

New Horizons

Housing that Supports Independence



Norman A. Smith
Editor
Judith A. Wilkinson
Co-Editor

Tim Doherty
Executive Director

Norman A. Smith
Assoc. Executive Director

Stephen J. Schaefer
Chief Financial Officer

Tracee Battis
Dir. of Housing Development

Frank Sciarrotta
Compliance/Property Manager

Robbinsville
Jacklene Elswiny
Social Services Coordinator

Judy Wilkinson
Office Manager

Hamilton
Jacklene Elswiny
Social Services Coordinator

Melinda Sciarrotta
Office Manager

Lawrence
JoAnne Sherry
Social Services Coordinator

Brianne Devlin
Office Manager

Freedom Village at Woodstown
Sammi DeMaris
Social Services Coordinator

Arlene Sims
Office Manager

Freedom Village at Hopewell
Cecilia Funk
Social Services Coordinator

Jennifer Applegate
Office Manager

Freedom Village at Toms River
Laurie Solymosi
Social Services Coordinator

Joyce Cocco
Office Manager

Freedom Village at Westampton
Dara Johnston
Social Services Coordinator

Savanna Green
Office Manager

Senators Look To Expand ABLE Program

Reprinted from DisAbility Scoop by Michelle Diamant | March 6, 2019

A proposal in the U.S. Senate would dramatically increase access to a newly-established program that allows people with disabilities a way to save money without jeopardizing their government benefits.



Legislation introduced this week by a bipartisan group of senators would raise the eligibility age for ABLE accounts. Under the plan known as the ABLE Age Adjustment Act, S. 651, individuals with disabilities that present by age 46 could open the accounts. Current law limits ABLE accounts to those with disabilities that onset prior to age 26.

“Since the passage of the ABLE Act, families across the country have benefited from the opportunity to better plan for the future of their disabled loved ones. This legislation will build on the foundation of the ABLE Act and expand access to these accounts to more families,” said Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., who introduced the bill along with Sens. Bob Casey, D-Pa., Jerry Moran, R-Kans., and Pat Roberts, R-Kans.

ABLE accounts were created under a 2014 federal law and permit people with disabilities to save up to \$100,000 without risking eligibility for Social Security and other government benefits. Medicaid can be retained no matter how much is saved in the accounts.

Last year, disability advocates warned that the ABLE program could be unsustainable without changes to the program to substantially increase the number of account holders. “Simply put, without increasing the ABLE eligibility criteria for age of disability onset from prior to age 26 to prior to age 46 in order to significantly expand the pool of individuals who can open ABLE accounts, the entire ABLE program nationwide is in jeopardy,” read a June 2018 letter from over 150 disability advocacy groups to congressional leadership.

According to the National Association of State Treasurers, which represents state ABLE administrators and program managers, 390,000 accounts are needed by June 2021 for ABLE programs to achieve “bare bones sustainability,” given the cost of operating the programs. By the end of last year, there were 34,707 ABLE accounts open across the country with \$171.7 million in assets, according to Strategic Insight, a consulting firm that tracks ABLE account trends. The senators behind the bill said that another 6.1 million people are estimated to be eligible for ABLE accounts if the ABLE Age Adjustment Act is approved.

We are Proud to Announce Our Latest Gala Sponsors

Event Sponsors

Costanza Builders
National Equity Fund, Inc.
V.J. Scozzari & Sons, Inc.

Angel Sponsors

First Commerce Bank
Joseph F. McKernan Jr. Architects & Associates
Nottingham Insurance

Patriot Sponsors

Bank of America
Fusion Employer Services
FWH Associates, P.A.

Freedom Sponsors

Dumont & Watson, P.C.
Investors Bank
NJM Insurance Group
Novogradac & Company, LLP
PS&S Engineering, Architecture, Environmental Services
Sea Bright Solar
Security Dynamics Inc.
Solid Cast Contracting

“My Two Cents”

By *Tim Doherty, Executive Director*



So, we are now starting our fourth year since the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that because COAH was not able to come out with their third Round rules, Towns have been forced to work within the Courts to get their housing certifications. The process has taken the better part of three years, from the time of the Town's declarations, to their ultimate certifying their current plans. More than half of the towns have settled, with those settlements now starting to create new housing.

Most of these settlements have been resolved through the work of the non-profit housing advocate, Fair Share Housing. They have been the chief player in all the towns in New Jersey, and a party to every settlement. Now, finally what COAH was unable to accomplish, these court rulings have set in motion.

Most of the settlements run for ten years, ending in 2025, because of the time lost in the process. So, now in 2019, these plans are only really good for six more years, upon which time they will need to be reviewed and done again. Also, once a town settles, there is a reporting that is due, at the end of a two year interim period which is supposed to monitor the Town's progress and compliance. If the town hasn't move forward, either in planning or zoning, then they will need to report to the Court on their status and give reasons as to why nothing has been accomplished.

Some town's have taken longer than expected, because of redevelopment issues or for their governing bodies to understand the gravity of the compliance issues. Project Freedom has benefited from these new housing plans such that we have been charged with helping these Town's with their compliance requirements for affordable housing. These new opportunities have now resulted in future new housing in Robbinsville Town Center and possibly another community in Hamilton Township. Both Town's have been very supportive of our housing which will create more accessible units for persons with disabilities. Our new communities also create a more integrated setting for those who are disabled, living alongside non- disabled families. This is how housing should be created.

Now, since there are still many towns who have not settled their affordable housing requirements as of today, we expect that the majority will this year. These settlements should create another 150,000 housing units by the end of 2025, which is approximately the number of units reported needed by many studies in 2015. Of course this is controversial, and may not be accomplished for various reasons, but at least a course has been set for town's to meet.

This was the goal that COAH could not reach in 2015 but which the Courts have been working toward. So, hats off to Fair Share Housing for leading the effort for compliance and for creating more housing that New Jersey desperately needs.

From Norman's Desk



In the rush to get out March's New Horizons, I forgot what March 2019 meant to Project Freedom Inc.

Thirty-five years ago last month an intrepid band of individuals decided to incorporate an idea into an organization. Up to that time, Project Freedom was a dream, a concept, and a loose collection of people concerned about housing.

Those three elements were "hosted" by the Nottingham Recreation Center for the Physically Limited (NRCPL). The "dream" of Project Freedom had been around for about three years, and NRCPL's executive director, Frieda Applegate, and its board of directors took on the dream as a goal. During this period, people with and without disabilities began to come together around the concept of people with disabilities living independently with supports in the community.

It had become apparent the year before that bringing the dream of Project Freedom into reality would literally require building it from the ground up--an effort that would eventually take six more years. As 1984 moved into the month of March, however, it was decided that such an undertaking should be done through a separate organization. Frieda Applegate became my co-founder

Project Freedom Inc. was founded 35 years ago after a March nor'easter, and nobody would have dreamed back then of the impact that the organization would have in the next three decades. In fact, much of Project Freedom's impact may never be known because the catalysts for positive changes are seldom documented or forthrightly acknowledged. Even today Project Freedom is changing policies at the State level, but our involvement as the impetus will only be known to a few.

Along with the incorporation in March of 1984 came the founding membership that formed to support the fledgling organization. I found the roll of founding members after the "Flood of '07" flooded my office. I'm listing those good people on the next page with pride and gratitude because they believed in my dream of independence and freedom. Many have left us; many more are still active strong supporters of Project Freedom.

As we celebrate our 35th year of breaking new ground for people with disabilities, please consider becoming a member of Project Freedom to continue the legacy started by these founding members. Thank you.

Norman A. Smith, Co-Founder & Associate Executive Director

"Like" us on [Facebook.com/ProjectFreedomInc](https://www.facebook.com/ProjectFreedomInc)
Follow us on Twitter @TheFreedomGuys
Visit us at www.ProjectFreedom.org

Follow me on Twitter @NomanSmith02 for some rabble rousing!

Project Freedom Founding Membership

Jane Adams
Frieda Applegate
Vernon Applegate
Barbara Baggott
Bruce K Baggott
Ed Baldassri
Hugh H. Barham
Philip Bennett
Donna Bensen
Joseph Cappello
Mildred J. Csenteri
Mary Dalton
G. Dallas Dixon
Timothy Doherty
Jean C. Dufour
Mary Ferrazzano
Kathy Fuchs
Armit E. Harrison
Charlotte Harrison
Margaret Homa
Peter Inverso
Nancy E. Kaszyc
Jim King
Linda King
Reba Kocsis
Ronnie Lloyd
Hope Lucas
John Lucas
Barbara Martindale
Ann G. Moore
Bill Moorewod
Donald Morris
Jane V. Moskwa
Robert Muka
Michael Mushak
Bill Pisch
Julia M. Ronan
Laure Scala
Linda Simmons
Norman A. Smith
Sadie Szolomayer
Michael Szolomayer
Leonard F. Taylor
Alfred W Wensley
Irene Wilson



Hamilton Happenings

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
4-Apr	Thu	Hamilton Games	Prog. Time 5:00 -7:00 PM
6-Apr	Sat	Hamilton Easter Crafts	Prog. Time 1:00 -3:00 PM
12-Apr	Fri	Hamilton Soup Making	Prog. Time 4:00 -8:00 PM
17-Apr	Wed	Hamilton Easter Crafts	Prog. Time 5:00 -8:00 PM



Lawrence Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
3-Apr	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
3-Apr	Wed	Massages	Your sign up time
3-Apr	Wed	Lawrence "Good Eats"	Prog. Time 4:00 -6:30 PM
8-Apr	Mon	People & Stories is BACK!	1:00—2:30 PM
11-Apr	Thur	Blawenburg Band Concert-all are welcome!	7:00 PM
15-Apr	Mon	People & Stories	1:00—2:30 PM
18-Apr	Thur	Lawrence Games	Prog. Time 4:00 -6:00 PM
22-Apr	Mon	People & Stories	1:00—2:30 PM
24-Apr	Wed	Nutrition	7:00 PM
25-Apr	Thu	"Good Eats" Sugar Free Pancakes	Prog. Time 5:00 -7:30 PM
29-Apr	Mon	People & Stories	1:00—2:30 PM



Robbinsville Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
5-Apr	Fri	Robbinsville Baking with Dana	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM
10-Apr	Wed	Robbinsville Games	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM
13-Apr	Sat	Robbinsville Easter Egg Hunt	Prog. Time 3:00-4:00 PM
24-Apr	Wed	Robbinsville Board Games	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM
26-Apr	Fri	Robbinsville Crafts	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM



Hopewell Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
3-Apr	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	1:15 PM to 3:15 PM
9-Apr	Tue	Life St. Francis Hosting Healthy Aging Presentation	3:00 PM
12-Apr	Fri	Mercer Home Health Hosting Pokeno	3:00 PM
18-Apr	Thur	Life St. Francis Hosting Diabetes Education Presentation	3:00 PM

Zoning Laws May Quash Respite Home For People With Disabilities

by Nassim Betchaane, Reprinted from St. Louis Post-Dispatch/TNS | February 13, 2019

WEBSTER GROVES, Mo. — The only reason Robby Fisher can live at home with his parents is because they have somewhere safe to take him if an emergency strikes.

Fisher, 28, has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. He lives in the Affton area with his father, Robert Fisher, 63, and stepmother, Deanna Fisher, 51, who are his caregivers. When Robert Fisher underwent heart surgery, and Deanna Fisher underwent surgery for hip dysplasia, they took him to a two-bedroom home in Marlborough owned by United Cerebral Palsy Heartland.

Since the '70s, the nonprofit group has used the home on Laclede Station Road to provide an around-the-clock refuge for people with disabilities whose regular caretakers run into an emergency or to simply need a break. The home lets people with disabilities stay until they return to their caretakers or find permanent housing. In one case, a 73-year-old man stayed for four months after his mother, 97, who had cared for him all his life, died suddenly. "When somebody has nobody to take care of them all of the sudden, for any reason, this becomes a lifesaving operation," UCP spokeswoman Kathleen Beach said. "Those few beds can make a big difference." The group has plans to move the service to a home in Webster Groves but is facing zoning hurdles that its directors see as unfair and potentially illegal but that some city officials see as necessary to regulate such shelters.

The Marlborough home was never designed for people in wheelchairs. So when a one-of-a-kind home at 450 Oak Tree Drive in Webster Groves became available, the nonprofit group seized the opportunity. The four bedroom home includes extra-wide hallways and doorways, automated door openers, wheelchair lifts, roll-in showers, a sprinkler system, outdoor ramps and a large garage designed for wheelchair-equipped vans. The couple who built the home designed it for their son, who like Robby Fisher has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. They spent nearly \$800,000 by the time they completed the home in 2005.

After their son moved elsewhere, the family sold the house to the nonprofit last year for \$685,000. The group has since spent tens of thousands of dollars fixing it to comply with building codes and to add an automated ceiling lift that can carry people from their beds to bathrooms and back. The home would provide care for a maximum of eight people at any one time. The group wants to move in by the summer. But there's a technocratic hitch.

New zoning laws that the Webster Groves planning and zoning commission recently recommended to the City Council would require the group to apply for a conditional use permit for the home and make a number of changes to the property, including adding parking spots and a designated drop-off point, and setting hours of operation. Rather than a group home, the home would be designated a "residential care facility." But the nonprofit argues that putting any kind of special requirement on the home would violate the federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination in housing, as well as state statutes defining group homes as residential facilities serving nine or fewer residents. And the nonprofit worries the city could ultimately deny their conditional use permit.

"Here's the golden rule for the rights of people with disabilities: If you don't require it of other people in the community, you can't require it of them," said the nonprofit's CEO, Brenda Wrench. "I imagine that from Webster's perspective this seems like a compromise where they just want to be sure we're doing things right, but if we went down that path, we've conceded that we're not a group home, and we're not going to do that. We're a group home, our contract with the state says that."

Mara Perry, Webster Groves zoning and planning commissioner, said that the code revisions weren't aimed at the nonprofit specifically but that their plans for the home prompted revisions the city had talked about making for years. "We definitely didn't have anything in the code before to address group homes at all," Perry said. "We've just been following state regulations, and that doesn't make it flexible for many of the group homes operating today."

And at a meeting last week, Webster Groves City Council members appeared poised to find a workaround for the home after hearing from families of people with disabilities and other advocates, including the Fishers, former St. Louis County Executive Gene McNary, president of the Special Education Foundation, and Judy Granger, with the Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

The council voted unanimously to delay the zoning changes until its meeting Feb. 19. Council members Frank Janoski, David Franklin and Laura Arnold also made it clear that they didn't want to keep the respite home from moving in. "To me these homes — and I think that's exactly what they are, homes — are a fundamental building block of our community," Franklin said. "And to treat them differently merely because they have temporary residents because of the underlying disability that these individuals have is not very policy-driven in the essence of building for people."

New Day Program Envisioned With 'Community College-Like Campus'

by Emily K. Coleman, Reprinted from the Lake County News-Sun/TNS | March 15, 2019

GURNEE, Ill. — Cameron Olson lasted a single day at one day program. He lasted three days at another. The 23 year-old Round Lake man with intellectual disability doesn't have a lot of choices about where he spends his days since he graduated in October 2017 from Laremont School, the Special Education District of Lake County facility for students with severe or multiple disabilities in Gages Lake.

The choices that do exist have long waiting lists and often reject potential clients who have behavioral issues or too many needs, said Liz Pumala, an adapted physical education teacher at Laremont. "I started to hate graduations, because I realized these kids aren't going anywhere," Pumala said. "They're going home. ... They're done learning. They're done growing and thriving, and I just got too sick of it."

That's why Pumala wants to open a new center, called Matthias Academy, a "day program on a community college-like campus" in Bristol, Wis., that would serve adults with disabilities, regardless of severity. Just over \$246,000 has been raised, according to the nonprofit's website. Nearly 70 families have set up fundraising pages, including one for Olson.

Pumala's background at Laremont is a large part of why Olson's mother, Liz, said they got involved in the project. Liz Olson said after Cameron turned 22 and graduated from Laremont, he became "super depressed." She said they subsequently "dug in deep" to make sure he's engaged during the day, with his siblings taking him to a movie or him accompanying her to the store. "He'll ask me about school," she said. "He'll ask me about movies. ... He's asking for things. He likes doing things. It makes him happy to do things. When he sits here, he just asks to eat, because that's the only thing he has control of."

Pumala envisions a system where students under the age of 30 take two classes a day and also work each day. After they turn 30, they'd become "graduate students" with one class a day and work. At 65, they can choose to semi-retire, can take a class if they want to but will have more leisure time.

She added that the work portion is what will help keep the campus running — helping with custodial operations, working in the bakery and running a campus bookstore. The academy would also facilitate employment opportunities in the community.

The business-like operations will provide some income, which would help supplement fundraising and the tuition families would pay, she said. Pumala said she knows the operations will be expensive, but the quality of the staffing and programming is really important to her. The tuition cost will likely range from \$18,000 to \$28,000 per year, plus an optional summer program at \$2,000 to \$3,000, depending on the student's staff-to-student ratio, according to the website. "If I could make this free, I would," Pumala said in a letter to parents. "If I could make this cheaper, I would, but we have seen cheaper. Cheaper is not THE BEST. Paying below average staff minimum wage and providing a place for them to just 'go.' We don't need more cheaper."

Pumala said she hopes to have Matthias Academy operational by 2020, but that depends on the funding and whether they go with a new building versus rehabbing an existing structure.

Easter Word Search

E	A	T	R	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	G	H
G	J	G	E	G	E	A	S	T	E	R	J	E	B	N
S	G	E	S	A	T	L	H	H	O	D	A	Y	S	U
T	F	A	L	N	G	D	E	C	O	R	A	T	E	D
R	L	E	R	L	A	D	A	B	I	P	O	Y	S	C
G	O	G	G	R	Y	A	C	A	R	R	O	T	E	H
D	W	E	S	G	I	B	B	U	N	A	N	Y	S	I
U	E	P	A	R	A	D	E	J	E	L	T	S	P	C
C	R	J	L	A	I	N	S	A	H	O	L	I	Y	K
K	S	G	E	S	J	R	S	U	N	D	A	Y	O	A
L	C	A	R	S	T	A	S	B	A	S	K	E	T	N
I	K	S	H	J	H	B	U	N	N	Y	E	G	S	I
N	G	S	A	U	I	B	L	A	T	I	P	G	S	N
G	I	N	J	E	N	I	J	E	L	S	O	N	G	G
S	P	R	I	N	G	T	U	L	I	P	A	G	D	S



BASKET
BUNNY
CARROT
CELEBRATION
CHICK
CHOCOLATE
DECORATED

DUCKLINGS
EASTER
EGGS
FLOWERS
GRASS
HOP
HUNT

JELLYBEANS
PARADE
RABBIT
SPRING
SUNDAY
TULIP





April General Recreation Club Freedom Events Highlighted

1-Apr	Mon	Day Program - Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
3-Apr	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
8-Apr	Mon	Day Program - Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
10-Apr	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
11-Apr	Thu	Columbus Farmers & Flea Market	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
11-Apr	Thu	Blawenburg Band Concert Lawrence	Bus Leaves PFR 6:00 PM
15-Apr	Mon	Day Program - Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
17-Apr	Wed	Equestrian Riding at Hopewell	Prog. Time Varies
19-Apr	Fri	Good Friday - PF Offices Closed	
22-Apr	Mon	Day Program - Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
24-Apr	Wed	Equestrian Riding at Hopewell	Prog. Time Varies
29-Apr	Mon	Day Program - Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM

Fat Tuesday On Monday at Hamilton

Everyone enjoyed at the Day Program held on Monday March 4th.

The zydeco music played and munchies were served as tenants played bingo wearing masks they made.

Dessert was the traditional Mardi Gras cake with a "baby" inside.



Project Freedom Inc.
223 Hutchinson Road
Robbinsville, NJ 08691

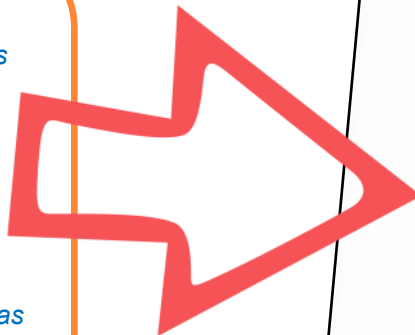
Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Trenton, NJ
Permit #1083

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Project Freedom Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization dedicated to developing, supporting and advocating opportunities for independent living for people with disabilities

The Abilities Expo New York Metro in Edison is a trade show for people with disabilities. Here products and services for disabled people, their families and careers, for seniors and workers in health occupations will shown under one roof.

The fair provides access to the latest technologies and resources for all disabilities and is complemented by informative workshops on topics such as dance, adaptive sports, therapies with animals and much more.



Abilities Expo 2019 **May 3, 2019**

Bus leaves 9:30 am
Exhibits Open 11:00 am

Free Admission And Transportation
Bring money for lunch

Call 609 448-2998 if interested