

# Independent

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

AUGUST 2018

## FYI

**Fargo - Independent Living Skills Class**  
**Living Well 101: Independence**

**Tuesdays, September 11 -**

**November 27, 2018, 1:15-3:15 pm.**

Call Tiffany to reserve your spot 701-478-0459.

**Freedom In Action Extended**  
**Short Story Writing by Phillip Wayne,**

**published writer and Laura Gerling,**  
**Master of Arts in Genre Fiction**

**Tuesdays, August 21 - September 25, 2018,**

**7:00-9:00 pm**

Cost is \$10 for all 6 sessions

Call Diane to register 701-478-0459.

**Poetry Writing Class taught by**  
**published authors**

**Tuesdays, October 16 - November 6, 2018**

**7:00-9:00 pm**

Cost is \$10 for all 4 sessions

Call Diane to register 701-478-0459.

**Freedom in Action**

**Fergus Falls - Fleece Octopus Toys**

Toys will be donated to local Police  
 Department to comfort children in crisis

**September 21, 2018, 2:00-4:00 pm**

125 West Lincoln Ave. Conf. Rm. #2

Call to register 218-998-1799.

**Wahpeton - Legacy Journaling**

**1st Session, September 20, 12:30-2:15 pm**

**2nd Session, October 11, 12:30-2:00 pm**

Must attend 1st session to attend 2nd session

Hughes Shelter in Wahpeton

Call Joyce to register by September 13.

701-672-1648.

*Freedom Resource Center has closed the Moorhead office. For service information, contact the Fargo office 701-478-0459.*

## Meet Jeff Williams, Accomplished Artist

By Tom Thompson



Jeff Williams

I had the distinct pleasure to sit down and visit with Jeff Williams of Fergus Falls. I asked him if he would be willing to tell his story and how he ended

up at Freedom Resource Center. The following is his story:

### Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I was born in Tracy, MN and when I was in kindergarten moved to Santa Clara, California. My Dad was stationed at the naval base there. After Dad was discharged we moved back to Minnesota and lived in Amiret, MN. In the mid 70's my Dad started in the insurance business after we moved to Fergus Falls, then to a lake place on Pelican Lake and I attended school in Ashby, MN.

When I was in the 4th or 5th grade I entered an art contest and won. Because of the encouragement from several of my teachers I entered more art contests and won those. Art was beginning to be a big part of my life at that time and when I was a senior in high school entered a state-wide art contest and took 3rd place. Early on in my childhood I was diagnosed with Spinal Meningitis, which may have contributed to a learning disability. After graduating from high school in Ashby I applied to Alexandria Tech School. I was not accepted into college, but after seeing my excellent portfolio they accepted me. I did not graduate from there and from 1984-1985 I worked at the Fergus Falls Area YMCA and then again in 2008-2010. I had different manufacturing jobs throughout the years.

### How does art affect you?

In the 70's attending McKinley Elementary, I realized how good I was and how it helped me cope with life. I feel God is working through me to

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be a good artist. My teachers were impressed with my talent and that's why I won so many art contests. I can see what I want to draw on a sheet of white paper before I draw it. Art is an outlet for me and it's relaxing. It is truly a large part of my life. I also work with building scale models.

## How did you get involved with Freedom Resource Center?

I was referred to Freedom Resource Center in July of 2014 by Luann from Otter Tail County Human Services. I was having difficulty filling out the application for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and getting all the documents together before I went to my hearing. I do struggle with memory, so they helped me set up a booklet file system for Social Services and Social Security, which helps reduce the stress and makes it easier to keep track of things. The other issues they help with are my anxiety and depression. I am easy to get along with, but have difficulty with being around a lot of people, as I find it very overwhelming and uncomfortable. They have been working with me on some social interactions with others as I do become very frustrated as society can run you down.

I found Jeff to be very genuine person who is very passionate about art and how it helps him cope. He works very hard at being the best artist he can be and how his art is a very important part of his life. He continues to work with the Freedom Resource Center Fergus Falls office through housing, social security, social services, personal and social issues. Jeff will participate in the Art of Freedom again this year.

## From Where I Sit

I recently saw a video clip of Ed Roberts, who is credited with founding the Independent Living Movement. Judging by the hairstyles, it was sometime in the 70's. Ed was talking about how he saw a day when people with disabilities could influence elections by voting in large blocks for candidates who supported their views. He said we should be running for office ourselves. We could have a huge impact.

So now, at least 40 years later, where are we? Do you ever hear anybody campaigning about disability issues? Do you see candidates running on a platform of disability rights?

No, you don't. Instead, we get the disastrous attempt by the US House of Representatives to pass HR 620, which would in effect weaken enforcement of our rights, and further delay businesses adhering to the spirit of the law and eliminating barriers. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed over 28 years ago. Haven't we waited long enough?

What happened? Why don't people with disabilities vote to pass issues that are important to them? Have we become cynical, don't care, or don't identify as someone with a disability? Maybe we are too self-centered. How about we all band together and protest like those mothers who were told not to breastfeed their babies at that swimming pool. Let's channel their energy. We should be outraged that you have to wait two full years to get Medicare if you go on Social Security Disability Insurance because you are unable to work.

Here's another good one: Ever thought about how you go to the restroom in a jet



Nate Aalgaard,  
Executive Director

aircraft without walking to it? Let's see, you have to transfer into a regular plane seat, the aisles are so narrow that people can hardly walk through them, much less use any kind of wheelchair. You better hope you can hold it for a long time. Not to mention the fact that planes dehydrate you in the first place. How does that flight to Hawaii sound now? I tell people this and they are in disbelief. Even if you got to sit in your own chair in the plane, the restroom is much too small.

The really big deal is that unemployment for people with disabilities is very high. There has been little progress in increasing these numbers since passage of the ADA. Enforcement of discrimination claims is slow and underfunded. It's hard to prove you weren't hired because you have a disability, and vocational rehabilitation programs are tight on funds. We have attitudinal barriers that seem to persist.

I'm sick of the political TV ads already, and it's only August. How about we start looking for candidates who will actually support our issues. Then, work for them, and most of all--VOTE.

## Disclaimer

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# Meet Freedom's Board Members



## Dan Westphal

Dan used to live next door to Nate Aalgaard and through that relationship, Dan was introduced to Freedom Resource Center. He is originally from Minneapolis and is a graduate of Moorhead State University majoring in Health Agencies Administration.

Dan is a Board-Certified Prosthetist with over 30 years' experience in the field of

prosthetics and orthotics. Dan currently works for Hanger Clinic in south Fargo. He also works part time as a DSP (direct service professional) for CCRI in Moorhead working in a group home.

Dan is divorced (single) and lives with his cat, Kirby. He is a member of Bethesda Lutheran Church in Moorhead and has served on the council and several committees. He is also involved with HOPE, Inc. playing sled hockey, wheelchair softball and wheelchair soccer. He also does some volunteer work with HOPE, Inc. Dan is currently Freedom's treasurer.



## Michele Rader

Michele lives in Fargo with her husband, John, and 2 kids, Haley (17) and Grant (8). After 20 years in the non-profit world, she switched professions and opened her own small in-home daycare. Michele was aware of Freedom Resource Center since working in the non-profit sector. She is also friends with Angie Bosch. Angie encouraged

Michele to apply to be on the board. She is Freedom's vice president.

Being on the board at Freedom Resource Center has continued to allow Michele to help bridge the gap between the community and individuals with disabilities. There still is a lack of understanding by the community about people with disabilities and what their abilities are. This gives Michele the opportunity to share with others what Freedom is and what they do and how we're empowering individuals with disabilities to be independent.

# Meet Our Staff



## Wanda Lokhorst

Wanda joined Freedom Resource Center in February of 2012 as the Administrative Assistant. Wanda assists with accounting, event planning, staff support, donor and mailing management, among other things. She loves being part of an organization that gives people with disabilities hope, choices, and the opportunity to use their own voice. Wanda and her

husband live in Barnesville. Their daughter will be starting kindergarten this fall, a milestone that Wanda says she is not ready for. They have three dogs, two of them being new puppies. With the addition of the puppies comes all the excitement and craziness that goes along with caring for busy pups. She enjoys spending time with family and friends at the lake, traveling, fitness, and crafting DIY projects.



## Angie Bosch

Angie joined Freedom Resource Center in 2007 as the Office Manager in our Fargo office. Angie does a variety of things, but the main parts of her job are financial and grants management. She also assists employees with their benefits, and does a lot of work on special events. Originally from Hawley, MN, Angie and her husband live in Fargo and have two girls, ages

7 and 13, and two dogs that keep them busy.



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

Go to [www.freedomrc.org](http://www.freedomrc.org)  
& click



## What’s Wrong With This Picture?

Notice the location of the button to operate the power door. When a person pushes the button, they are not in line with the door. After pushing the button, a person must back up and reposition themselves to get through the door. Even worse, a 30” wide X 48” deep clear floor space is not provided at the button. A person reaching for the button would be smacked by one of the doors if someone came out as they reached for the button.



*6th Annual*  
**Art of Freedom**

**Dakota Medical Foundation**  
4141 28th Ave S. Fargo, ND  
October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 • 5:00 to 7:30pm

Freedom Resource Center is proud to host the 6th Annual Art of Freedom. See original creations from new, emerging, and experienced artists. Enjoy music, light refreshments, and demonstrations.

There will be an opportunity to support our mission through chance drawings.

**For more information, please call  
800.450.0459**

**We are THE premier leader of disability rights in the region.**