

THE

Independent

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

MARCH 2016

FYI

SAVE THE DATE:

5th Annual Appreciation Luncheon

12:00-1:30 PM, May 10, 2016

Fargo Ramada Plaza Hotel and
Conference Center

Tickets will go on sale March 14, 2016

Living Well 103:

Vocation Orientation

1:15-3:15 PM, Tuesday, April 5

Freedom Resource Center –

Fargo office

2701 9th Ave S, Fargo, ND

Call Cindy to confirm your spot at

701-478-0459 (free)

Freedom In Action:

Low Impact Exercise

3:00-4:00 PM

Thursday, April 21, 2015

South Oak Apartments Activity Room
Lisbon, ND

Call Pam at 701-683-6850 to
register (free)

Community Mixer – Wahpeton

5:30-7:30PM

Thursday, April 21, 2016

Westwood Office Park, Wahpeton
Freedom Resource Center Office
complex

315 11th Street N, Wahpeton, ND

No registration required (free)

Bringing People Together: Lisbon's Freedom In Action

When Mary Denisen is not home reading a Guidepost book, she's checking out the hallways of South Oak Apartments to see if she can find anyone to visit with. Mary's a "people person," so when she saw a flyer about Freedom In Action coming to the South Oak's community room, she didn't hesitate to sign up for the first event, and has been involved ever since.



Mary's daughter, Cathy Wheeler, lives in an apartment next door to Mary. Cathy isn't as much of a "people person." She likes to spend her days reading. But with some urging from her mother, she too got involved with Freedom In Action, and has only missed one event because of a previously scheduled appointment.

Marilyn Stensby, who loves crafts and also lives at South Oak Apartments, didn't hesitate getting involved with Freedom In Action when Pam Foertsch, Independent Living Advocate with Freedom Resource Center, approached her about the possibility of a Freedom In Action activity at South Oaks. Marilyn talks about how the tenants of the South Oaks would come to the community room to work together on puzzles. Then tenants began to struggle with each other and people quit coming and using the community room.

Pam and Marilyn planned the first activity. "And now people are having fun together again," said Marilyn. According to Marilyn, Pam usually comes

continued on page 2

What's Inside

» From Where I Sit

» What is Peer Mentoring?

» Introducing Paula Short

» What's Wrong with This Picture?



www.freedomrc.org • 800-450-0459 • 701-478-0459

continued from page 1

up with ideas for Freedom In Action and runs the ideas by Marilyn. The two talk and finalize activities. One of the Spring activities the two are organizing is making Spring Wreaths. Pam is also planning a Low Impact Exercise activity as well.

Pam Foertsch started the Lisbon Freedom In Action group because she was working with a couple of individuals who lived at South Oaks who wanted to meet their neighbors and learn to get along better with them. Because the group has been so successful, Pam is now getting calls from the other public housing apartment, in Lisbon, asking if she would be willing to bring Freedom In Action to their community as well.

Freedom In Action (FIA) is an organized monthly event that Freedom Resource Center holds at our Fargo, Fergus Falls, Jamestown, Lisbon, and Wahpeton offices. We hold these events so participants can learn new skills, meet new people, and increase participation in each of their communities.

Success with the Lisbon Freedom In Action group is definitely measured by renewed fun and friendships. "Even if I moved to another apartment I would want to come back," Marilyn said. Skills. People. Participation. Community. It doesn't get much better than that.



From Where I Sit

I made it! As of February 26, I have now put in 20 years as Executive Director at Freedom Resource Center. A friend of mine asked me the other day if I thought it had flown by. I said, "No, it seems like its ground on forever." That was sort of a joke, because just the last couple of years have been somewhat of a struggle because of health issues. But I have to say, overall it has gone quickly and an awful lot has taken place, both good and otherwise. If I only knew then what I know now...



**Nate Aalgaard,
Executive Director**

No use in regrets. I remember my first day coming to the Freedom office at Case Plaza in downtown Fargo. In my younger days I pushed the manual wheelchair. That winter of '96 was a very snowy one. I was staying at my parents' place because we did not have permanent housing. So I had to drive an hour to get to Fargo. Then, I had to trudge up the slanted, snow-covered parking lot, up the ramp to the front door, and then up another ramp to get to the elevator. I was never in great shape, and this was quite a workout.

I entered the office and was warmly welcomed by the staff. They showed me to my office, which was quite spacious. It had a window facing north that was too high for me to look out of and see the ground. I had someone take a picture of what it looked like out there and taped it to the windowsill. There were a lot of boxes filled with paper. Our first job was to start sorting through them and figure out what needed attention and what we could get rid of. That task seemed to take quite a long time. In fact, I might be still working on it.

If my memory serves me correctly, there were eight of us when I started. Six in Fargo, one in Fergus Falls, and one working out of her home near Jamestown. Our budget was around \$300,000. There was almost no money in the bank, and meeting payroll each month was a bit of a challenge. Today, we have six offices, a budget of over \$1.1 million, and 16 employees. We still have a ways to go in order to serve all of our 19 Counties, but we're making progress.

I am proud of the fact that Freedom has helped hundreds of people live more independently. We've made changes to our communities to make them more accessible and user-friendly. We've advocated for disability rights. I believe we have stayed true to the basic philosophy of Independent Living – consumer control. And I've worked with a lot of great people along the way.

Disclaimer

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. Freedom Resource Center receives about 44 percent of its funding from the Federal Government. Approximate cost of this publication is \$.21 per piece, of which 44 percent or \$.09 is Federal funds; and 56 percent or \$.12 is non-Federal funds. Alternate formats available upon request.



INTRODUCING:

Paula Short

We'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Paula Short, the new Peer Mentoring Specialist with Freedom Resource Center. Paula is a native of North Dakota, growing up in Cooperstown and Glenfield. She has been married to her husband, Terry, for 30 years. Paula has two grown daughters and two granddaughters; and as grandparents know, there is nothing better than grandchildren.

When Paula isn't enjoying her time with her family and spending time at the lakes, she is busy reading recipes and experimenting with cooking and baking. One of her specialties is rhubarb/blueberry (or rhubarb/peach) freezer jam (see recipe below).

Paula was working with Microsoft before joining Freedom Resource Center, but she discovered that her real passion was working with individuals with disabilities. Before her short time with Microsoft, she worked with Anne Carlson Center, Fargo; and CCRI, Moorhead.

Paula is passionate about working to eliminate the stigma attached to disabilities, especially mental illness. She wanted to return to her work with individuals with disabilities because she strongly believes everyone should be equal and have the same opportunities. Paula looks forward to growing the Peer Mentoring service so that mentors and mentees can achieve more independence and community integration.

Paula will be meeting with the current Peer Mentors so she can get to know them and learn how we can become one of the best Peer Mentoring programs in the country. She will also be reaching out to the community for help in recruiting Peer Mentors, and publicizing the Peer Mentoring service.



What is Peer Mentoring?

Mentor: a wise and trusted advisor or guide. **Mentoring:** To serve as a trusted advisor or guide to (another person).

Peer support (mentoring) is one of the fundamentals of a Center for Independent Living. Who better knows the issues individuals with disabilities face than another person with a disability who has been there and done that? Peer mentors provide role modeling and share experiences, feelings, and awareness of disability issues.

Through peer mentoring there is a full exchange of brainstorming, problem solving, and sharing of concerns, successes, and ways to address issues. The peer support relationship allows for the more experienced person (with a disability) to provide information and support and serve as a positive role model to the person whose disability might be new or more recent. Peer mentoring can help make a big difference in an individual's sense of self-awareness and self-acceptance.

A peer mentor is a volunteer with a disability who usually assists people with similar disabilities, but sometimes they can be different. The peer mentor helps promote personal growth by sharing their own experiences and explaining how they have coped with the "ups and downs" of having a disability. Peer mentors help a consumer at Freedom Resource Center reach maximum independence and self-sufficiency. At times it is just nice to be able to talk with someone who will listen without judgement.

If you are interested in becoming a Peer Mentor or receiving Peer Mentoring Services, contact Paula Short at Freedom Resource Center's Fargo office.

Rhubarb/Blueberry Freezer Jam Recipe

Ingredients

8 cups Rhubarb	1 can (21 oz.) blueberry pie filling
3 cups white sugar	1 package (6 oz.) jello (any fruit flavor)

Directions

Combine rhubarb, sugar, and pie filling.
Bring to a boil (about 10 minutes), stirring frequently.
Remove from heat, add dry jello mix; stir until dissolved.
Put in containers, cool, and freeze.
When you are ready to use the jam, put it in the refrigerator.
Once it's thawed out, it's ready to enjoy!!



NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FARGO, ND
PERMIT NO. 1159

2701 9th Ave. S, Suite H
Fargo, ND 58103

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“Helping people with disabilities live more independently over 25 years”

Go to www.freedomrc.org
& click



What’s Wrong With This Picture?

People with different disabilities will point out different ‘Wrongs’ in this picture. Those with limited mobility will notice the tables are all bar height. Wheelchair users have to reach up to set their drinks on the tables. Those with joint issues often find chairs that height uncomfortable and/or difficult to sit on. People with low vision will notice a cane detectable device is not provided below the stairway. Overhead clearances less than 80”, require a cane detectable so that people with low vision don’t hit their head.

