesday
  - September 19, 2:30 pm
  - To join the conference call, dial 877-225-4133

**Cheyenne, MCPD (Mayor’s Council for People with Disabilities):** every 2nd Wednesday
  - September 13, 11:30 am, City Hall #122
  - Cheyenne City Council, 2101 O Neil Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001 (307)637-6200
  - [cheyennesmcpd.org](http://cheyennesmcpd.org)

**Laramie Advisory Commission on Disabilities**
  - September 7, 5 pm
  - City Hall Annex Conference Room, 405 Grand Avenue, Laramie (307)721-5251
  - Accessible entrance is on the west side (4th St.) of the building

**Wyoming Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities**
  - [wgcdd.wyo.gov](http://wgcdd.wyo.gov)

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IS THERE A MEETING OR EVENT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC THAT YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE? CONTACT US AT NEWS@wilr.org
Some regular activities may be rescheduled due to offices being closed on Labor Day

Bowling: El Mark-O Lanes $2.00 per game. Free shoe rental if you state that you are with the WIL group!

Brown Bag Social: Consumers and staff are invited to bring their own lunches and socialize.

Coffee Club: Café–type gathering for open peer discussion or sharing personal and creative writings.


*Crafts N Creations: Some supplies provided. This month’s craft is Rock Painting.

Film Fest: Movie showing 2:30-5 pm and repeat showing 5:30-8 pm. Call to Reserve Seating!

Living Well with a Disability (LWD) Workshop: Thursdays Sep 21 to Dec 7, PRE-REGISTRATION Required

11-week peer-facilitated workshop to promote skills for setting and reaching healthy goals.

Self-Directed Care Workshop: For those receiving services through the Medicaid Self-Directed Care option

The Write Club: Peer workshop offering tools and tips for aspiring writers

VIP Low Vision Workshop: Low Vision Skills Training, 8 classes. PRE-REGISTRATION encouraged!
## WIL Cheyenne Activities

**1609 East 19th Street**

**(307) 637-5127**

### September Activities

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<td>Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm</td>
<td>Intro to Safety/Mobility Equipment 10-11 am</td>
<td>Tools for Caregivers 1 pm</td>
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<td>Poetry Reading/Discussion Group 10:30-12 pm</td>
<td>Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm</td>
<td>Understanding Medicare 1-3 pm</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Crafts/Woodworking 10-11:30 am</td>
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<td>Keep Calm and Color On 12-2 pm</td>
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<td>Grab Bar DIY 10-11 am</td>
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### Exceptions

Some regular activities may be rescheduled due to offices being closed on Labor Day.

**Better Health=Better You: Thursdays Sep 28 to Nov 2, PRE-REGISTRATION Required**

This free 6-week workshop is designed for adults who want to take charge of their pain, fatigue, and other symptoms.

**Grab Bar DIY:** This informational presentation provides instruction of proper installation of grab bars, grab bar types. This is great information that will be useful to you or someone you know who needs grab bars installed.

**Intro to Safety/Mobility Equipment:** This informational presentation provides information regarding common safety and mobility equipment, its uses, where to get, and how to pay for such equipment.

**Keep Calm and Color On:** Adult coloring to assist with pain management, general activity, and socializing. Supplies are provided or bring your own.

**Understanding Medicare:** Wyoming Senior Citizens, Inc. presents an overview of Medicare with Q&A

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**PLEASE CALL TO PRE-REGISTER for Activity if Indicated!**
# WIL Gillette Activities

*707 Bridger Street*  
(307)686-8251

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Anxiety Support  
10-11 am  
Arts/Crafts 11-12 pm  
Lunch Social 12-1 pm  
Living Well 1-3 pm

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Vision Support  
10-11 am  
Arts/Crafts 11-12 pm  
Lunch Social 12-1 pm  
Living Well 1-3 pm

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Disability Support  
10-11 am  
Arts/Crafts 11-12 pm  
Lunch Social 12-1 pm  
Living Well 1-3 pm

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Lunch Social: Bring your own lunch and socialize, meet new friends.

Living Well with a Disability: 10-week peer facilitated workshop to promote skills for setting and reaching healthy goals. **PRE-REGISTRATION required!**

Vision Support

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

**Some regular activities may be rescheduled due to offices being closed on Labor Day**

Anxiety Support

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

Disability Support

Emergency Planning

Lunch Social: Bring your own lunch and socialize, meet new friends.

Living Well with a Disability: 10-week peer facilitated workshop to promote skills for setting and reaching healthy goals. **PRE-REGISTRATION required!**

Vision Support

**PLEASE CALL TO PRE-REGISTER FOR ACTIVITY IF INDICATED!**
## WIL Laramie Activities

**1050 North 3rd Street, Suite B**  
(307)721-4071

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<td>Tree Decorating Group 3-4 pm</td>
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<td>Living Well 12-2 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coloring Group 3-4 pm</td>
<td>Low Vision Group 10-11 am</td>
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<td>Living Well 12-2 pm</td>
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Some regular activities may be rescheduled due to offices being closed on Labor Day.

**Bowling:** @ Laramie Lanes, $3 per game but free shoe rental for WIL group!

**Coloring Group:** Adult coloring with soothing background music. Supplies available or bring your own. Drop-ins welcome.

**Living Well with a Disability (LWWD) Workshop:** PRE-REGISTRATION Required  
11-week peer facilitated workshop to promote skills for setting and reaching healthy goals

**Low Vision Group:** Place for peers from the low vision community to meet, and share experiences.

**Tree Meeting/Tree Decorating Group:** Discuss plans for participating in the UW Art Museum’s annual Festival of Trees fundraiser!
WIL SHERIDAN ACTIVITIES
882 LINCOLN DRIVE, SUITE D
(307)673-0078

September

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Coming Soon

October

Grand Opening

MORE WIL NEWS & EVENTS!

August In-service News
Not your typical company training! Here’s a few shots from our week-long August In-service in Casper. Always a great time to connect, reflect, and bring back fresh ideas to each of our WIL locations.

Hiking on the Braille Trail
Herb Gardening
Meditation Yoga

PLEASE CALL TO PRE-REGISTER FOR ACTIVITY IF INDICATED!
Since WIL wrapped up its Annual In-Service at the beginning of August, I’ve taken some time to reflect; on where we’ve been, where we are, and where we’ve yet to go. Our recent emphasis on peer-supported activities and opportunities is not by accident. We strongly believe that each individual has talents and expertise that can strengthen WIL services and our communities. Your life experience is invaluable. You are valued. Your story is meant to be shared with others.

Beyond the services we offer, we are a cooperative community. A place where people are united by a common purpose: To live a meaningful life that is not limited by disability. As a member of this community, you are a beneficiary and benefactor. You have the opportunity to support others even as you seek your own supports.

I invite you to explore the relationship you have with Wyoming Independent Living. How has this organization helped you? How can you help others? How can your experiences living with a disability support others to live life to the fullest? How can you combine your voice with others’ to shape our communities?

There are many ways to contribute. Become a volunteer. Lead a class. Write your story. Make a call. Advocate. In order to achieve our mission to advance the independence and dignity of people with disabilities, WIL needs your help. If you would like to get involved, I encourage you to reach out to your local WIL staff and talk to them. Strength is in the numbers, and your strength is needed.

Sincerely,

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

Ask your local WIL representative about volunteer opportunities!
To be added to our mailing list,

please call 307-266-6956

or email aalexander@wilr.org.