

THE Independent

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

SUMMER 2024

Celebrating Champions in the Community!

FYI

All Freedom Resource Center offices will be closed Monday, September 2, in observance of Labor Day.

Freedom Resource Center is 35! Join us in September for our 35th Anniversary Celebration at our Fargo location. Follow us on Facebook for more details.

Freedom In Action

FARGO

Red Hawks Baseball Game

Thursday, Aug. 8 - 12:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Cost is \$5.00 - Contact Katelyn V. at 701.478.0459 to register by Aug. 1

Voting Rights Presentation
by Protection and Advocacy

Tuesday, Sept. 10 - 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Contact Katelyn V. at 701.478.0459 to register

FERGUS FALLS

Coffee Talk with Art

Wednesday, Aug. 7 - 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Various art supplies on hand.

JAMESTOWN

Popsicle Stick Airplanes

Tuesday, Aug. 20 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Freedom Resource Center
300 2nd Ave. NE Suite 207

Service Animals and Housing Assistance

Tuesday, Sept. 17 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Freedom Resource Center
300 2nd Ave. NE Suite 207

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July 26, 2024, marks the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a historic civil rights law signed into law on July 26, 1990. This landmark legislation protects the rights of individuals with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination in all areas of public life. The ADA aims to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

At Freedom Resource Center, we are proud to be part of this movement and to advocate tirelessly for the rights of people with disabilities. Additionally, we strive to make our communities more accessible and inclusive for all. We recognize the importance of nurturing new leaders in this movement, especially as many pioneers of the Independent Living program are no longer with us, and the issues they championed still exist today.

On May 16th, we hosted our annual Appreciation Luncheon, a special event dedicated to recognizing outstanding volunteers, champions of disability rights, and employers who actively support individuals with disabilities. This event celebrates those making significant impacts in our community and helping us achieve our goal of assisting people with disabilities to live more independently.

The Appreciation Luncheon honors those who volunteer their time and effort to work for equality and inclusion for people with disabilities. It is a celebration of Freedom, highlighting our collective efforts to improve society and create opportunities for everyone.

We are delighted to announce and congratulate the recipients of this year's awards:

Volunteer of the Year Award:
Kevin Gerdes and Donald Lee

Advocate of the Year Award:
Tammy Googins

Youth Advocate of the Year:
Matthew Gallegos

Distinguished Service Award:
Tammy DeSautel

Employer of the Year Award:
Paradiso

Accessibility Award:
Brandon Halverson and the
Mead and Hunt Team

Shawn Dobberstein and the
Hector International Airport Team

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our retiring Board Members for their dedicated service to our mission:

3 Years: Krista Boehm

6 Years: Marc Holland, Catherine Artac,
and Alexandre Cyusa

A special thank you to Merri Christlieb for her years of service. It has been an honor having you on our team, and we look forward to many more years together.

5 Years: Merri Christlieb

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What's Inside

» People's Choice Awards
Nominations

» Meet our New Staff

» Thanks to our Donors,
Partners, and Contributors

FYI

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IL Skills Classes

FARGO

Decluttering Class

Thursdays, Aug. 29 - Oct. 10

RSVP to Katelyn V. by Aug. 15

JAMESTOWN

Living Well 102

Thursdays, Aug. 22 - Oct. 24

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Freedom Resource Center

300 2nd Ave. NE Suite 207

Contact Ashley at 701.252.4693

VALLEY CITY

Living Well 101

Tuesdays, Aug. 20 - Oct. 29

(No class Sept. 24)

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

The Vault - 223 Central Ave

Young Adult Gatherings

JAMESTOWN

Young Adult Gatherings

Tuesday, Aug. 6

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Freedom Resource Center

300 2nd Ave. NE Suite 207

Tuesday, Sept. 3

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Freedom Resource Center

300 2nd Ave. NE Suite 207

VALLEY CITY

Tuesday, Aug. 6

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

The Vault - 223 Central Ave

Tuesday, Sept. 3

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

The Vault - 223 Central Ave

Reasonable accommodations requests can be submitted to each office up to one week prior to event by calling the local office.

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VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



DONALD LEE & KEVIN GERDES:
PRESENTED BY LEIGH

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR



TAMMY GOOGINS:
PRESENTED BY KATELYN

YOUTH ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR



MATTHEW GALLEGOS:
PRESENTED BY MERRI

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD



TAMMY DESAUTEL:
PRESENTED BY SARAH

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR



BECKY COTE & LIANE BIESTERFELD WITH
PARADISO: PRESENTED BY KATELYN

ACCESSIBILITY AWARD



JEFF KLEIN (ON BEHALF OF BRANDON
HALVERSON) & SHAWN DOBBERSTEIN:
PRESENTED BY JENNIFER

The success of the Appreciation Luncheon validates the hard work of our dedicated staff, board, and supporters. To everyone who continues to be a part of Freedom Resource Center, THANK YOU! It takes the dedication of many individuals to help us achieve our mission of equality and inclusion for people with disabilities. Your generous support is invaluable, and we could not do this work without you.

Together, we continue to make strides towards a more inclusive and accessible society for all.



RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS: ALEXANDRE CYUSA,
MARC HOLLAND, KRISTA BOEHM, AND CATHERINE
ARTAC (NOT PICTURED)



CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS:
MERRI CHRISTLIEB, ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR

NOMINATE ALL YEAR ROUND!

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? Our event is dedicated to recognizing outstanding volunteers, champions of disability rights, and employers who actively support people with disabilities. It's about honoring those who are making a greater impact in our community for people with disabilities.

Go to <https://freedomrc.org/annual-peoples-choice-awards/> and submit your nomination. This event will be held in **May 2025**.

Meet Our New Staff



LUKE BOUCHER

Luke Boucher is a new Independent Living Advocate/Transition Coordinator for Freedom Resource Center. Luke comes to Freedom Resource Center with a non-profit background. Luke has experience in healthcare and insurance from Altru and Sanford. As well as the disabilities field from Development Homes Inc and Easter Seals Goodwill. Originally from Grand Forks, Luke earned his BA in Political Science from UND. Luke moved to Fargo in 2018 with his wife Megan. He spends his free time doting on his cats Magnus & Juno and playing overly elaborate board and video games.



RAEGAN KLOSTERMAN

Raegan Klosterman recently joined Freedom Resource Center in April 2024 as an Independent Living Advocate/Transition Coordinator in the Wahpeton Office. Her previous work experience is with children and adolescents with Autism and Traumatic Brain Injuries. She helped them achieve goals to help their quality of life. She looks forward to working with people of all ages and giving them the best opportunities to become independent. She enjoys reading, going to the lake, being with family and hanging out with her dog.

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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Contributors

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Tanya Stoll: Photography

Tricia McNamee: Photography

Dixie Duncan: Sign Language Interpreter

Crown Trophy: Awards

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Nominee Judges Event Team

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Red River Valley Fair

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Scheels

Shirts from Fargo

Snap Fitness

Starbucks

State Farm

Suite Shots

The Shooting Park

Skate City

The Tavern Grill

Trollwood Performing Arts School

Bluestem Center for the Arts

Viking Café

VTC

Wahpeton Deli & Eatery

Don Lee

Abbey Well

Milton & Charlene Ota

Sherry Bjornson



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Fargo, ND 58103



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

THANK YOU

To everyone who continues to be a part of Freedom Resource Center. Together, we continue to make strides towards a more inclusive and accessible society for all.



Join us in September for our 35th Anniversary Celebration!

More details to come. Follow us on Facebook.

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