

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Holiday Inn, Fargo  
August 1-2, 2018**

**Call to Order:** Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

**Roll Call:**

**Members Present:** LaRae Gustafson, Brittney Hogan, Diane Sienkaniec, Drew Hanson, Erik Williamson, Russ Cusack, Shannon Binstock, Trevor Vannett

**Members Absent:** Bill Willis, Mark Bourdon, Gillian Plenty Chief, Royce Schultze

**Non-Council Members Present:** Aimee Volk, Randy Sorenson, Nate Aalgaard, Scott Burlingame

**Approval of May 2018 Minutes:** Shannon Binstock made a motion to approve the May 2018 SILC minutes, LaRae Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Motion was made to amend the agenda by Diane Sienkaniec to move Bylaws and Guidebook to August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and Quarterly Directors Report to August 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:30 p.m. and seconded by Drew Hanson. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Motion was made to amend the agenda by LaRae Gustafson to add Increase of Part B Discussion to August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:45 a.m. and it was seconded by Russ Cusack. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Motion was made to approve the agenda as amended by Erik Williamson and seconded by Drew Hanson. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

**Correspondence – Brittney Hogan:** None

**Treasurer's Report – Brittney Hogan:** Reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Discussion was held on the APRIL conference in October 6-8, 2018 in Denver, Colorado.

Shannon Binstock made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and LaRae Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Erik Williamson made a motion to approve travel and related expenses for two SILC members to the APRIL Conference and Russell Cusack seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Drew Hanson and Shannon Binstock volunteered to attend the APRIL Conference.

**Erik Williamson made a motion to send Drew Hanson and Shannon Binstock to the APRIL Conference on October 6-8, 2018 in Colorado and Russell Cusack seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

#### **Schedule 2019 SILC Meeting Dates – Brittney Hogan**

- February 6-7, 2019 - Bismarck
- May 1-2, 2019 – Grand Forks
- August 7-8, 2019 - Fargo
- November 6-7, 2019 - Minot

**Drew Hanson made a motion to approve the dates above and LaRae Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

#### **Quarterly Director's Report:**

LaRae and Randy for Options: See attached.

Brittney for Dakota Center for Independent Living: See attached.

Scott for Independence, Inc.: See attached.

Nate for Freedom: See attached.

#### **Art of Freedom – Nate Aalgaard and Diane Siekaniec**

Nate discussed the history of the Art of Freedom event. They worked with fundraiser experts to develop the event to make people more aware of it. The art of freedom was started as a donor program. They are still working on developing it and revamping the event. One of the challenges is making it attractive to the entire community.

Diane talked about how art is very emotional. They talked to the community to determine what people wanted (painting, drawing, mosaics, etc.). They got an intern to assist with the event. Some of the art work has been submitted and has won ribbons. At the inception of the event there were around 50 artists and now they have about 77 artists that are participating. The event is continuing to grow.

#### **F5 Project – Adam Martin**

Adam talked about the history and inception of the F5 Project. He discussed his past and how his past started the F5 Project. He talked about the opportunities he got that helped turn around his life. The key was that he was ready for the change. Adam started by speaking at jails and prisons. They provide housing to felons. They have 6 houses at this time with 31 people in the homes. 98% of individuals have jobs and they have 90% of rent capture. They use social media as a source of information for the project. One of their new programs is working with LS & S on a mentoring program.

## Thursday, August 2, 2018

Call to Order: Brittney Hogan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

### Roll Call:

Members Present: Trevor Vannett, Brittney Hogan, Shannon Binstock, Diane Sienkaniec, Erik Williamson, Royce Schultze, Drew Hanson, Russ Cusack,

Non-Committee Members: Aimee Volk, Scott Burlingame, Randy Sorenson, Nate Aalgaard

Members Absent: Bill Willis, Mark Bourdon, Gillian Plenty Chief, LaRae Gustafson

### Committee Breakout

#### Bylaws and Guidebook – Royce Schultze

Discussed establishing Bylaws and reviewed the draft that was sent out prior to the meeting.

**A motion was made by Russ Cusack to accept the Bylaws with the discussed changes and seconded by Trevor Vannett. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

Guidebook

A Discussion was held on the changes to the Guidebook.

**A motion was made by Trevor Vannett to accept the Guidebook with the discussed changes and seconded by Russ Cusack. Motion was passed by unanimous decision.**

#### Increase to Part B Funds Discussion:

Per a document from ACL we do not need to do an amendment we need to discuss how we want to allocate the additional funds and send the IL PO an email stating what decision has been made with SILC Chair, 51% of the CIL EDs and the DSE concur with it. All of these people will be copied on the email. The IL PO will make technical amendments to the SPIL and will send copies of it to the DSE and the SILC.

**Trevor Vannett made a motion to distribute additional Part B funds according to the State Plan for Independent Living and Drew Hanson seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.**

### **Committee Reports:**

Internal Affairs – Brittney Hogan: When the SPIL is complete they want to ensure goals do not overlap. In early September they are going to do a special meeting regarding the Needs Assessment to make it into a Survey Monkey. They would like to do a joint meeting with the SRC and SILC in January to invite the CFO to present on the budget. Each subcommittee should have a new work plan starting in October.

External Affairs – Scott Burlingame: See grid. The letter to the governor is almost complete. They are still looking for an institutional transition story, an economic self-sufficiency story, and a housing story. They are going to do a press release for the new committee members. There is a new act called the “EMPOWER Care Act” to continue the Money Follows the Person money.

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze: There are currently three openings (Quadrant II, Quadrant III, and a member at large). There are two individuals that will be terming out in 2019.

State Rehabilitation Council – Trevor Vannett: No quorum was present.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities – Trevor Vannett: They will be awarding grants soon.

Quarterly Region 8 Conference Call – Brittney Hogan: South Dakota got two people appointed to their council. Several states will be sending individuals to the APRIL conference.

The next SILC meeting will be November 7 - 8, 2018 in Minot, ND.

**Diane Siekaniec made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Erik Williamson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.**

## Dakota Center for Independent Living

Jake Reuter called about KFYP TV wanted to do an interview with a successful MFP transition. He talked about how MFP helped him get an apartment and utilities, and how he is free to go as he pleases and go wherever he wants to. Staff talked to them about rental gap assistance and supplemental services and how much it speeds up transition by not having to wait for section 8 vouchers. Also talked about having a severe disability doesn't mean you have to stay in a nursing facility

Minot State University for the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities Power Up Conference. Have a consumer doing a Self-Advocacy video for our slide show presentation. Talk about what their learning style whether it's visual, auditory or kinesthetic(learn best by doing it), what is your personality trait-people person, results person, detailed person and idea person and describe which each one of these mean and helpfulness on how to use them positively. Rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

Set up AT and DCIL Information Booth at the Kidder Co. Fair in Steele.

AT and the DCIL Info Booth to the National Senior Health and Fitness Day at the YMCA.

AT booth at the Region VII Health and Learning Day at the Bismarck Senior Center.

AT presentation at Senior Citizen Center in Amidon

DCIL booth and AT booth at the Primetime Wellness at the YMCA health fair.

AT booth at the AARP Lunch and Learn, Healthy Living.

Did a Bicycle Safety Program/Presentation and a Bully Prevention Event at Pioneer Elementary School. We played the Bicycle Safety DVD. We had a student come up and make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with a blindfold on to show how difficult it is to do so that with a vision impairment. I had 4 students come up and put a marshmallow in their mouths and try to read a poster. I had a student come up to the front and try to put on a shirt and button without any use or help with his dominant hand. Bully Prevention presentation and did the non-bully pledge with them. Then we did the pledge that is on the back of the license plates and gave each student one and had them sign the pledge. Gave them the Bicycle Safety bookmark.

ADA Celebration at the Mandan Eagles Universal Park where DCIL had an ice cream social. Staff and consumer's from the DCIL Empowerment Committee served ice cream and toppings.

Held a Self-Advocacy Workshop/Presentation at the DCIL. Did hands on activities to find personality traits and learning styles that will help them when looking for a job, going to school, home life and social skills. Reviewed the ADA law, Section 504 of the Rehab Act of 73 and the IDEA law. We talked about different ways that they can advocate for themselves in different areas of their lives. We talked about setting goals and making plans for the future.

DCIL Dickinson in collaboration with Southwestern District Health Unit and United Way of Dickinson sponsored the Mental Health First Aid all-day training presented by First Link of ND. Individuals from

law enforcement, education, social work, advocacy, healthcare, housing, and various other agencies attended. Staff presented on DCIL Services and People First Language, at the beginning of this training. The training provided hands-on learning, role play scenarios, lecture topics, and sharing from the group their experiences both professional and personal. Traumatic events can lead to depression. Role-playing topics included losing a limb, child bullying, someone contemplating suicide in front of you, life style changes i.e. open heart surgery

Dickinson staff assisted with facilitating "mock interviews" for 14 transitional students at Dickinson High School. Vocational Rehab, Badlands Human Services and Job Service participated.

Contacted by Lincoln Park board member who had so questions on accessibility at the Millennium Park. At their last meeting the chair of the committee didn't think they needed to be ADA compliant with their parks because he said who is going to come out and look at it and enforce law.

504 assessments for Underwood City Hall and library, Entrepreneur Building at Sitting Bull College.

ADA and Disability Etiquette presentation for hotels and bars. Advertise through the Chamber newsletter and had one attendee.

Was invited by the Bismarck city administrator to speak at the ITG (political subdivisions) meeting and talk about accessibility and working with the city on site plans for construction that the city is building. Talked about the issues at the MDU resource bowl, seating at Bismarck ice complex, and parking at the public schools. This committee consists of City Commissioner, County Commissioner, Park Commissioner and a School Board member.

## **NORTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL**

### **SPECIAL MEETING FOR GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Thursday June 28, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Royce Schultze, LaRae Gustafson, Erik Williamson, Bill Willis, Diane Siekaniec

**Others Present:** Aimee Volk

Royce Schultze called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Roll call was taken.

### **Membership**

Royce talked to Scott and the application for Drew Hanson was submitted at the end of May. Aimee will continue to contact the Governor's office to find out what the status of the membership is. There is a prospect that Scott has as well as Diane in the Fargo area. Susan Olson's last day with Vocational Rehabilitation is June 29, 2018.

### **Orientation and Training**

Discussed the PowerPoint and changes to the PowerPoint. There was a question on if the council needs to discuss changes to the Mission Statement and the Purpose of the NDSILC to the whole council.

Training Plan Policy binder has been created. Discussed who the mentor's would be and it was decided that the CIL director for the region the new members are from. The orientation will start at the Fargo meeting at 4:00 p.m.

### **Bylaws and Guidebook**

Aimee will update the Bylaws and the Guidebook and send them out to the Governance Committee.

Next meeting will be the SILC meeting in Fargo on August 1-2, 2018.

Adjourned meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Independence Inc.  
Directors Report-SILC  
8/2/18  
Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

## **Community Services**

Our Vote Matters: Prior to the election, we sent basic questionnaires' to each of the mayoral candidates and city council candidates asking "If you are elected, how will you work to make Minot a more accessible community for people with all types' disabilities?"

We ended up getting responses' from two of the three mayoral candidates and three of the six city council candidates. These were then shared on our website and social media.

On July 19<sup>th</sup> we held our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrating Independence Picnic. We had over 200 attendees, and we awarded our 2018 Advocate and Youth Advocate of the Year. Our Youth Advocate is Wesley Snow. Wesley, originally from New Town, recently completed the ASTEP program at Minot State, and liked college so much that he decided to to pursue a degree at Dakota College-Bottineau (DCB) in Photography. Wesley serves as a Peer Mentor in our company and is helping somebody to pass their drivers test.

Our Advocates of the Year are Chad and Angie Thompson. The Thompson's started Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports, and have worked very hard to create competitive recreational opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. They have also been very public with their support of improved accessibility within our community.

The Souris Valley Sabre Dogs reached out to us about holding a fundraiser at a game on July 5<sup>th</sup>. However, prior to the game, we were alerted to some pretty significant accessibility issues at Corbett Field. I reached out to a newly elected member of the Park Board, and tried to get a meeting set up before *Independence Inc. Night with the Sabre Dogs*. Unfortunately, with the holiday, we were not able to set anything up right away.

However, we did get a meeting set up a week later. Drew Hanson and I met with multiple representatives from Minot Parks. We discussed issues with restroom accessibility, the lack of designated accessible and companion seating, issues with the complete inaccessibility of the grandstand, issues with a step before accessing the "party deck" and the lack of directional signage to access the third base side of the field.

Within 24 hours they had built a ramp for the restroom, brought in new filling to make the party deck accessible, and created accessible seating with companion seating. They also have asked us to continue to work with them to make other, longer term accessibility improvements throughout all Park District communities, including developing a long term plan for making the grandstands at Corbett accessible.

We had a float in the State Fair Parade this year. Our motto for the parade was “We Do Disability Right”. We handed out 500 bookmarks for the parade with our “We Believe” statements on them.

In June we completed our second round of Community Leadership Academy, with

System Advocacy Update

### Farm Bill Update

- House passed version
- Senate passed version with less work requirements
- Currently in conference committee.
  - Contact your lawmakers and urge them to retain Senate version.

### Transportation

- NHTSA's Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) program requires manufacturers to abide by standards to reduce energy consumption by increasing the fuel economy of vehicles.
  - Standards create an issue for people with disabilities making vehicle modifications.
    - National Council on Disability (NCD) Letter to DOT Secretary Chao and EPA Administrator Pruitt on the **Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards' Impact on People with Disabilities**. [Click here to follow link](#).

### Emergency Preparedness

- Senator Casey is introducing new legislation for people with disabilities and emergency preparedness called “Getting It Right”.
- Monitor for any developments on the bill.
- Review the Dear Colleague Letter and ACL Policy included in the attachments.
  - ACL policy provides a guide on how to work through emergency situations.

### IL Funding Update

- Healthy increase in House Budget for FY2019.

### ADA Notification Act

- Still dormant on Senate side
  - Continue to monitor.

### Labor Laws and Subminimum Wages

- Subminimum Wages- Rep from ACCESS spoke about 14(c) standards.
- 14(c) certificates grandfathered
- Phase out opportunities
  - For example, if an organization has 100 certificates and employees leave program they would not be eligible to apply for more waivers.
- Will require federal legislation and additional advocacy work to resolve issue.

### EMPOWER Care Act & Money Follows The Person (MFP)

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### EMPOWER Care Act & Money Follows The Person (MFP)

- MFP has helped over 75,000 Americans with Disabilities transition from institutions back into the community. *(Source: NCIL Policy Priorities, July 2018)*
- On average, monthly expenditures for MFP beneficiaries declined by \$1,840 (23%) during the first year of the program, saving approximately \$978 million. *(Source: NCIL Policy Priorities, July 2018)*
- According to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) participants are less likely to be readmitted to institutional care than other beneficiaries who transition but do not participate in the program.
- MFP expired on September 30, 2016 and programs have started to scale back by 40%.
- The program can be continued by passing the EMPOWER Care Act- H.R. 5306 (Guthrie-R) and S. 2227 (Portman-R).
- The bill would improve the MFP program and reauthorize funding through 2022.
  - Legislation would reduce how long someone must be in a nursing home before the person is eligible to transition from 90 days to 60 days.
  - Enhances program reporting and accountability
    - Requires the federal government to identify and share the most effective state strategies for transitioning beneficiaries from institutional to qualified community settings, including how strategies vary for different types of beneficiaries.
- HR 5306 was introduced by Congressman Guthrie on March 15, 2018.
  - Referred to House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health on March 16, 2018.
  - As of 7/25/18 the bill has 27 co-sponsors (16 Democrats; 11 Republicans)
- Contact your Congressmen and urge them to reauthorize the MFP Demonstration Program by supporting H.R. 5306

### Individual Services

We have entered into a new contract with the University of Montana to be a pilot site for a one-on-one app based health promotion program titled, Health My Way, which uses the content from the Healthy Community Living program but is geared toward rural consumers who are unable or choose not to participate in group workshop. Instead of a group workshop, they will go through health promotion content on a tablet (we will provide the tablets) on their own and check-in weekly with a trained health coach at Independence, Inc.

We are currently working on again rebuilding our BEYOND youth program. Our goal is to continue to make the program more interactive and flexible while continuing to meet the goals of the project. Last year, despite not having a Youth Transition Specialist for half of the school of the year, we were able to hold classes in over 20 schools, and two different community social groups. We held two job camps this summer, one in Bottineau and one in Bowbells.

## Options ND SILC Report August 2018

### TRAINING Conducted:

- Provided training to members of the Drayton Senior Center on Accessible Home design, funding and how to request a reasonable modification or accommodation. Also at the Drayton Center training conducted on “Mental Health Awareness” and “Traveling with a Disability”.
- Provided training for Devils Lake Brain Injury group on “Service and Emotional Support Animals” and also on “Self-Advocacy” training with this group.
- Provided training on “Self-Advocacy” at the SA (Schizophrenia Anonymous) peer group in Grand Forks on “Working Well with a Disability” series of trainings. The workshop covers several areas in our lives that can affect how we live and work with a disability.
- Provided training on “Effective communication” (assertiveness) at Mountain Brooke.

### HOUSING:

- Participate in Supportive Housing Collaborative in Grand Forks, continuing working on the Lagrave on First, Housing First project to open 8-13-18.
- Participate in Steering Committee for developing policies for the Lagrave on First Housing First Project. Tenants will be moving in starting mid-August 2018.

### ADVOCACY

- Advocated for accessible nursing/lactation stations in North Dakota. Federal Government Title V Block Grant money was used along with state matching money to purchase and place 6 lactation/nursing stations at 5 major airports, four zoo locations and at the Fargo Dome. Only two of these units were accessible. Options filed complaints against the locations, State of ND, and the Breastfeeding Coalition. The two inaccessible stations at the Grand Forks and Devils Lake airports were replaced with accessible models and the inaccessible stations were removed from the Dickinson airport.
- Assisted individual with follow-up on complaint against local business, built with inaccessible entrances. ND Department of Human Rights found no cause, so we are appealing to the Department of Justice.
- Sent letter to State of ND and Grand Forks Department of Transportation requesting they fix or replace an automatic door opener at the Rest Area just south of Drayton, ND.

### Nurse Educator Provider:

- Tami in Options Cavalier office collaborated and educated the Pembina County Public Health office in Cavalier into becoming a Nurse Educator Provider. Nurse Educators under HCBS provide training to individuals/families on nursing cares, monitoring of medications, identify and review potential health conditions and practices. Nurse

Educators are very valuable to individuals with severe health conditions/disabilities to remain living independently.

#### **COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION:**

- Participate in ND Vocational Rehabilitation Quarterly ADA Coordinator meeting to share resources and information.
- Participate in High Plains Fair Housing Board
- Participated with the Dental Coalition Committee. Some states have started to implement services using dental hygienists in small communities who do not have dental care access. They are trying to get this type of service in North Dakota. Members of the Dental Coalition committee will visit with legislative representatives about this to see if they could pass a law through the legislature in ND.
- Participated in the monthly CAT/DAR (City Area Transit/Dial -A- Ride) meeting for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. They are adding a couple of new routes and also extending the hours of some routes. They are also getting a couple of new buses.
- Heather is participating in a new committee on Emergency Inclusion with the Grand Forks Emergency Management Department. They are updating their Emergency Operations Plan to include all emergency planning with individuals with disabilities.
- Participated in the Grand Forks Emergency Management Board meeting. The committee received a grant through ND from Homeland Security of \$35,000 to train and exercise for "Active Shooter Events".

#### **RELOCATIONS/DIVERSIONS:**

- Ten Relocations/six are MFP
- Four diversions

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**

- Assisted 8 individuals with home or apartment accessibility design, contractor/vendor, reasonable modification request and/or funding information.
- Provided technical assistance to local church on accessible door designs and automatic doors, accessible parking for employee with disability, accessible bathroom signage requirements, automatic door vendors, funding resources and accessible restroom requirements for engineer.

# NORTH DAKOTA 2017-2018

## Quarter Three

### North Dakota Statewide Quarterly Statistics April 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018 Quarter 3

	Dakota	Freedom	Independence	Options	Total
I&R's	993	727	308	255	2283
Direct Service	31	20	78	34	163
CEO	3924	2789	1331	418	8462
Total People	4948	3536	1717	707	10908
Goals	97%	89%	97%	89%	93%

	Year to Date				
	Dakota	Freedom	Independence	Options	Total
I&R's	1566	1991	1025	786	5368
Direct Service	203	182	639	164	1188
CEO	8313	5739	2695	1104	17851
Total People	10082	7912	4359	2054	24407
Goals	93%	89%	95%	89%	93%

### Direct Service

Direct Services is based on a structured process of service delivery which is provided on a one-to-one basis to persons with significant disabilities. The Direct Service Program offers persons with disabilities more intense help in identifying and resolving the barriers that hinder them from living at the highest level of independence possible. This program utilizes a host of services incorporating legislative mandates of service delivery.

### Information and Referral

The provision of information to persons with disabilities, service providers, and community members on disability and independent living topics and issues; and, referral assistance to link individuals with appropriate organizations, services, and resources.

### Community Education and Outreach

This program area encompasses various services such as community education, outreach activities, and systems advocacy. Community education predominantly involves educating the general community of the issues and barriers affecting persons with disabilities. Outreach activities are primarily designed to tell people about independent living services and to increase usage of a center's services. Systems advocacy involves advocating for changes in major systems such as service delivery or building accessibility to enable persons with disabilities to utilize such in the most effective manner possible.

### North Dakota OVR Quarterly Statistics April 1, 2018 - June 30, 2018 Quarter 3

	Dakota	Freedom	Independence	Options	Total
I&R's	218	465	240	189	1113
Direct Service	7	13	61	25	106
CEO	863	1785	1038	309	3996
Total People	1089	2263	1339	523	5214
Goals	97%	89%	97%	89%	93%

	Year to Date				
	Dakota	Freedom	Independence	Options	Total
I&R's	345	1274	800	582	3000
Direct Service	45	116	498	121	781
CEO	1829	3673	2102	817	8421
Total People	2218	5064	3400	1520	12202
Goals	93%	89%	95%	89%	93%

**Freedom Resource Center  
Quarterly Director's Report  
August 2, 2018**

On May 8 Freedom held its annual appreciation luncheon. Around 175 people attended. We had several very deserving and impressive award winners. We also had two consumers speak about their experiences with Freedom. Robin Heubner from WDAY/ Forum Communications was our MC. Awards were presented for both adult and youth advocate, volunteer of the year, peer mentor of the year, distinguished service, employer, and accessibility. We started a new award this year in honor of our former board president, Larry Chial. We are also working on a curriculum for a leadership program, which will bear his name.

Freedom was nominated for a ChamberChoice award through the Fargo – Moorhead – West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. The banquet was May 11, and Freedom was in the final three of about 14 different organizations that were nominated in the small non-profit category. It gave us good recognition from the business community.

Our Moorhead Human Rights Commission has been reorganized and is now meeting after about two-and-a-half years off. I am a member, and we are working with the City of Fargo's Human Relations Commission to promote human rights in our communities. The next event will be a joint booth at the Pride in the Park Festival on August 11.

On June 6, Cindy Gabbert took over her official duties as program director. She has spent quite a bit of time in the last few months learning the job, meeting people, and gradually taking over the job previously held by Mark Bourdon. Freedom is fortunate to not have much turnover in our upper management for many years.

Our direct service staff have now been trained on the ABCs of Nursing Facility Relocation. Rather than having a dedicated person to provide the service, each of them will be ready to assist people in moving back into the community.

Due to a shortfall in funding from the State of Minnesota, Freedom has closed its Moorhead office. That staff person will now be housed at the Fargo office and still serve Clay County.

Freedom's board just held elections for new members and officers. We added one member, which brings our total up to 14. It is difficult to find people who are willing and able to actively participate, who do not live within the Fargo – Moorhead – West Fargo metropolitan area. However, we are trying to fill this need.

Our task force continues to work on accessibility issues in the community. One success lately is that West Acres Shopping Center is fixing their accessible parking to make it compliant with state law and the ADA.