

the Independent

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

September 2014

A Personal Call for Artists



Diane Siekaniec

Friends of Freedom Resource Center, I am excited to tell you on October 23, 2014, we will be hosting the second annual Art of Freedom. The Art of Freedom is an opportunity to showcase your artistic talents and demonstrate how expressing yourself through various forms of art can be uplifting. I encourage each and every one of you to consider what art pieces you will show. This is your way to show your friends, family, and the community, "I am more than a person with a disability, I am an artist with a dream."

Art is very emotional, it's about feelings. It is not just something pretty to look at. Art is about being brave enough to let our friends and our families see how we feel about disabilities and the injustices, it is also about letting people see the strengths that having a disability has taught us. It's about letting people see who I have become because of these strengths. Being an artist takes strength and confidence to step forward and let the public see your true feelings, emotions and thoughts that you have painted, sculpted, or written about.

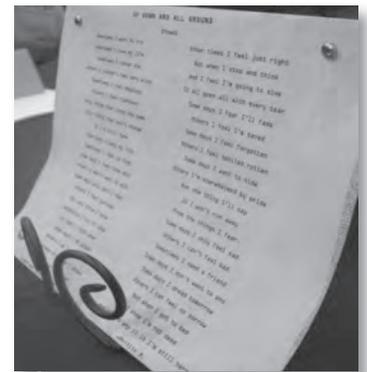
People with various artistic skills from beginner to expert are asked to express how art has helped them become more independent. Art of any form is accepted and the show room will be packed with many great pieces.



As an Artist I like taking advantage of art shows out in the public to see what is new and to see other people's creativity and imagination. So when I enter an art show it is to share my work and my creativity with others. I believe it is my social responsibility to share the gift of being an artist with my community, as well as it being a way to give back, let people see your work, let them get to know what a talented individual you are, you will be surprised how much more confident you become as an artist and an individual.

Freedom Resource Center is also looking for artists to mentor individuals interested in learning an art. If you are interested in either being an art mentor or learning different forms of art please call Wanda and tell her what type of art you would be interested in teaching or learning.

Also, Don't forget to call and register for the show! I hope to see you there!



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INSIDE

Growing to Meet Demands

As demand for Freedom Resource Center's services continue to grow, we to continue to grow and adapt. Over this past month Freedom has hired three new staff to join our team toward independence. Join us in welcoming Beth, Jerry, and Nathan to the Freedom Resource Center team!

Jerry Christianson



Jerry Christianson

Jerry Christianson joins us in the role of Accessibility Specialist. This new position will focus on building accessibility for people with

disabilities and ensure the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is upheld in our service area. The position was created after several businesses and community leaders identified the need for this service. Jerry will be stationed in Fargo but will provide accessibility services throughout our service area.

"The need for accessibility became very apparent to me and my family after my father was paralyzed from the waste down in a car crash." Christianson continued, "I hope that the Freedom team and I can help other families in similar situations to make their homes and communities livable."

Originally from McHenry, ND, Christianson earned a Bachelor of Science from Mayville, ND and a Masters from NDSU. For thirty one years Christianson taught high school science and math. Recently, he worked four years at his friend's farm. A Casselton resident along with his wife, Jerry enjoys riding motorcycle and participating in steam and tractor shows.

Beth Dewald



Beth Dewald

Beth Dewald joins our staff in the Jamestown office as an Independent Living Advocate. Dewald will assist people with disabilities to become more independent through Freedom Resource Center's core services. Beyond individual services, Beth anticipates being very active in the Jamestown community to build partnerships with area businesses and local leaders.

Dewald has a history of being very active in the area. Prior to joining Freedom, Beth

was with the Buffalo Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross for sixteen years. Dewald attended NDSCS, Jamestown College and St. Cloud State to further her education. A Jamestown native, Beth returned to Jamestown nineteen years ago with her husband Roger.

"I have been an advocate all of my life with family and friends." Dewald said, "I felt this opportunity to assist others in my community was very valuable and I'm happy to join the team."

Nathan Coverstone



Nathan Coverstone

Nathan Coverstone accepted the position of Resource Specialist. He will be busy with office operations in Fargo and

will be the friendly voice answering your questions on the phone between the hours of 9 AM and 1 PM. Coverstone will also assist in scheduling appointments with our Independent Living Advocates. Coverstone has a vast work experience and has lived all over the United States. He has lived in Fargo for fifteen years now and attended both NDSU and MSUM to further his education. Nathan enjoys playing chess, reading and philosophizing.

"I care deeply about empowering individuals to live the life they choose." Coverstone stated, "Working at Freedom gives me an opportunity to be a part of something greater than myself while supporting an honorable mission."

Nathan has been married to Crystal for fifteen years. The couple have two sons Tanner and Ian.

EYI

Art of Freedom 2nd Annual Art Show

Where: Dakota Medical Foundation,
4141 28th Ave S, Fargo, ND 58104

When: October 23rd

Call Wanda for more information about
how to get involved

Cooking 101 Freedom in Action

Where: Community Room,
Law Enforcement Center
413 3rd Ave. N. Wahpeton, ND

When:

October 14, 21, 28

November 4, 25

December 2, 9

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm

Call Joyce at 701-672-1648

From Where I Sit



Nate Aalgaard, Executive Director

Disability rights around the world took another setback on Wednesday, as the U.S. Senate once again failed to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This treaty, negotiated by Pres. George W. Bush and signed by Pres. Barack Obama, has now been ratified by 150 countries, but not the United States. Sen. Mike Lee of Utah blocked the vote on this occasion, but there has been a well-funded misinformation campaign that has convinced many Senators not to support this important international measure.

Why do we care if other countries have disability rights? First of all, there is the basic human rights aspect. We in the American disability rights movement enjoy civil rights protection, at least on paper. In many other countries this is far from the case. According to the United Nations, only 45

countries have antidiscrimination and other disability specific laws. Eighty percent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries. Women in other countries are particularly disadvantaged, experiencing exclusion on account of their gender and their disability. Mortality for children with disabilities may be as high as 80 percent in developing countries.

Then, there's the aspect of Americans being able to count on basic civil rights when they travel abroad. Here, we have laws mandating accessibility in newly constructed and renovated buildings, transit systems, and public services. If I went to another country, I would like to have some idea of what to expect with regard to basic accessibility. Environmental barriers can turn a reasonably pleasant trip into a nightmare in a real quick hurry.

As frustrating as things can be here in the United States regarding accessibility, they are far worse in other countries. A friend of mine has been traveling internationally playing Quad Rugby for several years. He has many interesting stories to relate from countries like Egypt, South Korea, and even some in Europe. He has been able to cope due to his physical abilities and resourcefulness, but that may not always be so easy for the rest of us.

Several members of my family have traveled to Scandinavia, our ancestral home, to visit relatives and view the beautiful scenery of Norway and

Sweden. I would like to go someday too, but worry that there are just too many environmental obstacles to make it enjoyable. I might be wrong, but it's kind of hard to rely on somebody else to give me information about my specific needs. So, for the past many years I have put this trip on hold.

I believe that people with disabilities around the world deserve to have basic human rights, like freedom from employment discrimination, an appropriate education, medical care, housing, and the ability to contribute to society. In many places, people with disabilities are treated as outcasts and wastes of time and space. This is appalling, and needs to change.

By ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United States Senate can once again show our leadership to the world on this important issue. We were, after all, the first country to pass comprehensive disability rights legislation, the ADA. Sen. Harkin intends to bring this treaty up for a vote once again when the Senate reconvenes in November. It will be his last chance, as he is retiring after this term. If you care about this issue, contact your Senators and let them know how you feel.

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If you would like to be removed from our mailing list please call 1-800-450-0459.

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Alternate formats available upon request.

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Fargo, ND 58103

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*“Helping people with disabilities live
more independently for 25 years”*

Go to www.freedomrc.org
& click



1st place Winner Brian Olson

Call for Exhibitors

We are seeking exhibitors for the 2014 Art of Freedom event to be held on October 23rd at the Dakota Medical Foundation building in Fargo. We are asking for art of any form. We would love to see your artistic talent!

If you're interested in participating or have questions, call Freedom Resource Center at 800-450-0459. You do not need to be a professional artist. This event is for everyone.

What's Wrong With This Picture?



A vehicle knocked this sign over at a local business in Fargo. The sign laid for days without being replaced.