

the Independent

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

February 2013

Phillip Madche Turns New Skills Into Action

By Mike Winge

Phillip Madche is a student in the Culinary Arts program at North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton, North Dakota. Currently Phillip, 26, is studying restaurant management and is learning the ins and outs of the food industry; something he is passionate about and wishes to pursue after college. He has proven his academic success by receiving the President's Honor Award, given only to those who have held a GPA of 3.5 or higher in their studies. This was an accomplishment many people never thought possible for Phillip.

Although college is going great for Phillip, middle and high school were a completely different story. According to his mother Joyce Madche, "His ADHD made it difficult to learn in the same ways as other kids. There was a good support system with Phillip's teachers at school, but he suffered in school due to his learning disability." As a mother, Joyce did what she could for her son, but was unsure of what resources were out there before Phillip went to college. "I just listened and did whatever a parent needs to do," she said.

As a consumer of Freedom services, Phillip completed a skills course called Living Well with a Disability. "It really helped me regain my confidence," said Phillip. "The course got me out of my comfort zone and gave me inspiration." His mother had great things to say about her son after taking both the Living Well skills class and the JobSmart class. "After attending classes at Freedom, things really turned around for Phillip. He became very passionate about his club and altogether those two classes made a tremendous difference in Phillip's life," she said.

When Phillip first came to Freedom, Wahpeton Independent Living Advocate Joyce Wolter was already familiar with him. He was referred to Freedom from Job Service and although he did set goals for himself, he had little direction in how to achieve these goals. After just a few

weeks of JobSmart and some honest advice, Phillip got the first job he applied for. Joyce had great things to say about Phillip. "Once Phillip is given the appropriate tools and he sets his mind to something he does not let it go; he holds on and sees it through," she said. If we all held that tenacity there would be great things accomplished in this world. He has had many people tell him he couldn't. I hope that they see him now and see that he can, and will. All it takes is for people to give you appropriate direction, honesty to tell you the hard stuff, and believe in you when few others do."



Phillip Madche

While attending a support group on campus in 2010, Phillip and a friend began discussing a student organization they wished to start. The focus of the club would be to promote disability awareness across campus. They felt that their current support group was lacking the flexibility needed by students with busy schedules. Unfortunately, Phillip's friend ended up leaving the area to enroll in college in Fergus Falls where he had a full ride. Regardless of this set back, Phillip continued to strive toward making this new club a reality. "There was difficulty in finding an advisor for the club, which is a necessity for a student organization," Phillip said.

Fast forward a couple years and Phillip has the organization off the ground and running. As of Fall Semester 2012, NDSCS has a new student organization, Disability Awareness Self Advocacy Association. Currently he is promoting this new student organization in all his classes and around campus. Some of the ways he is doing this include: handing out pocket-sized flyers, writing articles, and conversing with classmates and professors. He has even created a movie about what his organization represents.

Phillip is also passionate about increasing the percentage of people with disabilities attending post-secondary education. He states, "Only about one-third of people with disabilities have or are attending college, meaning that two-thirds are not taking advantage of the opportunities for continued education." Through his student organization, Phillip hopes to increase civic engagement and initiate the discussion of self-advocacy. "People with disabilities are becoming more involved in the community and in post-secondary education. Even though it is difficult living with a disability, one can achieve a high level of achievement in academics," he said. Phillip is currently looking for an internship opportunity and will pursue work in his field after graduation.

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INSIDE

Self Defense



Master Lucas Holzhueter, Detroit Lakes School of Tae Kwon Do and Kumbo provided self defense training for people with limited mobility and other disabilities on January 31.

To Know

Disability-related legislation to track

Minnesota

HF 181—(Autism Private Insurance Coverage)
HF 630 (Education) This bill includes provisions for bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
HF 353 (School Based Mental Health Grants)

North Dakota

SB 2193 (Specific to the Autism Spectrum Disorder)

On Feb. 21, the Senate approved **SB 2271** reenacting the Committee on Employment for People with Disabilities by a vote of 46-0.

SB 2375 (To direct the department of human services to seek a home and community-based services waiver expansion.) Recommended for interim study.

What's Wrong With This Picture?



Going to Scheel's Arena for a Force game. Clear parking lot--check. Clean sidewalks and curb cuts--check. Clear snow away from power door button--Oh no, forgot one.

From Where I Sit

By Nate Aalgaard,
Executive Director

There's nothing like a big snowstorm to expose weaknesses in the system, whether that be mechanical problems, snow removal, or just plain stupidity. The "What's Wrong with This Picture" photo in this edition highlights a basic problem. Four days after the big snowstorm of February 10-11, the parking lot and sidewalks at Scheel's Arena were cleaned very well. The only problem is they forgot to shovel the pile of snow away from the power door button. If ever I needed a power door opener, it was that night – about 10° below zero.

Another byproduct of this storm was that many people on the south side of Moorhead, where I live, did not get plowed out for up to two days. The city finally arrived at my house at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, the day after it quit storming. I heard that other people did not get plowed out until the following afternoon. Now I realize sometimes things are a bit beyond the scope of what equipment and resources can handle in a short period of time. But if I did not have an

attendant who had access to a giant four-wheel-drive pickup, I might've been stuck in bed for quite some time that Monday. Otherwise, somebody would've had to walk about a quarter of a mile through deep snow to get to my house.

There has also been a rash of vehicle breakdowns amongst people in my circle of acquaintances during this cold snap. On Martin Luther King Day weekend, my colleague Randy Sorensen's truck broke down on the way to Bismarck. I was ahead of him by about 100 miles, and had to turn around, drive back to Valley City, and pick up him and John Johnson so we could get out to testify for Independent Living funding at the legislature the following day.

Then, at the recent Independent Living Council meeting in Minot, another colleague, Royce Schultze blew a tire on the way down North Hill. I was feeling pretty lucky, until the sliding door on my van malfunctioned a few days later. I'm still sitting here waiting for parts, more or less stranded at home four days later. Today, February 18, we have another blizzard. Hopefully we get plowed out

quicker this time.

A relative from Norway told me they don't have bad weather, just bad clothes. I took that to mean that you can't do anything about the conditions; you can just be prepared for whatever comes your way. Likewise, many people would ask, "Why do we live here?" I have often contemplated that very question. I have come to the conclusion that life is much more than the weather. I often fantasize about moving to California, but I would leave behind a good job, almost all of my family, and many friends. It's not worth it, even if the weather is much better.

So here we are, dealing with the elements. We can make sure that we have the right clothes, be as smart as possible, and do our best to modify the environment (like removing snow). If not, stay home, have a hot beverage, and watch some recorded programs on TV until it passes.



Nate Aalgaard

Information

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Funding for this publication was provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Rehabilitation Services from the state's general fund, the State of North Dakota and the Federal Department of Education. However, the contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the policy of the funders and you should not assume endorsement by any government entity.

Alternate formats available upon request.

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*“Helping Bridge Your
Path to Independence”*

Thank You!



Standing for Ending Homelessness: Mike Winge holding a Freedom Resource Center poster board outside the Gladys Ray Shelter in Fargo, where our telethon was held for Giving Hearts Day.

All of us here at Freedom Resource Center would like to thank everyone who was a part of Giving Hearts Day in 2013. This was our second year participating in the 24-hour online event. We are delighted to say that we exceeded our donations from last year and doubled the number of donors. The money received will go toward our Independent Living Skills Classes and well as our monthly Freedom In Action events, which take place at all five of our locations. Again we thank you for your generous support. You are helping individuals fulfill their wish for independence!