

FYI

The Fargo office is currently under construction with some exciting updates until further notice! We're still open with normal business hours, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, M-F

SAVE THE DATE:

• Appreciation Luncheon - **Thursday, May 8**
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
 Doors open at **11:00 AM**
 Tickets on sale now!

FARGO

To register for Fargo events, call Katelyn or Sarah at **701.478.0459**. All Fargo Freedom in Action events will be held at **The Moorhead Public Library** 118 5th St. South, Moorhead, MN

FREEDOM IN ACTION

Advanced Care Planning Presentation
 by Sanford Health
Tuesday, April 15 - 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
 RSVP by Friday, April 11

YOUNG ADULT GATHERINGS (AGES 16-25)

Spring Crafts
Tuesday, April 15 - 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
 RSVP by Friday, April 11
 **Located at the Fargo Freedom Office
 2701 9th Avenue South Suite H

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Kevin's Persistence in Removing His Guardianship Pays Off

On July 14, 1978, Kevin's life took an unexpected turn. The summer between his junior and senior year of high school was supposed to be filled with college plans and time with friends. Instead, an automobile accident left him in a coma for seven days, followed by six weeks of hospitalization and rehabilitation. Kevin had to relearn how to walk, talk, feed himself, and handle all his personal needs—an overwhelming challenge for any teenager. Despite missing the first quarter of his senior year, Kevin worked hard and proudly graduated with his class in 1979.

After graduation, Kevin built a successful career, accumulating over 20 years of work experience in various fields. From operating heavy construction equipment to working on a ranch, driving over-the-road trucks, and building mobile homes, Kevin thrived. He had a job, a home, and friends, and life was good. However, tragedy struck when an arsonist set fire to his home, destroying everything he owned, including his vehicle.

In the aftermath, a family member offered to help him get back on his feet. What began as assistance soon led to a series of medical evaluations, ultimately resulting in Kevin being declared "incompetent" and placed under full guardianship. Under this arrangement, Kevin had no say in



major decisions, including where he lived and how his finances were managed. He was relocated to a subsidized apartment complex, given only three rolls of quarters for laundry each month, and a mere \$20 in cash for personal items not covered by food assistance. His Social Security

Disability check was managed entirely by his guardian, with no transparency regarding his finances. The lack of control over his own life was deeply frustrating, but one of the most upsetting revelations was learning that a prepaid funeral had been arranged for him without his input.

For 16 years, Kevin remained under guardianship. Then, four years ago, he decided to take action. The process of having his guardianship removed was filled with obstacles. He encountered endless paperwork labeling him as incompetent, a public defender who was unresponsive for months, and a court system that initially

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What's Inside

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- » **What is Independent Living?**
- » **Giving Hearts Day Thank You**
- » **Fruit Pizza Recipe**
- » **Silent Auction Donations Request**

CORE SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: PEER MENTORS

Q: What is a Peer Mentor?

A: Peer mentors are volunteers with valuable personal experience, who donate their time to guide someone on their own path to independence.

Q: Do I have to have a disability to be a Peer Mentor?

A: Yes, you must identify as having a disability.

Q: What are the requirements and how do I become a Peer Mentor?

A: Have a desire to help others, be dependable, and complete our brief application and mentor training including a background check with Katelyn Vilmo, Independent Living Advocate/Peer Mentor Specialist.

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told him he had no legal right to file for removal on his own. When his public defender did respond, Kevin felt unheard and unsupported.

Despite these challenges, Kevin refused to give up. With the advocacy and support of Freedom Resource Center, he navigated the system, received vital referrals, and stayed persistent. Finally, on January 22, 2025, Kevin's guardianship was officially removed.

Now, Kevin is using his experience to help others. He is an active member of the Minnesota Legislative Taskforce on Guardianship, advocating for individuals who may not need full guardianship but

instead require a less restrictive option, such as Supported Decision-Making. He strongly believes that courts should prioritize self-determination and implement the least restrictive measures whenever possible.

Kevin wants others under guardianship to know that change is possible. "We all have rights that should be heard," he says. "Use your voice, stand up for yourself, and reach out to Freedom Resource Center if you have any questions. You are not alone."

Kevin's journey is a testament to perseverance and the power of self-advocacy. His story serves as an inspiration to others seeking to reclaim their independence and make their voices heard.

What is Independent Living?

Independent living (IL) can be considered a movement, a philosophy, or specific programs. In the context of the Association of Community Living (ACL), independent living programs are supported through funding authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act). Title VII, chapter 1 of the Act states the current purpose of the program is to "promote a philosophy of independent living including a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy, in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society."

What Are Centers for Independent Living (CILs)?

Designed and operated by individuals with disabilities, CILs provide independent living services for people with disabilities. CILs are at the core of ACL's independent living programs, which work to support community living and independence for people with disabilities across the nation based on the belief that all people can live with dignity, make their own choices, and participate fully in society. These programs provide tools, resources, and supports for integrating people with disabilities fully into their communities to promote equal opportunities, self-determination, and respect.

Association of Community Living. Centers for Independent Living. Acl.gov

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FERGUS FALLS

To register for Fergus Falls events, call Joyce or Leigh at **218-998-1799**. All Fergus Falls Freedom in Action events will be held at **125 West Lincoln Ave. #1**

FREEDOM IN ACTION

May Day Celebration

Wednesday, April 30 and Thursday, May 1
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM on both days

JAMESTOWN

To register for Jamestown events, call Ashley at **701.252.4693**. All Jamestown events will be held at **300 2nd Avenue NE, Suite 207, Jamestown**.

FREEDOM IN ACTION

Spring Flowers

Tuesday, April 15 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM
RSVP by Friday, April 11

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.

Thank You!

We are beyond grateful for the incredible support we received for **Giving Hearts Day 2025!** Thanks to our amazing donors, we raised just over **\$15,000 to support independence for people with disabilities.** Whether you donated, shared our mission, or participated in our fundraiser, **YOU made a difference!**

This year, we had a blast bringing back our “Pie in the Face Challenge!” Every \$5,000 raised meant a staff member got pied, and on Giving Hearts Day, we took it even further —every 10 donors meant another pie in the face, making for a fun (and messy) day! We also teamed up with Papa Murphy’s, where 20% of sales that mentioned Freedom Resource Center directly supported our mission.

With the incredible generosity of our community—including those who took advantage of early giving and matching donations—we’re making a lasting impact. Your support empowers people with disabilities to live independently, access vital resources, and advocate for their needs.

From advocacy to peer mentoring, your generosity fuels the work we do every day. **We couldn’t do it without you!**

Thank you for being part of this journey. Stay tuned for more exciting events and ways to get involved throughout the year!

With gratitude,
Angie Bosch - Executive Director

SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS NEEDED

We are seeking donations for our silent auction, which will be available both in person and online. If you, your business, or someone you know would like to contribute a gift basket, item, or donation, we would be incredibly grateful! Silent auction proceeds support Freedom Resource Center’s mission to increase independence for people with disabilities.

To donate, please email freedom@freedomrc.org or call us at (701) 478-0459.

Recipe: Fruit Pizza

Credit to: SNAP-Ed Connection USDA

The crust for this dessert cooks in the oven and is covered with a cream cheese mix and topped with strawberries. For variety, try using any combination of colorful fruits.



Makes 12 Servings Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup strawberries, sliced (or kiwi, bananas, pears, peaches, or blueberries)
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg (large)
- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 8 ounces cream cheese, non-fat or light
- 1/2 cup sugar

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. For crust, cream margarine, sugar, vanilla, and egg until light and fluffy. Add flour and baking powder, mixing well.
3. Spread mixture about 1/8 inch thick on a pizza pan, baking sheet, or 9 inch by 13 inch pan.
4. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool.
5. For spread, mix together cream cheese, sugar, and vanilla. Spread on cooled cookie crust.
6. Arrange fruit on top of pizza. Refrigerate until serving time.



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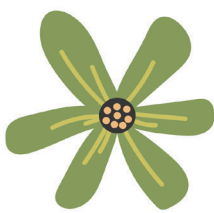
Join us for our annual
Appreciation Luncheon

May 8, 2025
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Doors Open at 11:00 AM

Avalon Event Center
2525 9th Ave S | Fargo, ND 58103

Get Your Ticket 

This special event is dedicated to recognizing outstanding volunteers, champions of disability rights, and employers who actively support individuals with disabilities.



Online Silent Auction
Starts **Monday, May 5th** at **12:00 PM**
and ends **May 8th** at **1:15 PM**.
Items will be on display at the event.

Unable to attend? Support our mission by sharing, bidding, or donating.

Follow us on Facebook 