

New Horizons

Housing | nat Supports Independence



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Paralyzed Veterans of America Seeks Court Order to Advance Protections for Veterans With Mobility Impairments and the Entire Disability Community

DENVER, CO— Last month Paralyzed Veterans of America requested that a federal court lift its hold on their lawsuit to compel the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue a long-overdue rule to make airplane restrooms accessible to travelers with disabilities. This action results from DOT ignoring its Congressional mandate to address this issue and continuing to deny full restroom access for veterans and travelers with mobility impairments and was made through Democracy Forward.



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Paralyzed Veterans of America is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. For more than 70 years, the organization has ensured that veterans receive the benefits earned through service to our nation; monitored their care in VA spinal cord injury units; and funded research and education in the search for a cure and improved care for individuals with paralysis.

Democracy Forward is a nonprofit legal organization that scrutinizes Executive Branch activity across policy areas, represents clients in litigation to challenge unlawful actions, and educates the public when the White House or federal agencies break the law.

On May 20, 2019, after DOT stated it would issue a proposed rule addressing lavatory accessibility by December 2019, the Court put a hold on the lawsuit led by PVA and required DOT to provide ongoing status reports. DOT's latest status report makes it clear that the agency has reversed course, and that what it plans to do in December will not meet its legal obligation. DOT's proposed rule would not address — as is legally required — whether to make lavatories fully accessible and instead would only address measures that fall “short of increasing the size of the lavatories.” On the critical issue of restroom size, DOT would merely issue a call for more information and would not propose a rule addressing the issue. “DOT's unlawful delays for 3 years have left travelers with disabilities subject to severe discomfort and puts our health at risk,” said Tom Wheaton, U.S. Navy veteran and national treasurer of Paralyzed Veterans of America. “A 2-hour flight can equal up to 4 hours or more without access to a restroom.”

The absence of a rule requiring accessible lavatories on single-aisle commercial airplanes means that Wheaton and other passengers with disabilities are often forced to take extreme measures, including intentionally dehydrating, before long flights. “Travel issues continue to be a leading complaint of PVA members, and we intend to keep the pressure on DOT to meet their legal obligations,” said David Zurfluh, national president of Paralyzed Veterans of America. “Our nation's veterans and all people with disabilities deserve better.” “The administration is playing fast and loose with its legal obligations and has again turned its back on travel protections for America's paralyzed veterans,” said Democracy Forward Counsel Karianne Jones.

Congress gave DOT until 2017 to propose new rules addressing lavatory accessibility on commercial single-aisle aircraft. PVA was part of a group of disability advocates and airline industry representatives that presented the agency with a negotiated consensus rule to issue for public comment, which Secretary Elaine Chao failed to release. Secretary Chao provided no justification for this failure.

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“My Two Cents”

By *Tim Doherty, Executive Director*



Project Freedom Inc has had a very busy year. During this past year, we have had two major housing communities in construction. One in West Windsor, and another in Gibbsboro.

Our West Windsor site is located near a Toll Brothers project, called “The Enclave” which is a compilation of Town Homes, Apartments and single family units. There is also a section which has “long Term suites”, for folks who may work in the area, maybe a month or two at a time, and need a longer residence than just a hotel room.

Our section is located next door to “the Enclave” and is our standard two story, one, two and three bedroom units. Our community is called, “Freedom Village at West Windsor” and will contain 72 rental apartments, all barrier free and all affordable. We are part of the Affordable Housing Plan for West Windsor. Our community and that of Toll is only a few blocks away from the West Windsor Train station, which makes it perfect for someone who may work in Princeton or Trenton or even New York, and who can commute to work. No need for a car at all.

Our second community is being built in Gibbsboro, a small town in southern New Jersey near Voorhees. The site location is right across from Silver Lake, which makes it a beautiful setting. Gibbsboro, looks like “Mayberry USA” and has that old fashioned, down home flavor we can remember when growing up. I can see Sheriff Andy Griffith standing next to his car, talking to the children. There, we are creating a three story, colonial favored design, containing eighteen units in each building, four buildings for a total of 72 rental apartments. Again, all units are barrier-free design, so that someone who uses a wheelchair can live independently.

So, these two new communities will make nine in total, under management by Project Freedom Inc. for a total of 485 rental apartments. All these communities are funded through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program administered by NJHMFA. This program requires an investor, such as NEF who then take the investor’s money such as TD Bank or Bank of America, and invest it in projects like ours. It really is one of the most successful federal housing programs currently offered. For their investment, the Investors get a dollar for dollar tax credit on federal taxes that they may owe. This continues for a 10 year period, so it is really a big incentive to invest in our affordable housing. It also provides new, decent very attractive housing design, that anyone would be proud to live in.

Finally, along with this actual construction taking place, we have been in the process of obtaining funding, and then permits, etc to break ground once again in Robbinsville Town Center South, which should be happening next month. Also, we will be submitting another Tax Credit application for funding for another Hamilton community. So, stay tuned for more good news, we are very excited.

From Norman's Desk



This month marks eighteen years since the attacks of September 11th. It is also National Preparedness Month, recognized each September to promote family and community disaster and emergency planning now and throughout the year. The 2019 theme is **Prepared, Not Scared**. The timing is no coincidence.

For many the memory of that awful September day in 2001 is fading, but my memories are still vivid down to my shirt and tie. The day started out so bright, beautiful, and refreshing, but it ended so dark and frightening. The feeling of anger and uncertainty spread around us like a cloaking fog.

Every year since the attacks, I choose to pay tribute to the three elements that create my memory of that day. First, I honor the life of my friend and colleague Colleen Fraser who died on Flight 93 with those other selfless heroes who may have saved the Capitol or the White House or thousands of other lives. Colleen was a fighter, and she was in good company that morning fighting to take back that plane.

Second, I remember the lives of the 343 FDNY firefighters who died that day. Most knew going into those buildings that some of them would not come out alive. They knew this instinctively by virtue of their experience and profession. They still went in with police officers and EMS personnel to save those who could not save themselves. They went in to save people with disabilities.

And, yes, thirdly, I remember those people with disabilities who died that day in those towers. I was not watching the horror on television that morning. I had a meeting at 10:00, and during that meeting I spoke of Colleen and wanting to connect her with someone. Later, someone told me of the collapse. My very first thought was that many firefighters had just died; my immediate second thought was that many people with disabilities had died as well.

How many people with disabilities died that morning may never be known. We do know that the corporations and government agencies housed in those towers hired people with disabilities. We do know that some people with disabilities made it out because they had a plan, their company had a plan, or some colleague or friend took the initiative to get them out. We do know that others stayed behind not wanting to burden friends, not wanting to get in the way, or just having unwavering faith that the FDNY would get to them. We also know that loyal friends stayed behind with them. We know that some people with disabilities who stayed were rescued but many died with their rescuers.

Every victim of these attacks needs to be remembered and honored. I feel a personal duty to honor Colleen, The 343, and those almost nameless people with disabilities who stayed behind.

Let us all remember the victims and the heroes of September 11, 2001, by getting prepared and staying prepared. You never know how a bright, beautiful, and refreshing day may end.

Norman A. Smith, Associate Executive Director -

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Visit us at www.ProjectFreedom.org

A Few Tips

Check in with neighbors to see how you can help each other out before and after a storm

If you have a disability, plan ahead for accessible transportation that you may need for evacuation or getting to a medical clinic. Work with local services, public transportation or paratransit to identify accessible transportation options.

If you have a disability contact your city or county government's emergency management agency or office. Many keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be helped quickly in a sudden emergency.



18th Anniversary





Hamilton Happenings

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
4-Sep	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Walmart Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
9-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
16-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
23-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
30-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM



Lawrence Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
4-Sep	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Walmart Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
4-Sept	Wed	Massages	Sign Up
10-Sept	Tues	BP & Pulse Ox Screening	2:30-4:00 PM
18-Sept	Wed	Nutrition	7:00 PM





Robbinsville Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
2-Sep	Mon	Labor Day Picnic - Robbinsville	Prog. Time 11:30 -2:00 PM



Hopewell Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
4-Sept	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	1:15—3:15 PM
6-Sept	Fri	Mercer Home Health Hosting Pokeno	3:00 PM
9-Sept	Mon	Penn Medicine Hosting Nutrition and Diabetes Seminar	3:00 PM
18-Sept	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	9:30—11:30 AM



The Blind Man's French Dog Problem ...

It's not really about the dog. Or being French. Or blind.

By Adam Linn / Reprinted from The NY Times / Oct 18, 2018

Last summer my wife, Juju, was invited to attend a conference in Paris, and she asked me to come along. I'd always wanted to visit Paris, so of course I said yes. But before I could book my ticket, I needed to do some research. I'm blind, and I use a Seeing Eye dog — a German shepherd named Nadia — to help me get around.

First, I needed to find out where the French stood on guide dogs. This wasn't an unreasonable concern. In New York, where the law clearly states guide dogs can accompany their owners everywhere, I frequently run into trouble — in restaurants, cabs, parks, even hospitals. I didn't want to go to Paris on vacation only to have the same fights over my guide dog I could have at home.

My research turned up some good news. It said that the French have some of the strongest service animal laws in the world, and more important, these laws are rigorously enforced — any form of discrimination is strictly forbidden. I was ecstatic. Not only was I going to experience a city that I'd always wanted to visit, but I also was now sure that my guide dog and I would be welcomed with open arms.

The problems began the moment we arrived in Paris. The representative from the apartment rental company took one look at Nadia and me and demanded an extra 700 euros security deposit, along with an additional 500 euros for a mysterious "deep-clean fee." I felt like I'd been smacked in the face. And it really stung after the warm welcome I'd imagined.

So much for discrimination being strictly forbidden. Juju and I were furious, but what could we do? We'd never find another apartment at the height of the tourist season. We were stuck. So that afternoon, I was on the Métro traveling to a gritty neighborhood in the 20th Arrondissement in search of the office of the local guide dog federation to find out if anyone there could help me resolve my problem with the rental company. When I arrived, I was met by the director, a small lively man, who shook my hand vigorously before leading me into his cluttered office. He listened sympathetically while I described my dispute with the rental company. When I finished, he sighed heavily and drummed his fingers on the desktop.

"You are absolutely correct, Mr. Linn," he said, "This is unquestionably a violation of French law. But your situation is a bit ... er ... tricky."

"Why tricky?" I asked. "The law clearly states you can't charge a blind person with a guide dog more than you charge everyone else."

"That's exactly right," he said. "But the law doesn't apply to you."

"Why's that?" I asked.

"Because French law only applies to French dogs."

French dogs? Was this guy pulling my leg? What the hell was a "French dog?" I pictured a bored-looking bulldog sitting at an outdoor cafe, a beret on his head, a cigarette in one paw, a glass of wine in the other.



Then the director interrupted my daydream. “But,” he said in a conspiratorial whisper, “there is one thing I can do for you.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“I will make you a false identification card. Then, while you are in France, you and Nadia will be French, and you will enjoy all the rights of a French guide dog handler. Restaurants, taxis, museums, you name it. Simple, no?”

Clearly I was missing something. Making a fake ID for a dog didn’t strike me as particularly simple. But just then the director snapped a photo of Nadia and me, and began tapping away at his computer.

I sat there stunned, a frozen grin on my face, while wave after wave of déjà vu crashed over me. I felt a familiar anger rising in my chest. I wanted to pound my fist on the director’s desk. I was angry because being blind is rarely my problem; my biggest frustrations stem from the fact that there is always some person in a position of power telling me that I’m not quite right.

Suddenly I was back in a Brooklyn courtroom for a custody hearing when a judge told me I couldn’t see my 1-year-old daughter without my mother being present “because no judge in their right mind would leave a baby alone with a blind man.” This despite the fact the judge knew I’d been my daughter’s principal care giver from the time she was born.

Then there was the immigration hearing to determine whether Juju would receive a green card. While a stone-faced immigration officer pored over pictures of our wedding, I sat there sweating through the back of my pants, obsessing over our lawyer’s final words before we went into the hearing: Juju had a great chance of receiving her green card — she was a doctor, we had married for love, we were the right age and had similar backgrounds. The only “problem” with our application was my blindness, which was sure to send up red flags.

I could have remembered countless other examples of discrimination I’d experienced over the years, but at that moment, the director tapped me on the shoulder and handed me my new identity card. “Voilà,” he said.

Back at the apartment, I made a few jokes about my new French identity, but my heart wasn’t in it. We spent the rest of the week going to museums and restaurants and holding our breath. I could never just relax and enjoy myself. Having to use a fake ID all over Paris made me feel like I was “getting away with something,” which left me tired and irritable.

In the airport on the way home, I was still angry. My anger wasn’t aimed at the French or their laws. I was angry because I’d hoped to be treated with respect in France and instead I encountered the same problem I ran into in New York. The problem is a whole lot bigger than guide dogs or blindness or unexpected cleaning fees. Once again I was experiencing what it means to be a member of a minority — blind or black or poor or a newly arrived immigrant, for that matter — living day to day in constant fear that everything you have can be taken away from you, even your identity.

Adam Linn is an author living in New York. He is working on a memoir of growing up without a father, going blind and becoming a father himself.

BMS Volunteers Spruce Up Our Robbinsville Grounds



On August 1st, a group of volunteers from Bristol Meyers Squibb arrived at Robbinsville to help us clean up our flower beds by weeding and mulching. It made a huge difference and we thank them all!



UPCOMING CLUB FREEDOM TRIPS

IN OCT

Club Freedom Members ONLY

Lakewood Renaissance Faire

Saturday Sept 21, 2019

Bus leaves Robbinsville 9 am sharp
\$7 per person admission + \$3 transportation

First paid will have a seat on bus—
no reservation without payment!

NO REFUNDS

Bring extra money for lunch, etc.

Call 609-448-2998 for reservations

A cartoon illustration of a knight in full armor riding a brown horse. The knight is holding a red lance and a shield.

CLUB FREEDOM TRIP

A logo for the Silverball Museum Arcade, featuring a stylized pinball machine and the text "SILVERBALL MUSEUM ARCADE".

SEPT 12, 2019
11 am - 3 pm

Cost \$10 -
lunch on you

Call
609-448-2998
to go

A photograph of a classic pinball machine with a colorful display and many lit-up buttons and levers.

Bus leaves Robbinsville 9:30 am

CLUB FREEDOM TRIP ONLY

Tuckerton Seaport Baymen's Museum and Village

A photograph of the Baymen's Museum and Village, showing a large, historic-looking building with a lighthouse on top, situated near a body of water with several boats.

October 5, 2019

Free Admission / Transportation \$3 per person

Lunch is on you...we will stop somewhere

Bus Leaves Robbinsville Complex. 9:00 or 9:30 am

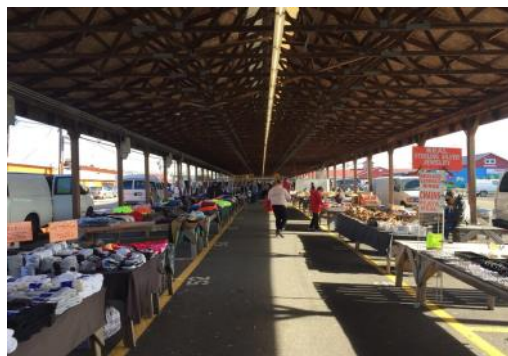
Club Freedom Members May
Contact: Mary or Esther 609-448-2998



September Calendar

Club Freedom Highlighted in Yellow

2-Sep	Mon	Labor Day - PF Offices Closed	
2-Sep	Mon	Labor Day Picnic - Robbinsville	Prog. Time 11:30 -2:00 PM
4-Sep	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Walmart Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
9-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
11-Sep	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
11-Sep	Wed	Day of Remembrance & Service 9/11	
12-Sep	Thu	SilverBall (Pinball) Museum - Asbury Park – 5 needed	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
14-Sep	Sat	Aquatics Hamilton YMCA	Bus Leaves PFR 11:30 AM
16-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
17-Sep	Tue	Parx Casino - Philadelphia - 5 Needed	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
18-Sep	Wed	Equestrian Riding at Hopewell	Prog. Time Varies
21-Sep	Sat	Lakewood Renaissance Faire	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
23-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
24-Sep	Tue	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
25-Sep	Wed	Equestrian Riding at Hopewell	Prog. Time Varies
26-Sep	Thu	Columbus Farmers & Flea Market	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
28-Sep	Sat	Aquatics Hamilton YMCA	Bus Leaves PFR 11:30 AM
30-Sep	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Hamilton	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM



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Tenants Get Creative at Recent Day Programs

