

THE Independent

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

MARCH 2024



Charting our Course for Change History of FRC Continued: A Tribute to Nate Aalgaard

In the early '90s, Freedom Resource Center found itself at a crossroads, navigating the intricate landscape of funding and defining its role in the community. The journey unfolded with key milestones that shaped our identity and set the stage for a more focused future.

In 1992, a pivotal moment arrived as the organization secured funds from the state of Minnesota. A contract, shared by Centers across the state, aimed to provide Independent Living services to youth aged 14-22 in high school. The Transition program, designed to aid students in planning their post-high school transition, kicked off in Fergus Falls.

The financial landscape shifted in 1995 when the organization received additional funds. A welcome boost of \$12,500 in general operating funds from the Minnesota legislature marked a turning point. Federal funds totaling approximately \$80,000 for North Dakota services and a transportation grant of around \$74,000 further strengthened our financial footing.

Enter 1996, a year that saw a change in leadership as Nate Aalgaard assumed the role of Executive Director. Candidly, he used to joke that had

he known the full extent of the challenges, he might have thought twice about taking on the position. Nevertheless, challenges are the threads that weave the fabric of progress.

One immediate priority was to define the Center's identity clearly. With differing interpretations of the mission and goals, internal consistency became paramount. Operating with a budget of about \$340,000, the organization had stretched its reach across multiple locations, including Fergus Falls, Morris, and Jamestown. It was time to reassess and focus on making a meaningful impact in our own backyard.

The pivotal event in 1996 called the Future Search, was a planning retreat led by Maggie Shreve, an Independent Living consultant

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FYI

Save the Date

Annual Spring Appreciation Luncheon
Thursday, May 16, 2024

Freedom's Resource Fair
Wednesday, July 24, 2024

Freedom In Action

FERGUS FALLS

Bingo

Wednesday, Apr. 17 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Registration is not necessary but appreciated!
Contact Leigh or Joyce - 218.998.1799

Spice Up Your Life

Tuesday, May 14 - 1:30 PM - 3:15 PM

Painting pots and planting spices to kick-start your summer; sample foods that use spices. Pre-registration is necessary by Friday, May 10. Friends are more than welcome, please indicate that they will also be attending when you register.
Contact Leigh or Joyce - 218.998.1799

What's Inside

- » **Anniversary Crossword**
- » **Extended School Year**
- » **Giving Hearts Day: Thank You!**
- » **Appreciation Luncheon**
- » **Silent Auction**

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

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 N A C N O Y B I A
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CORE
 SERVICES
 INDEPENDENCE
 FREEDOM
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 RAMPS
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 HOPE
 LAWS
 DISABILITY

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from Chicago. It brought together the board, staff, and community members to acknowledge past challenges, celebrate accomplishments, and chart a course for the future. The outcome was a redefinition of our primary identity as an advocacy organization, setting the stage for a more purposeful direction.

Recognizing the need for strategic focus, Nate made the decision to part ways with certain programs that seemed incongruent with Freedom’s mission. The transportation service, though valuable, diverted resources from core programs and became challenging to manage. Thus, it was one of the first programs to be “jettisoned.”

Similarly, the Representative Payee program, viewed as a maintenance service rather than aligning with

Independent Living Philosophy, faced a phased-out exit. The shift aimed to concentrate efforts on working with individuals on goal-oriented achievements and systemic issues affecting the broader disability community.

Nate advocated for a more localized approach, emphasizing the Fargo-Moorhead area over extensive travel for minimal impact. These strategic shifts laid the groundwork for a more streamlined and impactful Freedom Resource Center as we ventured into the late ‘90s, determined to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we served.

We invite you to stay tuned for the next newsletter, where we continue to reflect on the history of Freedom Resource Center and share stories of individuals whose lives have been touched by the work we do.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

ESY stands for Extended School Year, a program available to students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). It's crucial to note that ESY differs from traditional Summer School. ESY focuses on preventing the regression of skills acquired during the academic year, rather than introducing new instruction. While students, whether they have an IEP, can opt for Summer School to address difficulties in specific subjects, it's essential to distinguish between the two during IEP meetings. The decision on ESY eligibility is made by the IEP team and must be documented within the IEP itself. Eligibility hinges on the likelihood of skill regression without summer services or the duration needed to reacquire lost skills. Therefore, it's vital to use the term ESY when discussing continued services during the summer. For additional information, contact your local Freedom Resource Center office.



For everyone who donated to our mission, shared our posts, invited others to join our page, participated in our pizza fundraisers, and engaged in one way or another, your support means the world to us!!

Thank you for being an important part of Freedom Resource Center's mission and making Giving Hearts Day so much fun. Together, we are making strides toward a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you!



APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

We invite you to join us for our Annual Spring Appreciation Luncheon. This special event is dedicated to recognizing outstanding volunteers, champions of disability rights, and employers who actively support individuals with disabilities. It's about honoring those who are making a greater impact in our community for people with disabilities.

This event will be held May 16, 2024, at Avalon Event Center in Fargo. It will include an online silent auction that starts on Monday, May 13th and ends with the close of the luncheon on May 16th.

CALL FOR SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

Freedom Resource Center is currently welcoming contributions to our Silent Auction.

The silent auction will consist of a variety of items whether it's something unique, a gift certificate, an experience, or any other valuable contribution, your donation will be deeply appreciated. Not only will we be able to start bidding on items electronically a few days before the luncheon, but the items will also be displayed the day of the event.

Help us spread the word and we look forward to having you join us! For more information or to donate, please contact Wanda at 701-478-0459 or wandal@freedomrc.org. Thank you for supporting Freedom Resource Center in our mission to provide services that increase independence for people with disabilities.

Disclaimer

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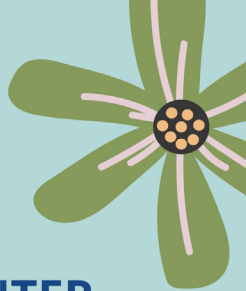


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*"The premier leader of disability rights
in the region for more than 35 years."*



SAVE THE DATE

APPRECIATION LUNCHEON
AWARDS EVENT

AVALON EVENT CENTER

THURSDAY, MAY 16TH

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

TICKETS GO ON SALE SOON

Join us over your lunch hour as we recognize
outstanding volunteers, champions of
disability rights, and employers who actively
support people with disabilities.

WILL INCLUDE A SILENT AUCTION