

THE

# Independent

A Publication of Freedom Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc.

NOVEMBER 2016

## FYI

### Freedom In Action Events

#### Fergus Falls

Inspiration Blocks –  
Jan 19, 2017, 3-4:30 pm  
Glass Magnets –  
December 22, 2016, 3:00 to 4:00 pm  
125 W. Lincoln Ave. Conf. Rm. #3  
Call Tanya at 218-998-1799 to register.  
Space is limited.

#### Fargo

Holiday Luncheon –  
December 8, 2016, 12-3:00 pm  
Bingo – January 18, 2017, 1-3:00 pm  
Freedom Fargo office  
Call Cindy to register at 701-478-0459

#### Wahpeton

Creative Crafting –  
January 18, 1-3:00 pm  
Location to be announced  
R.S.V.P. to Joyce at 701-672-1648

#### Jamestown

Create Message Blocks –  
Dec 15, 1:30 - 3:30 pm  
James River Senior Center  
RSVP to Beth at 701-252-4693  
Learning the Basics of Weaving –  
Jan 19, Feb 2 & 16, 1:30 – 3:30 pm

#### Moorhead

Making Lip Balm –  
December 9, 1:30 to 3:00 pm  
Call Tiffany at 218-512-1101

## Woman on a Mission

Shelby Wolter is on a mission. She is determined to spread the word about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). For her, it's personal. Shelby, 23, is diagnosed with the disorder. It is caused by the mother drinking and/or using drugs during pregnancy. It can cause multiple, physical and cognitive difficulties, which are lifelong. Shelby was born in St. Cloud and then adopted by a couple from the Breckenridge area. She attended school there, and then went to Ridgewater College in Willmar for occupational skills.

Shelby has been through a lot in her young life, including being bullied and teased all through school. That is one of her issues – get rid of bullying.

One of the big saving factors in Shelby's success is her dog, Lovey. The unconditional love of this animal, which she got at age 5, kept her going. "Some people with FAS think suicide is the only answer, because of the bullying. I am here because of Lovey. You have to be respectful," she said.



Many things are happening for Shelby. She moved into her own apartment on September 1. She is proud of being able to do that, and loves her new environment. She feels accepted, and participates in many activities at the apartment building. "I made friends," she said. Shelby has also been working with Joyce at the

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## What's Inside

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» Art of Freedom Photos

» New Employees

» What's Wrong with this Picture



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Freedom office in Wahpeton. She regularly attends Freedom In Action activities. She is planning to get a part time job.

Shelby's work ethic was developed growing up on a farm, where she worked hard assisting her father with various chores and equipment. She also worked for a couple of summers in seed plots for Seeds 2000 sunflowers. "That was so much fun," she said. "I learned so much."

One of the most important developments lately is Shelby's trip to the Minnesota Organization for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome conference in Minneapolis. This was her second time attending, and according to her, she felt much more confident. She talked to many people, including one of the speakers. That speaker, at the end of his presentation told her: "Young lady, you just keep doing what you're doing."

Shelby is now inspired to do public speaking. She has a speech scheduled for January at the OT class at North Dakota State College of Science. She is looking forward to spreading the message of acceptance and anti-bullying. "People need to know. They may include you, but still keep you at arms length. That's stigma," she said.

With her emphasis on this important message, you might think Shelby is a very serious person. Anything but. "I like to have fun," she said. One of the things she loves to do best is ride bike. She has ridden up to 3 ½ hours. "I know to bring lots of water and snacks, and know when to take breaks," she said. She also likes to play games.

Shelby is having a lot of fun these days. Her life is going where she wants it to. She has friends, a car and a driver's license, plans for employment, and her own place. Yes, life is good.

## From Where I Sit

Lately I have been experiencing frustration in abundance. It seems everywhere I turn there's a problem. A few of the issues:

My health. I've previously written about my neck surgery, shoulder surgery, and skin problems. I have one or two new problems to deal with. The shoulder is still weak and has a long way to go before it is as strong as it used to be. It might never get there. And what I hate hearing the most is, "Well you know Nate, you're not getting any younger." Of course I'm not!

Politics. There is overwhelming anxiety of what's going to happen as a result of local, state, and national elections. It got to the point that when I went to dinner with some friends after the election we agreed not to talk about it. It just creates more stress.

You never know what individual legislative bodies or politicians will do. Many times when budgets are tight disability gets dropped off the table. People looking for places to cut money seem to think there's fraud, waste, and abuse in healthcare. That might be true, but many services are essential for independence, and even for life itself. We have to continue to fight for those services, and it's not easy.

Technology. My computer crashed on me. Apparently it's unfixable and a couple hundred documents are gone forever. Having to work on an iPad is not exactly going well. The phones in our branch offices were down for about two weeks. Good thing we didn't have to sell things over the phone to keep the doors open.

'Tis the season. The holidays are coming up. Never any tension there. Right? And today winter hit. I always seem to forget how much I hate snow and ice, and how much of a hassle bundling up and trudging around in it really is.

One thing that seems to be bothering me more lately is discrimination. When we interview people for jobs we often ask the question: "Have you ever experienced discrimination, and if so what did you do about it? Surprisingly few say they have. Maybe I'm getting old and cynical, but I'd answer that I am discriminated against every day.

Just look back at our series of What's Wrong with this Picture, or What's Wrong Wednesday photos. The vast majority of these access barriers fall into the category of "readily achievable" when it comes to the Americans with Disabilities Act. That means easy to remove and without a lot of expense.

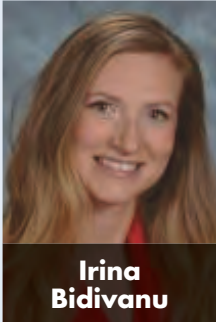
I feel that every day a barrier like improperly marked parking lots, too steep or unsafe ramps, or restaurant or bar tables that are too high stay, I'm discriminated against. It's getting frustrating, 26 years post-ADA. One thing I know is I am not giving up.



**Nate Aalgaard,  
Executive Director**

# Introducing: New Employees

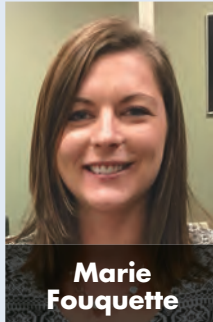
We'd like to take this opportunity to introduce four new staff with Freedom Resource Center.



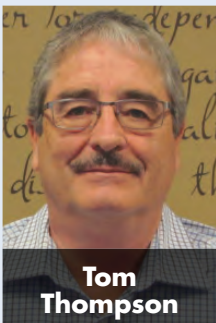
**Irina Bidivanu**

For over ten years, Irina Bidivanu has served people with disabilities and their families in the Fargo-Moorhead area within the community, homes, in a medical setting, and most recently, in public special education. As our new Resource Specialist, she will be one of the first people you will meet at our Fargo office. Irina will gladly answer any questions you might have about our services.

Marie Fouquette has helped individuals work toward self-sufficiency as a Self-Sufficiency Advocate and addressed housing issues as a Housing Case Manager. She graduated from Moorhead State University in Social Work. Marie will be joining Tanya Stoll in the Fergus Falls office.



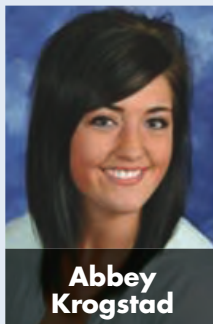
**Marie Fouquette**



**Tom Thompson**

After a number of years working for the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Tom Thompson became the Employment and Placement Services Coordinator for the Vocational Training Center. He is Freedom's new Integrated Employment Specialist.

Abbey Krogstad has worked in a variety of positions with Heartland Industries; the last 5 years as a Designated Coordinator. Heartland provides employment training to persons with disabilities. She is also an Integrated Employment Specialist.



**Abbey Krogstad**

Tom and Abbey will be coordinating group and individual information sessions with subminimum wage workers and their parents or guardians, throughout Freedom Resource Center's West Central Minnesota service area.

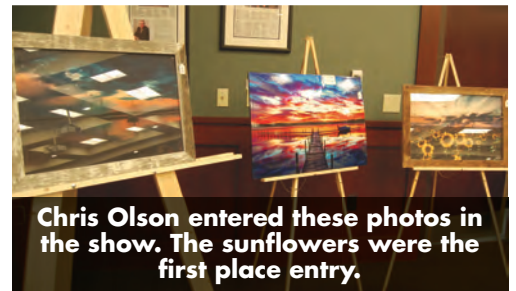
# Art of Freedom – A Big Success



**Charlene and Milton Ota, and Monica Haugen check out the works of art**



**People's Choice Award Winners Gibb Sheets (3rd), David Gangl (2nd), and Chris Olson (1st)**



**Chris Olson entered these photos in the show. The sunflowers were the first place entry.**

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## What's Wrong With This Picture?

What is Wrong with this picture? 1) The accessible parking sign is holding the door open. 2) The ramp doesn't have a handrail on both sides. 3) The handrail provided is not ADA compliant. 4) The electric meter sticks out more than 4 inches in the path and does not have a cane detectable device below it. 5) The landing in front of the door is not large enough and the sign is taking up some of that space. 6) Look closely and you can see a 2 inch threshold at the door. You could ask, "Why should anyone care? This door looks like a delivery entry." It is a delivery entry. It was also marked as the accessible entrance to a polling location.

