

FYI

All Freedom offices will be closed **February 17** in observance of President's Day

SAVE THE DATE:

- People's Choice Nomination
Deadline - **March 27**
- Appreciation Luncheon - **May 8**

FARGO

To register for Fargo events, call Katelyn or Sarah at **701.478.0459**. All Fargo events will be held at **2701 9th Avenue South, Fargo**

FREEDOM IN ACTION

St Patrick's Day Bingo

Monday, March 17 - 1:30 PM-3:00 PM
RSVP to Katelyn by March 10

Bunny Craft

Tuesday, April 8 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM
RSVP to Katelyn by April 1

Advanced Care Planning Presentation by Sanford Health

Tuesday, April 15 - 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM
RSVP to Katelyn by April 9

Young Adult Gatherings (Ages 16-25) Socialize and Play Games

Tuesday, February 18 - 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
RSVP to Katelyn by February 11

St. Patrick's Day Bingo and Games

Tuesday, March 18 - 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
RSVP to Katelyn by March 11

Spring Crafts

Tuesday, April 15 - 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
RSVP to Katelyn by April 8

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Your Support Changes Lives

Freedom Resource Center is a non-profit disability rights organization dedicated to serving people with disabilities of all ages. Our mission is simple: **to provide services that increase independence for people with disabilities.** Our vision? **People with disabilities are equal and valued participants in society.**

Serving 11 counties in western Minnesota and 10 counties in southeastern North Dakota, our team is uniquely qualified to understand and meet the needs of the community. Over half of our board and staff are people with disabilities, embodying the heart of our work.

By partnering with Freedom Resource Center, **YOU** help us continue our mission and life-changing services that increase independence for people with disabilities, creating a world where independence and inclusion are possible for everyone. This year, we've set an ambitious **goal of raising \$35,000** to drive our mission forward.

Every donation helps us meet this goal, impacting the lives of those we serve in a tangible way.

One of the most important ways your contributions make a difference is by providing **flexible dollars**. Unlike state and federal funding, which often comes with specific limitations, these donations allow us to adapt quickly to meet unique and urgent needs. Flexible funding empowers us to think creatively and make a bigger impact on the lives of those we serve without being constrained by guidelines.

With your support, we're able to provide these essential services:

- **Information and referral:** Guiding people to the resources they need to live independently.
- **Independent living skills training:** Equipping people with the skills to thrive in the community.
- **Peer mentoring:** Fostering a community of support through social activities and gatherings.
- **Individual and systems advocacy:** Helping individuals assert their rights and advocating for systems change.
- **Transition services:** Supporting individuals at risk of institutionalization to remain in their communities, assisting those in nursing homes and other institutions to transition back into community living, and guiding youth as they move from school to postsecondary life.

Through our grant-funded programs, we've had the privilege of helping people with disabilities find independence, stability, and hope. The following stories highlight just a few of the lives changed by

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- » **Appreciation Luncheon**



FERGUS FALLS

To register for Fergus Falls events, call Joyce or Leigh at 218-998-1799

FREEDOM IN ACTION

Pie and Bingo Day

Thursday, March 13 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

May Day Celebration

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

We will learn about May Day and make Baskets to be delivered to organizations and businesses.

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

Winter Gloves

Tuesday, February 18 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM
RSVP by Friday, February 14

Pinwheels

Tuesday, March 18 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM
RSVP by Friday, March 14

Spring Flowers

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

Young Adult Gatherings (Ages 16-25)

Tuesday, March 4 - 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
RSVP by February 28
Tuesday, April 1 - 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
RSVP by March 28

IL SKILLS CLASSES

Safe and Healthy Relationships

Mondays, March 17 - May 5
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
RSVP by Friday, March 14

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these essential services. **With your support, we can go even further**—expanding our reach and meeting needs beyond the limits of traditional funding.

One consumer shared how she was able to move into a safe, healthy living environment with the support from one-time Minnesota funds we had received last fall. This funding allowed us to provide crucial assistance to consumers in need: “I nearly died due to an environmentally and physically unsafe apartment. I didn’t realize I was a breath away from being homeless.” Now, she is in a new place, we were able to provide her with a new bed, a dining table, and chairs—things many of us take for granted but that have made her space a true home.

Another consumer transitioned from assisted living to her own apartment. She said: “I thought I was doomed, but I’m not—I’m happy. I have a beautiful home now. I enjoy cooking and made a lot of new friends. It’s all because of Freedom Resource Center.

I never ever would have made it this far. I feel that I am really a person and not a

thing or taken for granted.”

This next consumer shared a deeply personal reflection about her growth since connecting with Freedom Resource Center: “A wall came down. I don’t feel like I’m inadequate. I can live independently and do things on my own.

Mental illness isn’t something you solve overnight. It’s ongoing, and I need Freedom Resource Center. They don’t judge me. I can be me and watch myself grow here. If it weren’t for Freedom, I’d probably still be in assisted living just waiting to die. That’s the truth. Freedom has helped me break down my walls and rebuild trust. I hope people can see how important this organization is.”

These stories are just a glimpse of how Freedom Resource Center helps individuals achieve their goals. Our team doesn’t promise perfection; we promise to listen, to provide resources, and to walk beside each person as they navigate their unique path. We believe everyone deserves the same opportunities and the chance to live a life of independence and dignity.

Join Us This Giving Hearts Day

February 13, 2025, is Giving Hearts Day—a day to change lives. Your contributions directly support people like those in these stories, giving them the tools and encouragement they need to succeed. Help us reach our goal of \$35,000 this year, so we can continue empowering more individuals to overcome barriers and realize their potential.

Early giving is open, if you wish to donate before February 13th visit www.givingheartsday.org and search for “Freedom Resource Center” or scan the QR code on the back of this newsletter.

Let’s make this Giving Hearts Day a celebration of hope, empowerment, and community. Together, we can open doors and transform lives.

VALLEY CITY

To register for Valley City events, call Ashley at 701.252.4693. All events held at **The Vault - 223 Central Ave, Valley City**

Young Adult Gatherings (Ages 16-25)

Tuesday, March 4 - 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM
RSVP by February 28
Tuesday, April 1 - 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM
RSVP by March 28

IL SKILLS CLASSES

Safe and Healthy Relationships

Thursdays, March 20 - May 8
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
RSVP by Friday, March 14

**Reasonable accommodations for all Freedom events can be requested up to two weeks prior to the events.*



Legislative Corner

The 94th legislative session convened on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. The session lasts 120 legislative days. For more general information on the legislative session visit <https://www.leg.mn.gov/>. Here you can see what bills are being brought to the floor, search bills, or create a personalized account in MyBills and track the bills that are most important to you by accessing important updates through the portal. Minnesota Index offices can also help you locate a bill by phone rather than through a computer: Call House Index at 651-296-6646 or Senate Index at 651-296-0504.

For those interested in legislation regarding disabilities, follow Minnesota Council on Disability's (MCD) updates on their website: <https://www.disability.state.mn.us/about-our-public-policy/legislative-updates/>.

North Dakota's 69th Legislative Assembly convened on Tuesday, January 7th, 2025. The session length is 80 legislative days and will end on May 2nd, 2025. For more general information on the Legislative Session visit <https://www.ndlegis.gov/>. The State of North Dakota Legislature also has an online bill tracking system for public users to access using a profile ID. The portal can be found here: <https://ndlegis.gov/legislative-bill-tracking-system>. Alternatively, the North Dakota Legislative Council can be reached by phone at 701-328-2916.

The ND Protection and Advocacy Project tracks the legislative session with a legislative grid that can be found at: ndpanda.org and select Legislative Grid.

CORE SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

What does it mean?

Information and Referral or I&R for short, is one of the core services provided by Centers for Independent Living. Our staff accept requests from consumers and service providers in the community and in turn provide information, knowledge, and tangible resources for disability related needs, and for basic needs.

How does Information and Referral fit into independent living?

Appropriate referrals empower the consumer to take action on their own behalf and promote independent living in many ways. For example, with the help of a specific referral, a consumer could access assistive technology and home care allowing them to live in their homes longer.

What resources would we offer to someone with mobility barriers to enter and exit their home?

Freedom Resource Center offers a temporary ramp free of charge for up to 90 days. If a permanent ramp is needed, Freedom can provide referrals to funding resources and contractors.

NOMINATE SOMEONE

Do you know someone or a group in the community that is making an impact for people living with a disability who deserves to be recognized for their efforts?

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 8, 2025**, at Avalon Event Center in Fargo. It will also include an online silent auction. Donations are appreciated.

Award Categories

Accessibility Award

Advocate of the Year Award

Larry Chial Leadership Award

Distinguished Service Award

Employer of the Year Award

Youth Advocate of the Year Award

Volunteer of the Year Award

Go to www.freedomrc.org to submit your nomination. Email freedom@freedomrc.org for any questions. **DEADLINE** to nominate someone is **March 17**.

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.



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Fargo, ND 58103



NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US.

-Judi Chamberlin-

Partner with Freedom Resource Center to help us reach our **\$35,000 goal!** For every \$5,000 raised, one of our staff will get a pie in the face!

Your support provides life-changing services that increase independence for people with disabilities, creating a world where inclusion is possible for everyone.

Donate today at www.givingheartsday.org or scan the QR code.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook for pie updates and videos at every milestone!



EARLY GIVING IS NOW OPEN UNTIL FEBRUARY 13!

LOCATIONS: ND Fargo • Jamestown • Lisbon • Wahpeton | MN Fergus Falls