



From left to right:
Ina White; Colleen Fraser (killed on 911 airline flight 93;
Bus driver Betsy; Norman Smith; Unidentified woman;
Freida Applegate; John Snook and Rodney Dunkin.

30 Years of Impact & Change

By Norman A. Smith

I cannot clearly remember January 1984. I cannot tell you if the month was cold or mild, snowy or dry.

I do remember this. Soon after a snow event canceled a meeting, a few of us decided that this concept called Project Freedom should be more tangible.

Although much work preceded it, 1984 marks the official beginning of a concept transforming into something more real and concrete. In March of that year Project Freedom Inc. came into existence.

Nobody expected that 30 years later Project Freedom Inc. would be opening its fifth complex with our sixth and seventh on the verge of beginning constructed. No, we were just trying to solve an immediate housing need.

Naively, we did not expect it would take until 1991 to address that need. There were many unexpected consequences of that decision during these past 30 years.

Before our first apartment complex was completed in 1991, Project Freedom successfully brought together state agencies that never collaborated together on a housing project before. Today, this collaboration happens constantly.

The landscape of developing supportive housing has changed because of Project Freedom. In fact, the term "supportive housing" was not even used when the first tenants moved in to Freedom One in 1991. Yet the concept of lease-based housing with optional support services has been the "Project Freedom" model since 1984. A fact that may only be noted here, but is still nonetheless true.

"True freedom is to have power over oneself for everything," wrote French philosopher Michel de Montaigne in 1588.

For 30 years Project Freedom has implemented this concept for people with disabilities through our housing. This happens through the generous support of friends and contributors.

With your help, our impact will be greater in the next 30 years as we promote freedom through independent living.