

THE

# Independent

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

SEPTEMBER 2016

## FYI

**Call for Exhibitors –  
4th Annual Art of Freedom**

**Exhibitor deadline:  
September 29, 2016**

If you are interested in being a participating artist, contact Wanda at 800-450-0459

**Voting: It's Your Right**

**October 27 & November 3, 2016  
1:30 – 3:30 pm**

James River Senior Center  
Jamestown

To register call Beth at  
701-252-4693 (free)

**Living Well 101:  
Independence Orientation**

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016  
1:15 – 3:15 pm**

Fargo office

Call Cindy to confirm your spot at  
701-478-0459 (free)

**4th Annual Art of Freedom**

**Thursday, October 6, 2016  
5:00 pm – 7:30 pm**

Dakota Medical Foundation  
4141 28th Ave S, Fargo

For more information please call  
800-450-0459

## Emerging Artist to be in Twin Cities Exhibition

Mark Peer has taken part in a couple of art classes sponsored by Freedom. To say he is an enthusiastic participant is an understatement. He recently received the honor of having one of his paintings shown at the 2016 Artability art show at the Hennepin County Ridgedale Library. The exhibition starts October 20 and runs for one month. Mark has a prototype of his painting and will be working on the final version within the next few weeks. "When I first met Mark, he wanted to get more detail in his work," said Diane Siekaniec, Freedom's Community Integration Specialist.

Mark, 56, has lived in a home in Dilworth Minnesota run by Habilitative Services Incorporated (HSI) for the past 11 years. There, he receives independent living services and contributes to the household by cleaning the bathrooms and his own room, shoveling snow, and gardening. He said they do a lot of recreational activities as well, such as bike riding, playing catch and horseshoes, and going to community events. But his favorite activity is fishing. It shows in much of his work, including the piece he plans to put in the Artability show.

HSI is helping Mark get to the Twin Cities to deliver his art. The Clay County veterans services officer, Curt Cannon, came up with funding so that Mark can buy some new art supplies to complete his project.



Mark Peer

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This is the fourth year Freedom will hold The Art of Freedom. Mark has participated every year and will do so again. He started enjoying art in seventh grade with watercolor. He recalls taking four years of art at Fargo South high school. "I tried a lot of new stuff. I like acrylic a lot," he said. Mark also took an art class at NDSU where he got into impressionism. "I wanted my art to be more realistic and have more meaning, purpose, and be different from the norm," Mark said.

Born in Anchorage Alaska, Mark lived in several states due to his father being in the Air Force. His stops included Texas, New Mexico, Missouri, and Brooklyn Center and Cloquet Minnesota. The family moved to Fargo in 1972. There, Mark's dad worked for Gino's Pizza. Mark graduated from Fargo South in 1978. In high school, he loved swimming. He did the 100 yard breaststroke and was a member of the scuba club. He joined the Navy as a junior in high school and officially entered after graduation. His goal was to be a diver. Things did not work out for Mark in the Navy and he was honorably discharged in 1979. He currently receives his health care services from the VA Medical Center in Fargo.

Creating art gives Mark much more than just something to do. "Art gives me hope and strength. It makes me feel better, and helps me glorify God. I do it for myself and others," he said. He enthusiastically endorses Freedom's art classes. So far he has signed up for every one that he can. "Check it out. It's great!" said Mark.

Life seems pretty good for Mark Peer right now, but it has not always been so. He emphasized that he has been clean and sober for 11 years, and has quit smoking for over nine. He said his doctor was genuinely concerned about his lungs at one point, but now they are clear as can be.

Mark is extremely honored and excited to be able to participate in the Artability gallery show. His advice to all of us: "Don't give up. Don't ever give up."

## From Where I Sit Taking it to The Bank

I got the chance to tour the brand new sports and entertainment palace, US Bank Stadium, also known as The Bank on July 28. Impressive it is, with its see-through roof, seven levels of seating, and massive video boards at each end. The 90-foot pivoting doors are all the rave, as they can give spectators that outdoor feel without the danger of getting wet.

Brian Kihn, Pelican Rapids, was at the Vikings preseason game September 1. His impression of the accessibility of the stadium was mixed. He said the elevators were quite confusing as to which one went to which level. He said the parking is extremely limited, so it's best to arrive very early or ride the light rail. He said the staff were attentive and helpful, and there didn't seem to be any seats with obstructed views. He mentioned when the pivoting doors are open the view of downtown Minneapolis is spectacular.

Those of us on the tour had mixed feelings as well. Some of the areas we saw were done correctly, but unfortunately some were not. We did not get to see many areas where we had provided input as members of the Access Committee; such as the platform lifts, family restrooms, and the field level. This stadium would be appropriate for large wheelchair sports competitions such as the Paralympic games. Shouldn't the locker rooms be accessible to people with disabilities?

Several things would be easy to fix, like reducing the pull or installing power door openers on the family restrooms. Toilet paper dispensers were mounted above the grab bar, which can be an obstruction if a person is using the grab bar to stand up. They have faucets that you have to push down on to get the water to come out. People like me with limited arm strength can only push the button down part way, giving you about two seconds of water. You have to push it down all the way to get 10 seconds. The wheelchair spaces we saw did not have seat numbers and there were no drink holders.

While the semi-ambulatory seating area is a nice thought, there were no railings. People with balance issues might easily fall onto other people in the row, or the row ahead. These seats are important because a lot of people don't use wheelchairs, but still have mobility impairments and use things like crutches or walkers.

US Bank Stadium is a vast improvement from the Metrodome. It got to the point where I didn't even want to consider going there for a Vikings game because of the crowding, and horrendous restrooms. Let's hope they do the right thing and fix the problems that should not have been there in the first place.



**Nate Aalgaard,**  
Executive Director

# Changes in Subminimum Wages

Although the Fair Labor Standards Act has allowed employers to hire youth and adults with disabilities at subminimum wage through Subminimum Wage Certificate Programs, effective July 22, 2016 individuals with disabilities, especially youth with disabilities, must be afforded a full opportunity to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or reenter competitive integrated employment.

According to the US Government Accountability Office, 95% of all workers with disabilities who are being paid less than minimum wage were employed by sheltered workshops. Subminimum wage certificates are also issued to schools for School-based Work Experience Programs. There is no evidence that the use of these minimum wage certificates improves postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. Youth have greater likelihood of exiting school with integrated jobs at competitive wages when their transition programming focuses on ensuring that work experiences are based on their interests, are in community-based, integrated employment settings, and workplace supports are provided as needed. In Freedom Resource Center's catchment service area, there are at least between 1,000 – 1,500 individuals with disabilities who are paid below the federal minimum wage.

The new regulations (Section 511 – Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage) will prohibit subminimum wage for individuals aged 24 or younger, unless: the individual is 24 and is already employed at sub-minimum wage by a certified employer; or the individual has received pre-employment transition services, career counseling, information and referrals designed to enable the individual to obtain competitive employment, and the individual either was found ineligible or eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

If you have questions regarding the subminimum wage changes, you can call Freedom Resource Center.

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# 4th Annual Art of Freedom Call for Exhibitors

Freedom Resource Center has a vision where people with disabilities are equal and valued participants in society. Our vision includes full inclusion of people with disabilities in every aspect of our community, including making, viewing, and exhibiting original artwork. Freedom Resource Center is now accepting applications from new, emerging, and experienced artists.



The Art of Freedom is October 6, 2016 from 5:00 pm – 7:30 pm at Dakota Medical Foundation (4141 28th Ave S, Fargo, ND). There will be music, light refreshments, and a silent auction. If you are interested in being a participating artist, please contact Wanda at 800-450-0459.

The Art of Freedom is free and open to the public.



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more independently over 25 years”*

Go to [www.freedomrc.org](http://www.freedomrc.org)  
& click



## What's Wrong With This Picture?

Is the clear space on the latch side of the door less than 18 inches? In this case the 18 inches isn't needed because the door pushes open from this side. The door hardware looks good. It is a lever style instead of a knob. What is Wrong? The coat hanger is a protruding object in the circulation path. Any object that protrudes more than 4 inches from the wall that is 27 – 80 inches above the floor is a protruding object that needs a cane detectable device.

