

The Long Way Back

“When I entered the nursing home I was lost, lonely, scared, and confused. What I was facing...I didn’t know.” – Norma Jean Bethke

The fear of uncertainty and the unknown is something we all face in our lives. For Norma Bethke of Jamestown, that feeling was never as real as when she was put into a nursing home. “It was more than a little scary,” Norma explained. “I don’t warm up to strangers quickly and I didn’t know anybody in the building.”

Norma was admitted to the nursing home at age 75 in 2007 “When I entered the nursing home I was lost, lonely, scared, and confused. What I was facing...I didn’t know.” She told us. Over time the warmth and caring the residents, administrators, and staff showed Norma put her at ease. It wasn’t easy, but eventually Norma felt comfortable. “It wasn’t a place to just wait and decay; it was a place of learning, hope, and healing for me,” she said.

After the long road of healing came self-reliance and less need for care. “What the nursing home had to offer, I felt I didn’t need anymore. I felt it was time to go home.” Norma stated. Wanting to go home, Norma had a conversation with her social worker and was referred to Freedom Resource Center’s Jim Holben, a staff member in our Jamestown office.

Jim’s job is to help people transition from living in an institutional setting to community-based living. His position is funded by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, through a contract with the North Dakota Department of Human Services. Freedom’s two staff for on this program, Money Follows the Person (MFP), are currently working with a total of 16 people, 12 of whom are in the community, and four who are still in the nursing facility and are making plans to move out.

Norma’s Social Workers and Jim came together to form a plan for risk mitigation and emergencies during the transition and beyond. The goal of these plans is to make sure that once people choose to move to a community-based setting, the risks are minimal and their needs are still being met.



Norma Bethke

A transition through the MFP program can be a long and time-consuming process full of paper work. This overwhelming amount of work can prove to be daunting to people who don’t understand the complex documents. That is where Freedom Resource Center steps in. “Time isn’t really on my side. Jim’s guidance in the transition back home was a godsend.” Norma said with a smile. Realizing that the paperwork and planning is necessary to diminish potential risks during the transition, Norma agreed, “Every precaution was necessary.”

“I thank God for Freedom Resource Center and for what it is doing and for what it has done for so many people.”

On October 4th, Norma, now 80 years old, transitioned into her own place with the help of Jim. “I’m so glad to be home and have my freedom. I think he worked night and day. I wouldn’t have gotten home without him,” Norma said. Norma’s gratitude to Jim is evident. She even wrote a letter of gratitude to Jim’s supervisors. Jim insists he was simply doing his job at Freedom Resource Center.

The move home isn’t the last step in our partnership with Norma. To this date, Jim is a regular visitor of Norma’s to ensure the transition is working smoothly and that her needs are being met. He continues to point her toward available resources in the community and encourages her to keep active. “I thank God for Freedom Resource Center and for what it is doing and for what it has done for so many people.” Norma told me with a smile.

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INSIDE

The Importance of Having Leisure in Your Life

By Jim Holben

In the last few months at Freedom we have started offering Freedom in Action Activities to provide opportunities for leisure, social participation and community involvement to address the perceived barriers that prevent or limit participation in leisure opportunities in the community for individuals with disabilities. As a Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator and also as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) another thought was that when an individual is involved in the Money Follows the Person Program one of the areas that is a part of the persons Independent Living Plan is that there are opportunities for leisure, social participation and community involvement.

When an individual has been in a nursing facility there can be perceived barriers that prevent or limit participation in leisure opportunities in the community. Upon leaving a nursing facility the idea is that the individual will once again become involved in community leisure opportunities that are available and return to previous healthy leisure interests. I decided to address the perceived barriers through my background in Therapeutic Recreation,

which uses functional interventions, education and recreation participation to address these perceived barriers. By improving an individual's leisure awareness, knowledge, skills and resource familiarity as a Transition Coordinator and a CTRS I can assist an individual focus on their functional, educational and recreation participation interests and needs in their Independent Living Plan.

In recreation participation the focus is to provide opportunities for enjoyment, self expression and fun within an organized system and the Freedom in Action Activities and the MFP Independent Living Plan are two ways that this is accomplished. In visiting with some of the individuals that are involved with MFP it came to my attention that there was an interest in them meeting each other so that they could visit about their MFP experiences, socialize, discuss other leisure interests and celebrate Halloween.

On October 30, 2012 three individuals involved in the MFP program, Freedom Resource Center staff members, individual Qualified Service Providers, family members, and friends gathered together for a Halloween social at the Halloween festive Freedom Resource Center office in Jamestown. There were many stories, laughter, great conversation, and opportunities to share individual life and MFP experiences. This was only the first MFP leisure activity and in visiting with the individuals who were present there is continued interest in

meeting again in the future.

Very often leisure time is overlooked for



Giving Hearts Day
Hosted By: impactgiveback.org
24 Hour Online Fundraising Event
2.14.13

Freedom is once again participating in the one-day fundraising blitz, Giving Hearts Day. We greatly appreciate the support from all who contributed last year. More information will be forthcoming.

individuals with disabilities and society as not valuable. The benefits of leisure are endless and a few of the benefits of leisure are: enjoyment, self expression, socialization, learning new things, fostering independence and growth, opportunities for freedom of choice, and an improved sense of self control. Leisure time is a basic right in life and everyone should have access to the same leisure services and opportunities as everyone else and can become as active in their communities as they choose.

To Know

Freedom in Action!

Holiday Happenings in Wahpeton

December 13th
2 pm to 4 pm
Hughes Shelter

Lefse and Laughter in Fargo

December 20th
1:30 pm to 4 pm
Fargo Office

Ring Bells for Salvation Army in Jamestown

Monday, Dec. 17 from 3-4 pm at Coborns
Contact Andrea for Information
701-252-4693

Christmas Card and Gratitude Bulb Making

Fergus Falls: December 17th
Detroit Lakes: December 20th
Contact Tanya for Information
218-998-1799



Front Row: Nate, Mark, Bobbi
Second Row: Andrea, Tyler, Cindy, LaDonna, Joyce, Rebecca, Wanda
Back Row: Angie, Justin, Jim, Tanya, Raeane, Diane
Not Pictured: Val (Detroit Lakes office)

From Where I Sit

By Nate Aalgaard,
Executive Director

Why give back?

I know what it's like to feel isolated. Fortunately, I also have the resources to change that picture. I have good transportation; several friends and family in the area; and the financial resources to go out to eat, watch a ballgame or movie, or shoot a game of pool. In conversations with our staff, I suddenly came to the realization that many other people with disabilities simply cannot get out and participate in activities.

A few months ago Freedom started a new activity called Freedom in Action, or FIA. It stemmed from the idea that many of the people we serve are isolated from each other and the community for various reasons. Those reasons run the gamut from transportation problems, to mental health issues, to physical disabilities, to lack of financial resources. We decided that in order to change this picture we needed to try something different. Thus, we are holding monthly learning and socialization events

at each of our office locations. Through these events, people with disabilities learn about the community in which they live, explore new activities, and get to meet and socialize with other people.

With these monthly activities we also want to incorporate another feature, that of giving back to the community that has supported us. The image that many people have of a person with a disability is someone who is in need of services, whether they be charitable or government. It is an image of someone who is not capable of producing anything of value. This could not be further from the truth. People with disabilities want to be productive. They want to be valued members of their communities, but often they simply have not had the opportunity.

That reminds me of one of our former board members, Deane Feland. Deane started out at Freedom as a consumer of our services. Eventually he became a member of our board of directors, and served as vice president. Deane was always one of the most outspoken supporters of this organization. He could not say enough good things about what we did for him and other people. He was also extremely appreciative of the opportunity to give back as a member of the board. Unfortunately, Deane passed away a few years ago. I greatly value the time I got to spend working with him.

On November 27, we held two different events called Grateful Gathering, in Fargo and Detroit Lakes. People brought food, ate together, and socialized with people they may not have ever met before. We also incorporated another feature called Operation Gratitude. This is a nonprofit organization, which collects toys, candy, and cards for our troops serving overseas. We felt that it was a perfect opportunity for those of us with disabilities to show that we too can be part of a greater effort to show our appreciation.

Over the past year Freedom has gotten involved in fundraising activities. One of the projects that donations help support is FIA. Costs associated with this type of activity are not able to be reimbursed by our state and federal funding sources. Thus, donations are critical in order to help sponsor events, purchase food, and assist with other associated expenses so that those who participate can do so at a minimal cost. We appreciate all the people who have helped support these activities in the last few months, including those who gave a contribution, the staff and volunteers who plan the events, and most of all the people with disabilities who attend. It is a real joy to see their enthusiasm and interest.



Nate Aalgaard



Freedom collected many toys, candy, and cards for Operation Gratitude. Items were shipped to a nonprofit organization, and then distributed to US troops.



Friends and neighbors joined Freedom Resource Center for a "Grateful Gathering" on November 27th in Fargo. People were invited to bring an item of food to share with others. Roughly 24 people attended the event. Items were also collected for Operation Gratitude, a nonprofit organization that supports U.S. troops and their families.



Keith Bjornson, Karen Aakre, and Sherry Bjornson enjoy the festivities

Information

In an attempt to reduce the cost of mailings, please send your email address to freedom@freedomrc.org

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list please call 1-800-450-0459.

Freedom Resource Center and/or its Board of Directors do not necessarily endorse or support any of the views expressed within the personal testimonies contained in this newsletter, unless approval is specifically mentioned.

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Alternate formats available upon request.

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Fargo, ND 58103

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*“Helping Bridge Your
Path to Independence”*

Learn the Art of Self-Defense

Join Master Eric Greenquist from the Greenquist Academy along with Freedom Resource Center in Wahpeton to learn the basics of self-defense and martial arts.

- What: Freedom in Action
- When: November 20th
- Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Where: Greenquist Academy,
502 MN Ave., Breckenridge, MN

This event is FREE. Register with Joyce by calling 701-672-1648.

What's Wrong With This Picture?



What's wrong is that we don't see nearly enough of this type of equipment. These ramps are made of the same modules that are used for boat docks. The piece at the end makes it into a ramp, and these units can be used for a variety of accessibility solutions. Representatives of Affordable Access in Fergus Falls provided this demonstration to Freedom staff.