Emily Carter, A Future Leader In The Disability Movement

By Tyler Axness

There is a stereotype I read in a chain email that says the “Y Generation” is lazy, self-centered, and wants everything provided for them. Belonging to this generation, I couldn’t disagree more, but I took it with a grain of salt. Last summer I met a young adult from Fergus Falls who would erase any doubt I had in discrediting that stereotype.

Her name is Emily Carter and I met her at Freedom Resource Center’s Youth Leadership Training.

Emily, 21, had heard about our training through her mom, Melinda Carter, who was a volunteer at our Fergus Falls office. Emily immediately opened up about her world view and obstacles to her independence. “I’m not really sure what kind of disability I have, I just know the side effects.” Emily said, “It takes me a little longer to do some things and that gives me short patience sometimes.”

Our conversation turned toward obstacles for independence and how we can bridge over them. Emily explained, “I struggle sometimes with communication because of my disability, but the biggest obstacle I have is transportation. I have to rely on someone to get somewhere because I’m not able to drive, so I sometimes can’t go where I want to go.”

She doesn’t let these obstacles get in the way of her life. “I make sure I’m making time for myself. That could be going for a walk, reading, or writing,” she said. Beyond relaxation and leisure that everybody needs, Emily is proud to work and is active in her church, both of which she made clear are very important to her.

Work is important to Emily. She explained, “Through vocational rehabilitation, I got a job at McDonald’s. I love my job. It keeps me on my toes and I’m not sitting around the house. I love the people I work with!” What struck me when hearing Emily talk about her job was the pure excitement she holds about the subject. It was evident the significant role a job has in boosting her income and her self-image.

“I am very active in my church,” Emily continued. “Life Church focuses on young adults and children, so it’s a great church for me. I have made many young adult friends including my best friend there. Besides having difficulty figuring out rides to the church, it has really helped me overcome other personal obstacles.” She concluded with saying she also enjoys helping out with Sunday school.

When looking to the future, Emily focuses on education and advocacy for people with disabilities. She began that advocacy by learning some basic skills in our Youth Leadership Training. Emily put those skills to work when she volunteered a day to go with us to St. Paul to visit the Minnesota Legislature. “I wanted to go for the experience,” Emily said. “I learned that voicing your opinion isn’t going to hurt you.” During the trip Emily had the opportunity to meet Representative Bud Norms and express some of her concerns about people with disabilities in the state.

I asked Emily what she hopes to accomplish in advocating on behalf of people with disabilities. To advance her vision for people with disabilities, Emily wants to go back to get a higher education. “I would like to go back to school and get an Education degree to work with special needs people or childcare,” She said. “I want to make sure people with disabilities aren’t treated different like they are in our world today.”

I’ve been impressed with Emily’s attitude, ambition, and energy from the moment I met her at our training. Emily is young individuals like her who should provide people hope for our future. She defies the very stereotype of the “Y Generation” I opened her story with. Emily works and volunteers, she focuses on helping the people around her and lifting them up, and she works hard for what she wants. We look forward to working alongside Emily as she pursues a better tomorrow for people with disabilities in which all people can bridge over their own obstacles to independence.
From Where I Sit

By Nate Aagaard, Executive Director

I’m sitting at home as a Wednesday morning, getting ready to go on vacation. But before I can go I need to write an article about the value of work. How ironic, and also quite challenging.

The whole idea of going on vacation is to not be working. But as I think about it, isn’t it great to have the means to go on vacation? Isn’t it a vacation of sorts to be able to take a break from work? I think so. It’s a great way to escape from the stress of everyday life.

No new clients will be receiving funding for training or equipment for several months. I wonder how many people are going to have a tough time finding a new job. I think it’s going to be harder for a lot of people to find work, especially for those who are disabled.

I’m a firm believer that everyone has potential, and should be as productive and self-sufficient as possible. For some people that might mean volunteering at a nonprofit organization, or being involved in some civic groups. Freedom Resource Center is a money crunch.

Freedom Goes to the Minnesota Capitol

March 27 – Freedom Resource Center and volunteers jumped on a bus and headed to St. Paul, MN to visit with their legislators about the issues that concern them.

Save Money at Home

• www.coupons.com
• www.couponnetwork.com
• www.coupons.smartsource.com
• www.redplum.com

4. You can even take this a step further by going to a local website to find the best deals on groceries. Go to www.valleymeseekers.com, which has a list of local savings deals. You can find these deals in any of the local newspapers and on local radio.

Saving Money on Groceries and Supplies:

1. Plan your weekly meals according to the specials.
2. Use coupons and save money on your grocery bill. You can find the best deals by checking the weekly ads in your local newspaper or on the internet.
3. Use a reusable bag when shopping. This will save you money and help the environment.

4. Did you know that just by using one reusable bag when shopping, you can save about $500 a year.

Save Money on Prescription Drugs

Individuals who have disabilities, are elderly or low income, may struggle to afford their prescription medications. This article contains some tips on how to save money on prescription drugs:

1. Compare prices at different stores. Prices may vary from store to store. Call various pharmacies in your community and ask about the cost of the medication you are taking.

4. If you’re eligible, apply for financial assistance programs in your local area. You can find these programs by searching online or by contacting your local government office.

7. The website is www.mdrugcard.com. For more information about any of the above mentioned resources, please contact the Freedom Resource Center office nearest you.

Information

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

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list please call 1-800-400-0456.

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