



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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO AMBER!

Connie Klein, LSW

Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator

When I first met Amber Hammer on March 8, 2012 she was living at Dakota Alpha, a nursing facility that specializes in people with brain injuries, in Mandan, ND. Amber had acquired a brain injury after complications during a surgery. After Amber's injury her family was told that Amber may not make it and if she did would most likely be unable to care for herself or communicate.

At that time, the plan was for Amber to return to her home community of Williston, ND. Her Aunt Gayla Williams was to serve as her primary care provider. Through determination and hard work Amber was able to realize this dream on March 30, 2012. Amber communicates well and is doing wonderful in her own home. Amber does need assistance, but she is able to do many things the doctors told her family she would never be able to accomplish. The Money Follows the Person Program (MFP) was able to assist Amber and her family with this transition. Amber's Aunt Gayla had this to say about the Money Follows the Person program:

"MFP has been such a huge asset to Amber and me as her QSP (Qualified Service Provider). It is almost impossible to list all the assistance we have received, material, as well as emotional, mental and spiritual. [The] MFP program is such a blessing. First Connie and Jen (worker at Dakota CIL in Bismarck) [were] in Mandan to assure her release went well. Connie's trip that day from Minot to Mandan to Williston and back, WOW,



Continued on page 2...

total dedication! She [made] numerous trips to Williston for support. MFP is indeed fortunate to have her. Dee and Jill (other workers at Independence, Inc. in Minot) have also been helpful and caring, offering assistance and professional advice and support.”

Using the MFP financial assistance, we were able to get Amber her safety equipment, stock her shelves with groceries, and supply her with other necessities. We also provided a 365-day period for case management. I have worked with this family for over a year, and have seen the improvements Amber has made. She is a remarkable young lady, whom through determination, strength, support and assistance from her family is celebrating her first year of independence from the nursing facility.



Upcoming Events

June 18, 2013 **1:00-2:30 PM** **“Help! I need a photo ID”**

A Photo ID is important in today’s world, and when you don’t have a driver’s license what should you do? Join us and discover what it takes to get an ID in ND. Part one of a two part series. Please call the office to determine what documents you will need at 839-4724 to preregister by noon on June 14, 2013 if you are interested.

June 19, 2013 **1:00-3:00 PM** **“Part 2 Help! I need a photo ID”**

Join us for the second part of getting a photo ID. We will continue the work began in Part One. Prerequisite is PART ONE on June 18, 2013.

June 25, 2013 **1:00-3:00 PM** **“Keep Food Safe While Grilling”**

Join Trisha Jessen from NDSU Extension Center for some grilling tips: defrosting, using marinade, and using a food thermometer. Sure to be a HOT class!!! Please preregister by calling the office at 839-4724 by noon on Friday June 21, 2013

July 11, 2013 **5:00-7:00 PM** **Celebrating Independence Event**

Join us at Oak Park for our 3rd Annual Celebrating Independence Picnic. Please call the office by July 8, 2013 to RSVP for this event. At that time we will fill you in regarding details of time and pavilion number. Free will offering to support future Independence, Inc. activities.

August 22, 2013 **1:00- 2:30 PM** **“Know your disability”**

How does your disability impact your life? Sometimes it is a challenge to put into words that your employer, family, or friends understand. Join us to discuss this with our Independent Living Specialist! Call to preregister by noon on August 19, 2013.

For information about Y.A.D.A -- Youth Ambassadors of Disability Awareness Meetings, please call and speak with Jamie Hardt, Youth Transition Specialist.

Unless otherwise specified, all classes and events will be held at the office of Independence, Inc. Please contact our main office at **701-839-4724** for more information or to register for Independent Living classes. Hope to see you soon!

My Voice

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

The past few weeks I have been on the road more than at home. I have been to Bismarck many times, to Fargo a few times, and even spent a few days at a Hotel in Tulsa, OK. While this is a challenge to both my personal and professional life, a trusted colleague recently reminded me to be thankful that I have been asked to participate in so many diverse opportunities to promote our movement around the state and nation.



During my recent travels, I noticed the counties that Independence, Inc. serves are underrepresented. For this reason, I am taking the opportunity to put out a “Help Wanted” announcement to invite you or someone you know to throw your hat in the ring for the organizations that are seeking participation from people with disabilities.

HELP WANTED- We are looking for persons with disabilities who are willing to become ambassadors for the Independent Living movement and who are willing to step out of their comfort zone and allow for their personal experience to help shape the direction of disability policy and practice in North Dakota. Related experience is helpful but not necessary. Training will be provided. A diverse range of disabilities and disability experience is appreciated and valued. All applications will be accepted and given serious consideration. Reimbursement for travel expenses, personal care attendants, and meals are available.

The following groups are looking for qualified persons with disabilities to join their ranks:

[Board of Directors, Independence, Inc.](#): At least 51% of the members of our Board of Directors (BOD) must be persons with a disability. Members must be individuals with varying experience, abilities, and community leadership capabilities. The BOD controls the direction of the organization, works to ensure the fiscal and programmatic integrity of the organization, and employs and supervises the Executive Director. The BOD meets 4 to 6 times per year in our Minot office and is currently in need of at least 3 new members.

[North Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council \(SILC\)](#): The SILC guides the development of the Independent Living system in North Dakota through the active involvement of persons with disabilities. SILC members serve as ambassadors and promoters of the Independent Living philosophy and movement. The SILC consists of members from all regions of the state as well as several other organizations. Over 51% of the SILC are persons with disabilities. We are currently looking for a representative from the Minot area. SILC meetings are held 4 times per year throughout the state.

[North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council \(SRC\)](#): The North Dakota SRC is an advisory council to the Director of North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on issues concerning policy and program, delivery of services, and methods for reaching potential consumers. The council members, of whom 51% have a disability, are selected to serve by the Governor of North Dakota on the basis of their interest, knowledge, and understanding of the needs of individuals with disabilities. Membership is comprised of representatives of business and industry, mandated federal/state agencies, advocacy organizations, and persons with disabilities who have benefited from vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC meets 4 times per year, normally in Bismarck. The SRC is looking for members who are persons with disabilities and members who can fill the business/industry roles.

If you are interested in learning about any of these groups or completing an application, please contact me at 701-839-4724.

Budget Friendly Recreation

*Rhonda Thompson
Community Relations Specialist*

Are you looking for free or low-cost and fun things to do in and around Minot? Minot, affectionately known as “The Magic City”, offers many choices for recreation, relaxation and entertainment. There are parks, museums, concerts, wildlife viewing areas, libraries and deals to be found in and around The Magic City.

Oak Park and Roosevelt Park are beautiful spots to enjoy a picnic, walk or roll on the paved walking paths, read a book, play with the kids or one of my favorite activities, people watching. Arts in the Parks is a summer concert series that is free and is usually held at the Scandinavian Heritage Park twice a week and on the weekends. Concerts may also be held at Oak Park or Roosevelt Park. The concerts and the venue are both free, so bring a picnic and something to sit on, relax and enjoy the music. To check the schedule go to www.minotarts.org.

Minot also has a park just for dogs, called the Dakota Bark Park. It has three fenced exercise areas, one for small dogs, one for large dogs, and one for all sizes. The Bark Park is located just east of the Highway 83 Bypass and north of Highway 2 & 52 Bypass West. There are two possible challenges with the park: only portable restrooms are available, and the road and parking lot are not paved.

There are many nice parks scattered throughout the city; you may have a favorite park near your home.

Minot is home to many museums. There are at least two train, one airplane, one county historical, one heritage center and several art museums.

The Historic Soo Line Passenger Depot and the Railroad Museum are both in the downtown area. The 100-year-old Passenger Depot building houses a transportation history of the American West, which includes trains, planes, automobiles and buses. There is a nice collection of railroad and airline china, walls are covered with old North Dakota license plates, a Westland Oil Company Display and much more to see. You can also research old maps, look through old yearbooks and read about the history of transportation in the West while there. It is not wheelchair accessible so if you want to visit and need accommodations, please call 701-852-2234 and they will do their best to help find a way in if possible. The Railroad Museum, a block east by the tracks from the Soo Depot has trains, tools, and technology from 1886 to the present. This facility is wheelchair accessible. If you like railroading this is the place to go. Open Saturdays from 10-2, or call for an appointment, 701-852-7091. Neither museum charges a fee, although donations are gladly accepted.

If aviation is more your speed, the Dakota Territory Air Museum is the place to be. Aviation history is found just north of the Minot Airport. There you will find the first jet assigned to Minot Air Force Base, as well as many World War II planes, the Minot Airport Beacon used from 1949-1993, and Minot Fire trucks from the 1920s and 30s. There is a fee for this museum and it is accessible for all people. This museum was featured last year in *The People’s Voice*.

For more information on budget friendly activities in Minot and surrounding areas, visit the Minot Visitors Center, on the grounds of the Scandinavian Heritage Park, 1020 South Broadway, where you will find maps, brochures, schedules and a wealth of information on Minot, Ward County, and North Dakota. Also, please keep an eye on our website (www.independencecil.org) and our Facebook page for other opportunities throughout the summer.

So get out there and enjoy the day!

Thank You Rachael

Inez Rose

Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator

Independence, Inc. has had the pleasure of facilitating a social work internship for Rachael Ritzke during the past four months. Rachael



graduated from Minot State University in May, with a degree in Social Work. She quickly became a valued member of our team by her eagerness to learn and her ability to assist us as needed. While at our agency, she job-shadowed each

employee, worked with individual consumers, and demonstrated professionalism in whatever tasks she was assigned. We will miss Rachael, her bright smile, and her enthusiasm. Rachael, we wish the very best to you in your future! THANK YOU!!!!

3rd Annual Celebrating Independence Picnic

Please join us for a picnic

July 11, 2013

Oak Park from 5:00-7:00 pm

Call to RSVP 701-839-4724



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 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,
Jill McDonald, Pamala Mondragon,
Jamie Hardt, Rhonda Thompson

Thank You!!! Gracias!!! Merci!!! Danke!!! Domo!!!

A GIANT thanks to Dr. Stephen Ricks and the Minot Grand International for your generous donations of oral and personal hygiene kits for the "Taking Care of You" Independent Living Class held on April 9, 2013. We truly appreciate your efforts to support Independent Living!

Legislative Update

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director

Well, the North Dakota Legislative session has come to an end. For the first time in a really long time, the legislature used all 80 days and passed many pieces of legislation that were controversial and will be debated for years. It was a hard fought session by many advocates from across the state, and I am personally very proud of the efforts put forward by people with disabilities.

While I know I will leave out many important issues that were passed, and many hard-won battles that were lost, I am going to quickly summarize a few laws that were passed that should help improve lives for people with disabilities in North Dakota.

Employment Senate Bill 2271, which related to the committee on the employment of people with disabilities passed the House and Senate unanimously and was signed into law by the Governor. This new law sets a new committee, consisting of public and private membership. The goal of the committee is to make employment the first and preferred outcome in the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. The committee is assigned to work to remove barriers to employment and report to the Governor annually on its progress. The law defines employment as being paid at a competitive wage and being in an integrated setting.

Housing House Bill 1029, also known as the Housing Incentive Fund allowed for a continuing appropriation to increase housing in North Dakota. The first priority of this funding is to provide housing for essential services works (those employed by a city, county, school, district or long-term care facility). The second priority is to provide housing for individuals and families of low or moderate income. This program is funded by \$20 million in income tax credits.

Health Care Overall, HB 1012 included nearly \$2.9 billion in spending including the expansion of Medicaid. This expansion will allow lower income North Dakotan's with disabilities access to Medicaid without having to apply for Social Security Benefits. The bill also increased the state share of spending on our current Medicaid spending by adapting to changes in the current state/federal funding formula. The budget also includes a \$1 an hour increase immediately plus a 3% annual increase for Direct Service Professionals (DSP), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), and Quality Service Providers (QSP).

An interesting legislative study to follow will be a result of SB 2375. This bill will study the effectiveness of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) studies in North Dakota and work to advise on how the current system can be made better. As North Dakota continues to spend proportionally more on Long Term Care services than on HCBS services, this study could be a tool for future changes in funding priorities.

Funding for Centers for Independent Living House Bill 1012, the Human Services budget included an additional \$800,000 in funding for a statewide network of Independent Living programming. This will mean that Independence, Inc. will be able to hire more staff and be able to provide better services to our more rural counties.

At the end of the session, I also feel it is time to say thank you to so many people. This includes those of you who took the time to write letters in support of our funding, as well as those of you who got active in other advocacy efforts. I would like to thank all the other grassroots advocacy groups from across the state who did a wonderful job at not only keeping me informed of what was going on in Bismarck, but a wonderful job of letting our elected officials know what was going on in their world. Finally, I would like to thank each member of the North Dakota Legislature who listened to the voices of North Dakotans with disabilities. While we don't always agree on everything, we thank you for your dedication to this state.

YADA

Jamie Hardt

Youth Transition Specialist

The Youth Ambassadors of Disability Awareness (Y.A.D.A.) group is back!

Y.A.D.A. is a group of youth who are engaged in the disability rights and awareness movement who are actively working to improve the community's knowledge and understanding of individuals with disabilities, identifying unmet needs in our community, and the importance of awareness and respect of others.

Y.A.D.A. met Monday April 22, 2013 and brainstormed upcoming projects that will help

spread the word about disability awareness. Y.A.D.A. will continue to meet monthly at the Independence, Inc. Office. Youth ages 14-22 with and without disabilities are invited to join and get involved! Below are the upcoming meetings:

Monday, May 20, 2013 - 3:30pm-5pm

Monday, June 24, 2013 - 3:30pm-5pm

Monday, July 15, 2013 - 3:30pm-5pm

Monday, August 26, 2013 - 3:30pm-5pm

The Y.A.D.A youth group will hold a number of fundraising activities to help send one Y.A.D.A. member to the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Youth conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma on October 26-28, 2013.



Annie's House Update

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director



In February, I had the pleasure to attend a meeting and toured Annie's House, an accessible ski facility, which is located at the Bottineau Winter Park. The Bottineau Winter Park is 10 miles north of Bottineau, 1/2 mile off Highway 43. Annie's House is a joint project between the New York Says Thank You Foundation and the Bottineau Winter Park and is named in honor of Ann Nicole Nelson whose life was cut short during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. You can read more about Annie's story here: www.skibwp.com/anniespage.

This facility will create a wonderful opportunity for integrated adaptive skiing as well as other outdoor activities for people with and without disabilities. Approximately 50% of the public space in the new facility will support adaptive skiing. Independence, Inc. hopes to be a partner in promoting this facility as a premier destination for accessible recreation throughout North Dakota.

Scott Burlingame, Executive Director
Dee Tischer, Senior Independent Living Specialist
Jill McDonald, Finance Director
Connie Klein, Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator
Pamala Mondragon, Information Specialist
Dawn Olson, Independent Living Specialist
Inez Rose, Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator
Jamie Hardt, Youth Transition Specialist
Rhonda Thompson, Community Relations Specialist

ID Statement

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Introducing Rhonda Thompson

*Rhonda Thompson
Community Relations Specialist*



Hi, my name is Rhonda Thompson and I am delighted to join the Independence, Inc. team as the Community Relations Specialist. My role is to promote Independence, Inc. throughout the 11 county region we serve, focusing on advocacy, community education and access.

Prior to joining Independence, Inc., I worked for Lutheran Social Service Disaster Response at Hope Village, and have previous experience working as an educator at a school for students with developmental disabilities, a case worker for the Utah Department of Child and Family Services, a counselor at a homeless shelter, and a short-term missionary.

I moved to Minot from Ohio in 2010 with my husband and now 16 year old daughter. Prior to that, I have lived in Utah, California and Japan and am a native Texan. “Remember the Alamo”. I love to travel and so far have visited 45 states and 16 countries.

I look forward to working with the dedicated staff in assisting individuals of all ages to have the freedom to live as independently and as involved in their community as they so choose.