

## VIBURNUM WILL BECOME MY HOME

What a great day it is to wake up knowing that you have been given an opportunity to go back to work. I feel so fortunate to have a fresh start in life and start a new career. I have been given an Executive Director position for Disabled Citizens Alliance for Independence in Viburnum, Missouri. This was the first Independent Living Center to be established in Missouri. Now there are 22 Independent Living Centers. This gives me great joy to be able to serve and encourage individuals with disabilities never to give up. Thank you God!

Many of you know that I grew up in a small town and enjoyed the country atmosphere. Now I can return to an environment like I had in my childhood. There is nothing like country hospitality. The individual Board members that I interviewed with definitely displayed the country spirit and hospitality. Their open format in my two interviews helped me feel like I would want to be given the position. They were very open with me in this process sharing the strengths and areas that would need to be improved. I have met a few of the employees in the last several years at meetings and conferences which displayed their individual talents and strengths. I will have the opportunity to work with 96 talented employees. I am looking forward to this!

To many of you, it might seem a little scary if you were blind and moving to a new place on your own. Yes I have some fear about this but how exciting is it to start a new career. I have spent over 30 years serving on boards and committees, advocating for individuals with disabilities, and living the independent living philosophy. I was diagnosed with retinitis Pigmentosa in July 1979 and have dreamed about having this opportunity to manage an Independent Living Center. All my years of hard work volunteering and serving have given me the desire and ability to take on this new adventure. I had to just trust God that he would use me to benefit and help others.

In my years of serving on the Missouri State-wide Independent Living Council and the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council has allowed me to meet some amazing individuals that work in the Independent Living Centers across the state. Individuals that work with people with disabilities have a strong servant's heart. They are not in this field because of the huge salary but because of the joy they receive in helping others. I am looking forward to meeting and learning more about every employee that works for DCAI. It will be my mission to earn each employees and board members trust and respect.

Every employee will play a key role in DCAI meeting the service goals and objectives of our consumers. I am excited to meet the individuals that DCAI serves. I hope to create a renewed excitement and the passion returning to our Center in Viburnum. Again I must let everyone know how important they are to our success.

I am excited to be starting Tuesday October 16th. I am so thankful for this amazing opportunity. I pray God will give me the wisdom, courage, and strength to lead this Center in to the future. My words to all the employees and board members are, "We can do this!"

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