

THE

# Independent

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

JANUARY 2022

## FYI

**Giving Hearts Day Open Houses  
Freedom Resource Center Offices  
Fargo, Fergus Falls, Jamestown,  
and Lisbon**

**Thursday, February 10, 2022  
1:00-3:00pm**

**FREEDOM IN ACTION  
FARGO**

**Valentine Goodie Decorating  
Monday, February 14th  
1:30-3:00pm**

*Call Merri to register 701.478.0459*

**FERGUS FALLS**

**Love Yourself  
Tuesday, February 8th  
2:00-3:30pm**

*Call Marie or Leigh to register  
218.998.1799*

**JAMESTOWN**

**Chicken Wire Frame  
Tuesday, February 15th  
1:30-3:30pm**

*Call Beth to register 701.252.4693*

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## Freedom "Ramps It Up"

Freedom Resource Center's Temporary Ramp Program "ramps up" people's independence during a difficult time in their lives", Jennifer B. of Jamestown stated. Our program offers and installs a temporary ramp free of charge for people with disabilities. If the need is permanent, it provides time to make permanent accommodations. If the need is temporary, it provides time for healing.

We spoke to several consumers who have participated in the ramp program who shared their experience.

Ron H. "was outside shoveling snow, when he came into the house with his boots covered with wet snow/ice. Ron slipped and fell all the way down our basement stairs, breaking his foot in two places," his wife, Marlene, says. With the stairs creating a barrier for getting in and out of the home, the Fergus Falls residents called Freedom and got in touch with Jerry Christiansen, Accessibility Specialist.

Marlene says "The ramp program was absolutely wonderful! I don't know what we would have done without the ramp! Ron would not have been able to come home if we did not have the ramp to get him in and out of the house for doctor appointments."

"The process was fast and easy," Ron added.

Jerry Christiansen has worked for Freedom Resource Center for seven years. He is knowledgeable in accessibility issues in housing and in public settings, as well as knowing resources which can be helpful in meeting those needs, such as ramp vendors. When a call comes in, Jerry will go on site, take measurements, and offer solutions for the next steps. If a permanent ramp is needed, Jerry has a list of appropriate contractors.

Mikel O. with Fergus Falls Housing and Redevelopment Authority received an accommodation request from a tenant whose minor child had mobility issues. With four steps up to the entry, a ramp was needed to make the home accessible. He contacted Jerry for resources. "It was really a good program. Easy as can be. Smooth. Fast responses. Jerry had a temporary ramp in his truck, which he showed me as an option. Accessing the home from the street would have been extremely difficult for anyone with mobility issues. This accommodation request has led to us re-think our planning and design of future housing sites." Jerry also provided Mikel with a referral to Next Day Access who can install permanent ramps.



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Freedom Resource Center's Ramp Program can help people be independent by living in their homes longer. Jerry, our Accessibility Specialist, will also look at the entire home, perform an assessment, and offer other ideas and solutions.

Don K. of Wahpeton had a partial leg amputation and was in a nursing home for two and a half months until the referral for a ramp was set up. "Freedom got the ramp that I needed to get in and out of my home. Even if there was a fire, I could get out of my home safely. They had the ramp set up before I even came home-it was a complete success! Everything works great!" We asked Don how Freedom helped him be more independent. He said, "Well during the summer I was able to get on my scooter and go down to the local corner café and have lunch without any problem."

Accident-related disabilities that need rehabilitative treatment can happen to anyone, anytime. Jennifer M. of Jamestown loves the outdoors and hiking. This past spring, on a nature hike, she fell and broke her ankle. "Freedom helped me connect with the resources I needed so I could return to work quickly, and attend follow up care for my injury. I was unable to use the stairs, which meant there was no way for me to get in and out of my home to attend work or appointments. Freedom's ramp program saved the day! Freedom is very active in the communities I've lived and worked in, and I've seen how they have helped others find solutions. I called hoping for ideas, and

## Be Part Of The Solution!



Freedom Resource Center wants you to join us as we **RAMP-IT-UP** this Giving Hearts Day!

By partnering with Freedom Resource Center, **YOU** support people with disabilities to access their home with our temporary ramp program. Proceeds

donated will be used to ramp-up services in our region for individuals with any disability, any age, free of charge. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram leading up to Giving Hearts Day as we share different facts about our ramp program and what exactly happened to Drew as he ventured off to deliver a package! We appreciate your continued support in our mission.

Schedule your donation today at [givingheartstoday.org](https://givingheartstoday.org).

they came through with so much more. Within a couple days a ramp was installed, and I received follow up check-in calls. I don't know what I would have done without them," she said.

As a Center for Independent Living, Freedom can provide services to increase independence and break down barriers standing between our consumers and access to work, school, or social interaction. Jennifer B. of Jamestown has expressed her gratitude for the Ramp Program that Freedom offers. "After dislocating my ankle and becoming non-weight bearing for a length of time, one of my biggest concerns was how I was going to get out of my house and be able to continue doing what I needed to do. Being a parent, community member, and business owner, this concern weighed on me greatly. But FRC came to my rescue! The day after getting home they had a ramp set up at my house and allowed me to use it as long as I needed."

Mirt B. commented, "I was so happy to be home again and the feeling of being confined left as the ramp went up. Freedom at last!"

## You can help someone get home!

In 2021 Freedom broke down barriers for 42 consumers who needed a ramp to be more independent and live in their home, at no cost to them. As a non-profit organization participating in **Giving Hearts Day**, our goal in 2022 is to raise **\$40,000** to expand our program and continue to provide accessibility solutions. You can be part of the solution and bring more people home! Celebrate Giving Hearts Day by donating to Freedom at <https://www.freedomrc.org/donate/>.

## Meet Our Staff



Hello, my name is Molly Anderson I recently joined Freedom Resource Center as an Independent Living Advocate. I have had the pleasure of being able to work with people with disabilities for the past 13 years. In my spare time I like to spend time with my family and friends. I also enjoy going to the lake and playing softball in the summertime. I feel very grateful to be

a part of the Freedom Resource Center Team and to be able to work in the Independent Living field!

## Disclaimer

In an attempt to reduce the cost of mailings, please send your email address to [freedom@freedomrc.org](mailto: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.

### Information and Referral

**Q:** *What does it mean?*

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

**Q:** *How does Information and Referral fit into independent living?*

**A:** 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.

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

**A:** Freedom Resource Center offers a temporary ramp solution free of charge. If a permanent ramp is needed, Freedom can provide referrals to funding resources and contractors.

**Q:** *How can I help?*

**A:** You can help by donating to Freedom on or before Giving Hearts Day 2022. The funds raised will help our home access program expand, and you can help someone get home!

### In Honor of Dan Holte



Our good friend, Dan Holte, passed away on December 6, 2021. He was an integral part of the “Freedom Family” for several years. He served as a dedicated board member, peer mentor and advocate for others living with disabilities.

Dan’s wife, Sue, was always by his side. They were two peas in a pod, and it was clear they were both dedicated to Freedom’s mission. They both served as Peer Mentors for several years and served on Freedom’s Civil and Human Rights Task Force playing a pivotal role in advocating for people with disabilities in the Fargo-Moorhead area.

Dan’s time as a Peer Mentor at Freedom was spent, in large part, helping people with disabilities navigate the fixed route bus system in Fargo-Moorhead, something he took very seriously. He was dedicated to making sure each person was comfortable learning how to ride safely and efficiently. He trained each rider effectively and communicated with each person very well, always making sure they were comfortable enough to try to ride independently as the end goal.

Dan also loved spending time with his grandchildren and loved talking about his favorite football team, the Green Bay Packers. Dan was dedicated, thoughtful and always willing to lend a hand to help anyone who needed it. His “Freedom Family” will miss him dearly.

### Beef Confetti Taco Salad *Serves 4*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 small red onion, *cut in half, outer layer peeled, and cut into thin half-moon slices*
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 pound Ground Beef (*93% lean or leaner*)
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup salsa
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup low-fat pre-shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 medium tomato, chopped (*about 1 cup*)
- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup diced yellow or orange bell pepper

#### Optional Toppings:

- 1 can sliced black olives (*2.25-ounce, drained*)
- Diced Avocado
- Your favorite salad dressing
- Lime wedges for garnish

#### Instructions:

1. Place the onion and vinegar in a small mixing bowl, plastic container with a tight-fitting lid or small Mason jar with lid. Let marinate at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes or cover and store overnight in the refrigerator. (Onions will last 3 to 4 weeks in the refrigerator.) Set aside.
2. Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef, cook about minutes, breaking into  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch crumbles and stirring occasionally. Pour off any drippings. Stir in salsa; cook 2 minutes. Remove skillet from heat; keep warm.
3. Line 4 plates or bowls with salad greens. Divide beef mixture among 4 plates. Top beef with some of the pickled onion (if you don’t use all of it, use in other recipes over the coming weeks), cheese, tomato, pepper and onion. Garnish with optional ingredients, as desired.





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in the region for more than 30 years.”*

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& click



## DID YOU KNOW...

2021 Ramp Statistics:

- 42 ramps in 19 communities
- 687 feet of ramp placed
- 9,962 miles driven

Our 2022 goal is to raise **\$40,000**,  
and **YOU** can help.



## Giving Hearts Day

Help someone.



**DONATE TODAY AT [GIVINGHEARTSDAY.ORG](http://GIVINGHEARTSDAY.ORG) AND HELP FREEDOM RESOURCE CENTER  
BRING MORE PEOPLE HOME!**