



# PEOPLE'S VOICE

Summer 2014

## Inside This Issue

Growing Independence .....1

We Get By With a Little Help  
from Our Friends (and Families) .....2

My Voice .....3

Independent Living Clubs  
are a Hit! .....4

## Mission Statement

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

## Growing Independence

*Michele Anderson, Independent Living Specialist*

I am writing to you from the Bottineau Office to inform you about our growing range of services. I would like to share with you one of our new projects, a recent creative art collaboration with Metigoshe Ministries which involved building mosaic garden tiles. At this event, campers with disabilities at Pelican Lake made mosaic tiles (out of stained glass and cement), and then gifted them to the camp garden.

The purpose of this project was really two fold. The usage of stained pieces of glass represent perceptions that are sometimes formed or held by all people. It is easy to fall into the error of perceiving others in just one way, much like looking at one broken piece of glass and thinking that it is not of much value. But when we put the pieces of glass together and form a composition, it then

becomes visually a real experience of seeing those pieces of broken glass form a beautiful and strong composition. The same goes for looking at ourselves and others, if we perceive just one piece of ourselves and we are critical of it in some way, we are negating looking at ourselves as a whole composition and a composition that is made beautiful and strong beyond words.

The second reason for using mosaics as a project is to visually demonstrate that a piece of glass represents an individual...and one piece of glass by itself is not nearly as powerful and impacting as many pieces of glass placed side by side with intention and in this collaborative composition. The whole is much more beautiful than any of its individual pieces.

All people have value and purpose beyond what words can say and what we can know...humans grow in ways that cannot be foreseen and that is what is phenomenal, mysterious and exciting about growth.



## Independent Living Clubs are a Hit!

*Inez Rose, Independent Living Specialist*

In addition to the various classes that Independence, Inc. offers, such as gardening, budgeting, and safety planning, we have developed a Cooking Club that meets the third Tuesday each month, and a Book Club that meets the first Thursday every month. These clubs have become popular with people who like to socialize as well as gain new independent living skills. Here are some statements from very satisfied participants:

**Andrea Hansen** says, "I like Cooking Club because I am learning how to cook different things, meeting different people, and learning how to clean up things in the kitchen."

**Darrell Wahl** says about the Cooking Club: "I like the science of it – how we make everything from scratch and how everything turns out." In talking about the Book Club, Darrell says he likes "all the books that I've listened to this whole year. I like how the people that write the book research, think, and put everything together, and how the book ends."

If you wish to join these groups, please call 701-839-4724 for more information.



Continued on page 2...

One of my favorite humans is the late Dr. Maya Angelou and I really appreciate her many words, but these that follow are applicable to the point and purpose of this creative project...

“You may not control all the events that happen to you,  
but you can decide not to be reduced by them.”

---Maya Angelou

We can decide to view ourselves and one another as strong, necessary and valuable within the composition of life. So, mosaics are just a creative way of reminding us all not to forget our value to each other and within the great scheme of things.

We would like to thank the 1st Lutheran Endowment Committee, who gifted Independence, Inc. with funds to purchase art supplies and materials for this project, and more to follow, and Metigoshe Ministries staff and those we serve for being a wonderful part of our growing experience!



## **We Get By With a Little Help From Our Friends (and Families)**

*Jill McDonald, Finance Director*

“What would you do if I sang out of tune,  
Would you stand up and walk out on me?  
Lend me your ears and I’ll sing you a song  
And I’ll try not to sing out of key.

Oh, I get by with a little help from my friends  
Mm, I get high with a little help from my friends  
Mm, gonna try with a little help from my friends.”

---The Beatles

We were fortunate to have an opportunity to partner with North Broadway Taco Johns for a fundraiser on May 15, 2014. Taco John’s generously donated 50% of the sales from 5-7 pm when our supporters came in and made it known they were there supporting Independence, Inc. It was wonderful to visit with so many people who came to help out! When the evening was over, \$236 was donated to Independence, Inc. We are excited to announce how that money will create an impact! The first \$100.00 covers one night lodging for a local area youth to attend the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Youth Conference this fall. This is a phenomenal opportunity to engage with other young leaders of the independent living movement and bring back new skills to engage our community in removing barriers that people with disabilities face. The remaining \$136.00 will purchase supplies for 45 club members to attend cooking club! Cooking club develops skills in the kitchen, teaches inexpensive meal options, as well as creates a network of friends who share a love of food and conversation.

Thanks for all the help from our friends in the community. We are stronger with your support! Check out Scott’s article on page 3 to learn how you can donate to Independence, Inc.

## **My Voice**

*Scott Burlingame, Executive Director*

In this edition of The People’s Voice, you are going to start seeing something a little different. We are going to begin to ask each of you, as readers, and as people who believe in what we do, to contribute financially to help us achieve our mission.

There are many reasons we are doing this. First, our primary funding source is the State and Federal government. History has taught us that from time to time these funding sources are less than stable. We are very appreciative that our elected officials have funded our activities; however, we believe we owe it to them to do everything we can to find alternative funding sources.

In addition, these traditional funding sources come with limitations. For example, our grantors do not allow us to purchase food for our cooking classes, to fund our Annual Celebrating Independence Picnic, or to help us pay expenses for some of our youth to attend a national training.

Fundraising is not something I have ever been particularly comfortable doing. Sadly, throughout history people with disabilities have often been used as a prop for people without disabilities to raise funds through the use of pity. The father of the Independent Living Movement, Ed Roberts, once told 60 Minutes “there’s a whole science around charity and how you get people to give... the fact is they try to make you feel guilty enough to give money.” According to Roberts, this reality caused people with disabilities a “tremendous amount of problems,” because those who raise money have to say “Look at these poor, poor helpless cripples, don’t you feel sad?” I believe that is one of the reasons people with disabilities have been isolated from the rest of society.

These efforts to raise money on the use of pity have been very successful in imprinting the perception of disability not as a natural part of the human experience, but rather as a horrible circumstance that you should feel obligated to donate. We will never do that at Independence, Inc.

We want members of our community to donate to us because we are the leaders in undoing the damage that has been caused by years of the pity movement. We are asking you to donate because we are the organization that is working hard to create a community in which people with disabilities are full participants. We are asking you to donate because you believe that people with disabilities can and should be full and active participants in our community.

Here are a few ways you can donate to Independence, Inc. Perhaps the easiest is to go to our website, [www.independencetil.org](http://www.independencetil.org) and click on the “Donate Now” button. You can also stop by our office or send a check in the mail at any time. We are a 501c3 organization, therefore 100% of donations to Independence, Inc. are tax deductible.



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### **Information**

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.

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