

Independence Center Receives \$30,000 Grant To Expand Its Occupational Therapy Services

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ST. LOUIS - Independence Center is proud to announce that it has received a \$30,000 grant from the Marillac Mission Fund for occupational therapy to support seniors aging in place. This grant has allowed Independence Center to expand its occupational therapy services, providing more support to its older members.

“This grant allows us to provide occupational therapy services in home to our seniors,” said Katie Hartnett, Community Support Supervisor at Independence Center. “A lot of times occupational therapy comes into homes ‘after’ a fall or a crisis has occurred but our goal is to provide preventative care for our seniors so they can live safely and independently in their homes as long as possible. 35% of our population at Independence Center is older adults so it’s important for us to not only provide support for their mental health but also care for their physical wellbeing as well.”

The grant will allow Independence Center to support older adults by administering assessments of their home environments to ensure their ability to safely and comfortably ‘age in place.’ Independence Center members meeting the requirements are given suggestions on how to make their home safer. Hartnett said her team has already assessed more than two dozen seniors and helped make minor modifications in their homes such as installing grab bars in bathrooms, removing fall hazards and making repairs that could help prevent accidents.

Hartnett said the grant money will also fund the addition of a part-time occupational therapist to Independence Center’s existing outpatient mental health clinical team, specifically to provide assessment and interventions for its members. This will give Independence Center staff an additional way to connect with its members.

“In-person assessments are not only critical for occupational therapy to be successful, it also provides a social and emotional connection that is important for our members,” said Hartnett. “The thought of going to a nursing home can be very scary for a senior who really wants to stay in their own home, and this program will allow us to help them do that as long as possible.”

Independence Center’s mission is to provide all the services and resources a person with a serious and persistent mental illness needs to manage their symptoms, find belonging and purpose and gain the independence to live a healthy, quality life. For more information about Independence Center, or to learn more about their services, go to www.independencecenter.org.