

# New Horizons

Housing That Supports Independence



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

**Tim Doherty**  
Executive Director

**Norman A. Smith**  
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Office Manager

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Office Manager

**Lawrence**  
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**Brianne Devlin**  
Office Manager

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**Pamela Freshwater**  
Office Manager

**Freedom Village at West Windsor**  
**JoAnne Sherry**  
Social Services Coordinator

## ***Freedom Village at Robbinsville Has Broken Ground!***

Freedom Village at Robbinsville, another 74 unit campus, has begun construction. Located off Rt 33, it is slated to be completed in 2021.

A ground breaking party was held on Dec 12th at our original location on Hutchinson Road.

Here are a few photos of that celebration.



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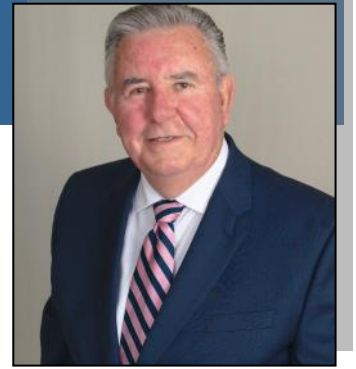
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# “My Two Cents”

By *Tim Doherty, Executive Director*



As I write these words, we have just been notified, that Project Freedom has won the Low Income Housing Tax Credit award for our Hamilton project to be known as “**Freedom Village in the Woods**”. We still have to obtain a Federal Home Loan Bank Award, which we hope to apply for this coming Spring. This project will mark our twelfth housing community that Project Freedom has created. All our housing is barrier free, making life a bit easier for someone who uses a wheelchair, yet it is also appreciated by someone who is not physically disabled.

Previous special needs housing has been designed for the individual in mind—someone who would live alone. Group homes were formed that would put three or four individuals together, strangers in reality, creating a family of sorts, each “family” sharing a single family home. This model continues today, but really doesn’t guarantee the independence that many people really want. Making your own decisions, and choices, is really what independence is all about. Our housing, because it is leased based housing, provides a greater ability for the individual to preserve their housing independence by not risking their housing option if they need to change their service provider.

More and More, our housing has evolved into real family housing—not just one bedroom units for single individuals. Our housing also includes two bedroom and three bedroom units, creating family environments for those who are disabled, and not disabled. This now creates a new dynamic and greater integration for the person who does have a disability. Real neighborhoods begin and relationships develop, creating a more natural environment for people to live. People start to think about their neighbors—maybe even worry about them if they deviate from their normal routine. They learn their kids’ names and other family members, and often share home baked goods. That is really what being part of a community is all about.

Over the years, I have seen so many success stories from our disabled tenants. One such person, who used a wheel chair and lived in a second floor apartment, had to crawl up an outside stairway, in order to get into his apartment. Needless to say, when he moved into one of our barrier free units, it allowed him to access his apartment without that indignity. I have also seen how our young consumers become more responsible, maturing by having to make their own decisions, however small they may be at first. I know in our own family; it is gratifying to see how Jen has become so independent—and more confident in handling her own issues. This is how we all learn to become responsible individuals—by having the opportunity to make those decisions and learn from those outcomes.

So, as this new year begins, we look forward to continuing the journey of creating more barrier-free housing that creates an independent environment for everyone. This year, we hope to open our West Windsor and Gibbsboro developments to new consumers who have the dream of a nice, safe place to live. One that will allow everyone to become independent. Have a Happy New Year.





## ***From Norman's Desk***

The new year brings another president campaign and election into greater focus. People with disabilities are expected to have major impact on this election, and many campaigns retargeting people with disabilities to gain our votes.

As reported on by Eric Ascher for RespectAbility.org, seven presidential campaigns made history together last November in Iowa as they participated in a Democratic Party forum, Accessibility for All, focused on issues affecting people with disabilities. This is the first time this campaign season that a forum was held specifically on this topic.

The forum was moderated by Catherine Crist, the chair of the Iowa Democratic Party Disability Caucus, and by Cindy Hanawalt, MD PhD, Immediate Past President of the Linn County Medical Society. Hanawalt's questions focused more on health care while Crist's questions focused on employment, education and other disability rights issues, reported Ascher.

Six candidates participated in the Forum themselves: Sen. Cory Booker, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, former Rep. John Delaney, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Sen. Bernie Sanders, and businessman Andrew Yang. Former Sen. Chris Dodd spoke on behalf of Vice President Joe Biden.

The questions were generated by Iowans with disabilities. There were approximately 100 people in the audience at the Forum, with some audience members coming and going throughout the day, wrote Ascher.

This is another sign that politicians are taking our vote seriously enough to direct time to obtain it. Time is second to money as a vital resource to any campaign, and six major candidates spent their time to engage directly with people with disabilities on our issues.

In addition, disability advocates praised last month's Democratic presidential debate for including a prominent question about how candidates planned to address the needs of people with disabilities. Among the three candidates who got a chance to respond, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren's comments drew some of the most lavish praise.

Readers have asked me which candidates have better disability policies, and my answer has been and will be: Look for yourself. Evaluate for yourself. Make your vote count for what is important to you.

People with disabilities need to value their votes by voting for the candidate whom addresses their needs and values the best.

Norman A. Smith, Associate Executive Director - [ProjectFreedom1@aol.com](mailto:ProjectFreedom1@aol.com)

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Former presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke talks to an advocate.

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In order to fully participate in recreation you must join Club Freedom

Any questions, please contact Norman Smith 609-448-2998 or email: [projectfreedom1@aol.com](mailto:projectfreedom1@aol.com)



## Hamilton Happenings

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
1/13/20	Mon	Friendship Connection Meeting	5:00—7:00 PM
1/18/20	Sat	Friendship Connection New Year's PotLuck Lunch	11:00 AM—2:00 PM
1/27/20	Mon	Friendship Connection Meeting	5:00—7:00 PM



## Lawrence Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
1/8/20	Wed	Massages	as scheduled
1/9/20	Thurs	Stress Mastery	4:00 –5:00 PM
1/14/20	Tues	Friendship Connection Meeting	4:00-6:00 PM
1/22/20	Wed	Nutrition	7:00 PM
1/23/20	Thurs	Let Your Yoga Dance	4:00 PM
1/28/20	Tues	Friendship Connection Meeting	4:00-6:00 PM
1/30/20	Thurs	Tai Chi	4:00 PM



# Happy New Year!

## Robbinsville Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
1/6/20	Mon	Day Program	1:00-3:00 PM
1/13/20	Mon	Day Program	2:00-4:00 PM
1/27/20	Mon	Day Program	2:00-4:00 PM



## Hopewell Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
1/3/20	Fri	Mercer Home Health Hosting Pokeno	3:00 PM
1/8/20	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	1:15—3:15 PM
1/15/20	Wed	Allstate Renters Insurance Presentation	3:30—5:00 PM
1/16/20	Thur	Friendship Connection Meeting	5:00—7:00 PM
1/22/20	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	9:30 AM—11:30 AM
1/30/20	Thur	Friendship Connection Meeting	5:00—7:00 PM



## ***Grassroots Movement Educating First Responders On Special Needs Interactions***

Reprinted from Post-Tribune/TNS | November 6, 2019 by Jerry Davich

VALPARAISO, Ind. — Emily Felter leaned into her father's arms with a quick kiss and tight hug. Tom Felter Jr. reciprocated with a hug and kiss for his 24-year-old daughter who has Down syndrome. They stood in front of about two dozen guests at Casa Del Roma banquet center in Valparaiso.

"Are you going to help people sign in?" Felter asked Emily. "No," she replied sharply. "OK," he said with a chuckle.

Welcome to The Emily Talk, where Tom does most of the talking and Emily gets most of the laughs. For several years, they've offered an insightful presentation to help people interact with individuals who have special needs.

"Hi, I'm Tom," Felter told the Porter County RN Club, a group of registered nurses. "And this is Emily." "Hi," Emily said shyly. "If you get nothing out of this talk, just remember one thing — to be patient," he said. "Emily is like a slow computer. You have to give these people time to absorb what you're saying."

A train's horn blared in the background. Emily, who has the mind of a young girl, clutched her father even tighter. "Barking dogs and crying babies are her Kryptonite," Felter said.

He uses a PowerPoint presentation with easy-to-understand bullet-point takeaways, based on recommendations from the Americans with Disabilities Act. For instance, don't trip over yourself to be overly polite. Be direct while still respecting someone's personal space. Speak slowly if warranted. Allow extra time for a response. "Don't overwhelm them," Felter said. "Also, don't grab their arm. Let them take your arm." Don't yell or raise your voice, which contorts your face, he said. "Use a calm voice, even if you're angry," Felter said. "It doesn't always matter what you say, but how you say it. Get their attention and keep their attention. Stay face to face."

Felter, an ambulance paramedic with Porter Regional Hospital, originally geared The Emily Talk toward first responders, but has expanded to include just about anybody who works with the public. The goal is to teach how to avoid an awkward situation in casual conversation, but also to avert a potentially dangerous scenario for people with special needs.

"Do you want to sit by mom now?" Felter asked his daughter. "No," Emily replied. "OK," he said. Emily's participation in their presentation is day by day, sometimes minute by minute.

"We're always on Emily time," said Felter, who lives in Hebron. "Some days, we don't even get inside the building." Their program was spurred by the tragic outcome of a 2013 incident at a Maryland movie theater involving a 26-year-old man with Down syndrome. Ethan Saylor had just watched a film he enjoyed so much that he immediately returned to watch it again, without buying a ticket, while his aide left the building to get the car.

After Saylor didn't leave the theater on request, three off-duty sheriff's deputies forcibly removed him from the building and at some point, he wound up on the ground, face down. Saylor suffered a fractured larynx, and his death was later ruled a homicide as a result of asphyxia.

Last year, Saylor's family reached a \$1.9 million settlement with the state of Maryland. His death sparked public outcry and, advocates hope, a heightened sense of awareness and sensitivity by law enforcement for individuals with special needs. The Emily Talk always begins with a five-minute video featuring this case.

"There are now grassroots presentations like ours all over the United States to talk about not letting this tragic situation ever happen again," Felter told the group.

Emily eventually sat next to her mother, Tina Felter, who gently embraced her and rubbed her back. Emily was born with multiple health problems. Her parents said they learned that Down syndrome is her gift, not her disability. It doesn't define her. It only begins to describe her. "She's my claim to fame," Felter said.



Felter joked that even he and his wife don't know what Emily will do or say during any social situation. Her mother once joked, "We're working on her social skills."

Most of us need to work on our social skills when interacting with people who have special needs, whether they're visually noticeable, as in Emily's case, or not so initially obvious, Tom Felter told the RNs. "You have to try to understand their viewpoint," he said.

Felter and his daughter have shared their presentation with firefighters, EMS providers, NIPSCO gas meter workers, and most recently with first and second year residents at IU Health Arnett Hospital in Lafayette. At the program for the RNs, Emily interrupted her father a few times to unknowingly punctuate his points about interacting with anyone with special needs. She stated her feelings without much forethought about context of the situation.

"I love you!" she told him. "I love you more," he replied.

## ***Do You Understand the Community Care Program?***

The Community Care Program is a Medicaid home and community based services (HCBS) waiver program. It provides services for eligible individuals who live in a provider-managed setting, such as a group home or supervised apartment, or who live in their family home or their own apartment or home, to assist them to live as independently as possible.

### **To be eligible for the Community Care Program, an individual must:**

be reached (top) on the CCP Waiting List or be determined by DDD to be at imminent risk of homelessness

- meet the functional criteria for eligibility for DDD services
- meet the additional Level of Care criteria for Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/ID)
- meet specific Medicaid requirements regarding income and resources (DDD works with individuals to help establish whether or not they meet these Medicaid requirements)

### **Depending on an individual's [assessed level of support need](#), the following services are available in the Community Care program:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <a href="#">Assistive Technology</a>          | • <a href="#">Occupational Therapy</a>                              |
| • <a href="#">Behavioral Supports</a>           | • <a href="#">Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)</a>         |
| • <a href="#">Career Planning</a>               | • <a href="#">Physical Therapy</a>                                  |
| • <a href="#">Community Inclusion Services</a>  | • <a href="#">Prevocational Training</a>                            |
| • <a href="#">Community Transition Services</a> | • <a href="#">Respite</a>   |
| • <a href="#">Day Habilitation</a>              | • <a href="#">Speech, Language and Hearing Therapy</a>              |
| • <a href="#">Environmental Modifications</a>   | • <a href="#">Support Coordination</a>                              |
| • <a href="#">Goods &amp; Services</a>          | • <a href="#">Supported Employment - Individual and Small Group</a> |
| • <a href="#">Individual Supports</a>           | • <a href="#">Transportation</a>                                    |
| • <a href="#">Interpreter Services</a>          | • <a href="#">Vehicle Modifications</a>                             |
| • <a href="#">Natural Supports Training</a>     |   |

For more Information, go online to State of NJ  
Department of Human Services,  
Department of Developmental Disabilities

# ***Make Room at the Table for Difficult People***

*Reprinted from the New York Times/ Nov. 27, 2019 By Annette Lareau*

"I am not going to hit you on Thanksgiving," our 37-year-old son with autism says to me anxiously on the telephone. "No," I say soothingly, "you will use your coping skills."

I try to change the subject to pumpkin pies and stuffing, but he persists. He recounts in his chanting monotone, "On Nov. 13, 2011, I threw a chair through the window. On Thanksgiving the police came." Events like these are one reason our path through each Thanksgiving is uncertain and painful. Like many families, we face the holidays with an unsettling mixture of dread and hope.

The holiday dread that envelops so many of us is tied less to our specific families and more to unrealistic expectations. An image like the one in Norman Rockwell's "Freedom From Want," better known as the Thanksgiving painting, lingers as the kind of gathering we yearn to have. It shows a family seated around a festive table, smiling and laughing. The image was used during World War II to evoke patriotism and to raise money for war bonds. As Rockwell acknowledged, the painting represents an idealized world, where no family members are away at war, so they enjoy togetherness, abundance, innocence and fun. This ideal creates a burden of unreasonable expectations, one that can be painful when reality fails to match such hopes — not by inches but by miles.

In so many families, someone is mentally ill, alcoholic, drug-addicted or extremely difficult. Many have members with serious health problems such as cancer or dementia; some struggle with sexual abuse and domestic violence; others must accommodate members with extreme differences in perspectives and life choices. People come to the table as they are — often in pain, often in need. Families with autistic adults observe obsessions of all types. Some are endearing, like my son's yearning for wrinkles. "Wrinkles come soon? Won't miss them?" Other obsessions are less delightful: "I have to control myself to be welcome. No violent stuff and no destroying stuff."

In the Rockwell painting, the meal has not yet begun, so the scene is filled with anticipation, as people on both sides of the table lean joyfully toward one another, and everyone seems interested and engaged. But this togetherness is hard to create. We have friends whose middle-aged son has a mental disability. He routinely creates a scene and storms out of the family dinner before the meal ends. My in-laws had an uncle with mental illness who lived on the street. Some Thanksgivings, they visited him on his corner; he refused entreaties to accept help. Millions of families include alcoholic members who sometimes become belligerent. In others, narcissists dominate the conversation.

Of course, extended families often include kind, generous people who make us laugh, defuse tense situations and make extraordinary efforts to make everyone feel welcome. They are a key part of the "glue" that makes holidays work. Many families have strategies to keep holiday gatherings successful. Those with members on the autism spectrum plan ahead, by setting aside a quiet space or making sure to prepare familiar foods for someone who has difficulty with a change in routine. Others opt for tech-free dinners to minimize distractions. Most engage in rituals that help family cohesion, such as playing board games or charades, taking walks after dinner, or watching football playoffs or favorite movies.

At a Thanksgiving two years ago, our son was engaged in a favorite ritual: watching a Michael Jackson movie before dinner. He joined us just before we put the glistening turkey on the table. He sang his blessing. People began to eat. I took a deep breath, feeling content. Seconds later, our son leapt to his feet and started cursing in a deafening voice. As they held forks frozen in midair, everyone at the table stared at him. The cursing was followed by tearful remorse. "I need to control myself. I don't want to leave! I want to be good!" I walked him away from the table, and he let me cajole him into resting in the living room with his helper. Later, he was able to rejoin the Thanksgiving table. We wobbled through some awkward moments, but as we all ate dessert, the pleasure of being together resurged. Even more surprisingly, the guests from that day are returning for Thanksgiving this year, cheerful and willing to join us, despite knowing that our son might yell or throw things.

My husband and I are grateful for this response, not only for its generosity but also for its reminder of the importance of broadening our conception of holidays and family events. We need to recognize the Rockwell painting for what it was — wartime propaganda — and learn to embrace a more accurate portrayal of family life. The trick is to reframe our expectations and accept the situation for what it is. Most families have at least one very difficult member. Our son's behavior is not always predictable. But he is a deeply interesting person whose refreshingly different ways of looking at the world are gifts he eagerly shares. We need a picture of the holidays that makes room at the table for the delusional, the narcissistic, the wayward and those whose internal demons sometimes hijack their better selves. If we start with more realistic expectations, we will have a better chance of enjoying the moments of harmony at our Thanksgiving gatherings — those times when we feel a true connection with those we love and awareness of the unique gifts our family members and friends bring to the table.

Annette Lareau is a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania.



## January General Recreation Club Freedom Events Highlighted

<b>1-Jan</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Happy New Year! PF Offices Closed!</b>	
6-Jan	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Robbinsville	Prog. Time 1PM-3 PM
8-Jan	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
<b>9-Jan</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Mall Trip Freehold—5 People Needed</b>	<b>Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM</b>
13-Jan	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Robbinsville	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
15-Jan	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
<b>16-Jan</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Columbus Indoor Farmers Market</b>	<b>Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM</b>
18-Jan	Sat	Friend's Connection Potluck Celebration	Prog. Time 11 AM -2 PM
<b>20-Jan</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>PF Offices Closed - MLK Day</b>	
<b>21-Jan</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Mall Trip Moorestown-5 People To Go</b>	<b>Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM</b>
<b>23-Jan</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Parx Casino - Philadelphia - 5 Needed</b>	<b>Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM</b>
27-Jan	Mon	"Day-Rec Program" -- Robbinsville	Prog. Time 2 PM-4 PM
29-Jan	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM

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*You Can Make Your  
New Year's Resolutions,  
but  
Don't Forget These  
Simple Rules  
For Happiness*

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

*Tomorrow is a new day*

*Making mistakes is part of life*

*Saying 'no' is okay*

*Not everyone has to like you*

*Beauty & strength come from within*