



PEOPLE'S VOICE

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Mission Statement

To advocate for the freedom of choice for individuals with disabilities to live independently through the removal of all barriers.

Goals

- To promote the philosophy of independent living.
- To eliminate attitudinal, environmental, and communication barriers which perpetuate discrimination experienced by people with disabilities.
- To replace the perception of disability as a tragedy with a sense of pride, power, and personal style.

Accessible Recreation in Minot

Therese Besemann, Systems Change Specialist

We are committed to creating fully accessible communities by supporting the full inclusion of people with disabilities. To achieve this goal, we provide technical assistance for businesses and conduct accessibility surveys to raise the awareness of business owners of the advantages to becoming accessible to all patrons.



In each edition of the People's Voice, we will be featuring an area business that is accessible and user-friendly. The first business to be featured is The Rack Pool Hall located at 1414 20th Ave SW, Minot.

The Rack is a family owned and managed business, open seven days a week. Sunday has been designated as Family Day from 3:00 pm to 10:00 pm; no smoking is allowed during those hours. The Rack offers 7' and 9' pool tables, two billiard tables, dart boards, a restaurant, bar, and full service pro-shop. The Rack sells, services, and assembles pool tables as well as providing a variety of dart and pool accessories needed to become an expert. You can join a pool league or a dart league during the winter months, but if you do not want to commit to a league, you can stop in to play pool by the hour on 9' tables or drop a few quarters into the 7' tables. They also provide daily specials on food, beer and pool tables, to stretch your dollars further. For example, Monday through Friday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm you can play pool on the 9' tables for free or pay a mere \$3 per hour to play on one of the 9' tables from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. That is much more economical than dinner and a movie.

The next time you are looking for somewhere to go with friends and you only have a few dollars in your pocket, check out The Rack Pool Hall.

Recreation Opportunities

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

Are you ready for some fun? We have had a lot of really serious things that have been happening throughout our service area the past year or so. We have been consumed not only by the effect of major flooding, but also the stress of living in an increasingly growing part of the country. At Independence, we are worried this may be creating additional isolation for people with disabilities. Over the next few months, we are going to be promoting events that are fun. This will start with each of our newsletters highlighting affordable, accessible opportunities for recreation. We will be holding a variety of recreation events in our office, and will be promoting other activities in our communities. Please feel free to check these out on our website at www.independencecil.org or visit our Facebook page to find out what those events may be.

Upcoming Events

Independent Living Skills Classes

April 10, 2012

1:00 – 2:00 PM

Baking 101:

Please come join us for an introduction to baking. Do you mistake baking soda for baking powder? Don't know the difference between wet ingredients and dry ingredients? This is the class for you! Please call to preregister.

April 17, 2012

1:00 – 2:30 PM

Boredom Busters Board Games:

Has winter given you a crazy case of cabin fever? Please join us for an afternoon of fun playing games with some wonderful people! Lots of laughs and great conversation is guaranteed! Please call to preregister.

May 8, 2012

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Basic Sewing: Buttons:

Have you ever wondered what to do when your button pops off a shirt? Please join us for an introductory sewing class and save your shirts from being turned into rags! Please call to preregister.

May 15, 2012

1:00 – 2:00 PM

Budget Friendly Shopping Strategies:

How can you get your dollars to stretch at the store? We need to make every penny count! Please join us for an afternoon of bargain shopping strategies. Please call to preregister.

All classes will be held at the office of Independence, Inc. Please contact our main office at [701.839.4724](tel:701.839.4724) to register for classes. Hope to see you there!

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director
Colleen Kubler, Finance Director
Dee Tischer, Direct Services Coordinator
Therese Besemann, Systems Change Specialist
Jill McDonald, Independent Living Specialist
Connie Klein, Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator
Pamala Mondragon, Information Specialist
Carly Leffelman, Youth Transition Specialist
Inez Rose, Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator

ID Statement

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Independence, Inc.
300 3rd Ave. SW, Ste. F
Minot, ND 58701

My Voice

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

I hate the term “self-advocate.”

There I said it! To be clear, I don't have any opposition to people advocating for themselves. I think most would agree that I am very dedicated to just that. The self-advocacy movement was the driving force of the civil rights movement that eventually became the Disability Rights movement of which Independence Inc. is proud to be part of. If we are doing what we are supposed to be doing, we will be providing the support, training, and encouragement of people with disabilities to advocate for themselves.



One of the founding principles of the Centers for Independent Living movement is a belief in consumer control of our organization. That is defined by the fact that over 51% of our Board of Directors are persons with significant disabilities, and over 50% of our management staff and staff in general are persons with disabilities. We are, in our simplest form, an organization of people with disabilities providing advocacy to others with disabilities. However, I would never call one of our board members or any of the employees at Independence “self-advocates.”

It is the exclusivity of the term “self-advocate” I have problems with. In a movement that defines itself by equality and inclusion, why do we need a special term to describe people who speak up for themselves? It bothers me that it is only the disability community that uses the term “self-advocate.” If I go into a business, and they have an employee training program that encourages individual empowerment, they don't call it “self-advocacy program,” they call it leadership development. If a politician wants to hear from the people affected by legislation, they don't ask for “self-advocates,” they ask to hear from concerned citizens.

Finally, I worry about tokenism. Here is a news flash, not every person with a disability knows about every issue that affects the lives of people with disabilities. Just because a person has a disability, it does not mean they are always the right person to provide input on every issue. For example, if somebody drives their own car, they may not be the right person to talk about the need for more transportation. However, if somebody cannot get to the grocery store without waiting for a friend to pick them up, they are exactly the right person.

It is for that reason we are always dedicated to assisting the right people, who are passionate about issues that matter to them, to gain the skills and confidence they need to provide input on issues that will help them to live more independent lives and to become more empowered citizens. This is a lot of work, but well worth our dedication.

Who We Serve:

At Independence, we serve people of with all types of disabilities. I thought for this newsletter I would share with you the breakdown on what types of disabilities we served last year. Keep in mind that all of our disabilities are self-reported by the person receiving the services.

- Cognitive 8%
- Mental/Emotional 14%
- Physical 48%
- Hearing 1%
- Vision 3%
- Multiple Disabilities 17%
- Other 9%

Consumer Corner

Dee Tischer, Direct Services Coordinator

March is often synonymous with Cabin Fever. To make this month happy and safe, let's take a peek at your environment and its impact on someone with memory loss, dementia or Alzheimer's.

Cabin Fever (noun). Boredom, restlessness, or irritability that results from a lack of environmental stimulation, as from a prolonged stay in a remote, sparsely populated region or a confined indoor area.

Noise: While television can help create a diversion or activity, it can also create problems. Be vigilant and aware of what's on the television - and your loved one's reaction to what they're watching. Loud, violent shows can be upsetting or confusing. Try turning on a comedy, cartoon, or old, classic movie. They may sit quietly for a while then suddenly get agitated or confused. This could be a reaction to what's on the television or simply to the noise or background noise. Try turning off the television and turning on some quiet music (preferably music from their era). When listening to the radio, choose a station without commercials as talking may further confuse them.

Activities: Boredom can lead to increased agitation or wandering. To avoid or limit either, and to ensure your loved one still feels useful and valued, caregivers need to plan and provide their loved one with meaningful activities. As the disease progresses, it becomes increasingly difficult (if not impossible) for your loved one to do the things that once came easily. Therefore, when planning activities, begin by looking at the abilities and skills they still have. If your mom loved to cook, even if she can no longer prepare a meal on her own, she may be able to help you set the table or scrub potatoes. If your dad loved to garden, while he may no longer be able to go outside alone and prepare the soil, you could give him a large pot, soil and seeds so he can safely garden indoors.

Safety: Make sure your home and environment are safe for your loved one. They may have difficulty and/or reactions to things in the home: rugs, mirrors, long hallways, or lots of doors. Vision changes (caused by aging or the advancement of the disease) may turn area and scatter rugs into safety hazards. Mirrors may upset them since they no longer identify with the person in the mirror and 'that other person' may confuse or frighten them. (Some caregivers report their loved ones believe the reflection they're seeing in the mirror is a friend and will talk to - and develop a bond with - 'that person'.) Your loved one may have difficulty finding their way around your home, especially if you have long hallways or lots of doors. You may want to consider putting a sign or picture on cabinets, drawers, and doors (especially the bathroom door) to help them navigate at home and retain their independence for as long as possible.

Caregivers need to constantly observe and assess what is happening so they can make decisions and changes as necessary to ensure their loved one's continued safety.

If you need more information on this subject, or would like to speak with one of our staff members, please call Dee Tischer at the Independence, Inc. office at [701.839.4724](tel:701.839.4724).

Personal Experience

Do you have a personal story that was inspiring or life changing? Independence, Inc. is interested in hearing your life experience and may wish to publish it in Independence, Inc.'s newsletter, the People's Voice. If you would like to share your story/experience with others, please call Dee at 839.4724 or toll free at 800.377.5114.

N.D. Housing Incentive Fund

Therese Besemann, Systems Change Specialist

North Dakota has a new resource for developing affordable, multi-family housing in the state. The North Dakota Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) was created in Senate Bill 2210 which was passed by the 62nd Legislative Assembly and signed into law by Governor Dalrymple in the spring of 2011.

The HIF program was established in response to the growing need for safe, decent, and affordable rental housing in North Dakota. The HIF is available throughout North Dakota, with a large majority of the fund being set aside for areas impacted by oil production and disasters. In addition, half of the HIF dollars are designated to create units for households with lower incomes and a quarter of the fund is reserved for communities under 10,000 population that have unmet housing needs.

The HIF will be funded by contributions from North Dakota taxpayers in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar housing tax credit which can be fully claimed in the year their contribution is made. Contributions may be designated to a specific community, county, area, or project; therefore, contributor's funds can support their community needs.

It should be noted, there is not any state contribution to the Housing Incentive Fund, so it will be dependent on taxpayers who elect to support the program. Those eligible to receive funds from the HIF include local, state, tribal entities, non-profit, and for-profit developers. Individuals may not receive direct assistance from the fund. The legislation was advanced by the Housing Alliance of North Dakota (HAND) and the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND), and is administered by the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA). Additional information on the Housing Incentive Fund is available at www.ndhousingincentivefund.org.

Information

In an attempt to reduce the cost of mailings, please send your e-mail address to pamalam@independencecil.org

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call 701.839.4724 or 1.800.377.5114, or email us at the above address.

If anyone is interested in receiving this newsletter in an alternative format or would like to submit articles or information of interest to individuals with disabilities, contact our office at 839.4724 V/TTD.

The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

The opinions expressed in "The People's Voice" are not necessarily those of Independence, Inc. Mention of any product, service, or event does not constitute any endorsement or recommendation by Independence, Inc.

Editorial Board: Scott Burlingame, Colleen Kubler, Jill McDonald, Pamala Mondragon

Accessibility Surveys:

Independence, Inc. will provide Accessibility Surveys for homes, businesses, agencies and organizations upon request. A report will be provided with suggestions for increased accessibility and compliance issues pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Education and Training Opportunities:

Independence, Inc. will do a presentation for your club, agency, organization, or business at no charge! Presentations and resources available include: Disability Awareness, ADA Basics, Employment Issues, Laws and Legal Rights, Accessibility, and more!

Please contact Therese at 701.839.4724 V/TDD or 1.800.377.5114 V/TDD to schedule a presentation or to borrow materials from our Lending Library.

Disability in History: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Jill McDonald, Independent Living Specialist

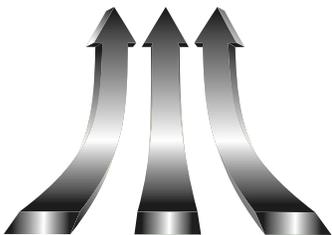
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is in the media quite often and is frequently associated with military members returning from combat. Some consider PTSD to be a “new” disorder as it became a recognized mental health condition in 1980; however, there are written accounts describing symptoms of PTSD among combat veterans 3,000 years ago in Egypt. The name has changed over the years, but many of the symptoms are quite similar today as they were then (www.vva.org).

The National Institute of Mental Health describes PTSD as “an anxiety disorder that some people get after seeing or living through a dangerous event,” (www.nimh.nih.org). This can be anything from combat to natural disasters. There have been many cases brought to light following natural disasters and also notably following the terrorist attacks September 11, 2001. A trained mental health professional or doctor can assist in determining if the symptoms are due to PTSD. There are several therapies currently being used in the treatment of PTSD ranging from cognitive behavioral therapy to medication to reduce symptoms.

A lot could be said about PTSD and how it affects individuals as well as those who love them. The history of PTSD had its beginnings on the battlefield, and has morphed from battle fatigue to shell shock to being recognized as PTSD today. Theories about the cause of PTSD have evolved from exhaustion to concussion. We now recognize it as an anxiety disorder; we aren’t able to single out why some individuals react to traumatic events with PTSD while others do not (www.hazelden.org). People with PTSD find treatment helpful, but should be patient as it takes time to feel the effects of treatment.

Redefining Youth Transition

Carly Leffelman, Youth Transition Specialist



The passion behind the Independence Inc. - Youth Transition Program stems from the idea that each individual has incredible strengths and fundamental weaknesses. Individuals often are more in touch with what they cannot do, than what they can. If the world continues to develop around the basis of this ideology, we will be a nation and a planet that is controlled by the uncontrollable, that is driven by the impossible, that is stunted because our focus is on the difficult rather than on what impassions our personal nature.

Many students are hesitant to admit that they have a disability and/or have a difficulty explaining their disability to another individual. Most students struggle to generate a list of strengths or skills. Adolescence is a time when students with disabilities are not only trying to figure themselves out as individuals; they are also busy trying to fit in and comparing themselves to others. Without discussion or conversation regarding future plans or disability awareness and pride, these students are not supported to the fullest. Schools now have to provide transition planning with IEPs and students are given more opportunity to prepare.

Youth with disabilities are placed in classrooms that are driven by math, reading, and science. Perhaps a student has difficulty reading. That doesn’t eliminate them from the possibility of

success. It opens them towards a world of innovation. No longer are they able to rely on their reading skills, but they have to persevere and fail at full steam ahead until they figure out what works. Many students struggle to the point where they feel their failures outweigh their accomplishments. Had they been given the proper tools, strategies, and techniques for success that is created through adaptation, accommodation, personal motivation, and peer and/or mentor support, they may have transitioned into a powerful, driven, and successful young adult that thrives around challenges, and hurdles over obstacles.

Creating this sense of overall acceptance and support cannot be done without collaboration. To build a better system of support, we have to develop character. To develop character, we have to increase the amount of synergy and networking between schools, service providers, parents, and the students themselves.

Each adolescent that walks through a school door has an individual purpose, unique strengths, and a very different learning style, ability, and passion than their peers. Each student should be supported and guided based on the overall standards; however, we can further that and increase their levels of success by showing them they are swimming in a pool of strengths. Students are the most important teammate in this collaboration. Disability is not a dirty word. It is not something that should be shunned or looked down upon. When that word no longer carries the stigma that attracts bullies, the students will understand that it may not come easy, but if they learn relentlessly from both their successes and failures, they will accomplish great things.

Let's join together and band the individual strengths that we each possess in order to create a stronger generation of youth with disabilities. But yet, let's create a stronger generation of youth in general. We have permission to take risks, to make mistakes, to fail from time to time, but most importantly, we have permission and we have what it takes to be successful by whatever measure we see most fit. Disabilities will be with students or individuals for the rest of their lives. Let's guide them towards a lifetime of overall successes by creating a passion for relentless learning, and an understanding they are so much more than a disability.

New Staff



Hello! My name is Inez Rose. I started employment in December 2011 as a Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator under the Money Follows the Person Program. I was born in North Dakota, grew up on a farm near Anamoose, and married a wonderful man from Virginia. He is proud to claim that he's a North Dakotan after living in this great state for 40 years! We have one son in Chicago, a grand-cat named Dandelion, and our own cat named Buttons. My interests are reading, playing guitar and mandolin, writing, sewing, and quilting, walking, and baking pies! I was employed at Trinity Medical Center for 22 years as a secretary, then attained a college degree in Social Work and Gerontology. I have volunteered for more than 30 years in assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and other events around our community. Being of a helping nature, I love to work with elderly and people with disabilities. I am happy to be working at Independence, Inc. and excited to be a member of such a wonderful team! I'm looking forward to meeting our consumers, so if you're in the building, please stop by and say hello!



INDEPENDENCE, INC.

A Resource Center For Independent Living

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Jill McDonald, Independent Living Specialist

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