

FREED | 

# The Year of Transition

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

# The Year of Transition

Our services are consumer driven and come from a person-centered perspective. Meaning we meet people where they are and come alongside them to support their unique goals and circumstances.



So much has happened in 2018! Many people know FREED for our Equipment Reuse Program, providing gently used wheelchairs, walkers, or commodes or for our senior services including our Fix It Program, Senior Transportation Voucher Program, or Senior Information & Assistance services. In fact, almost 75% of individuals we serve are over the age of 60 and our Assistive Technology services are our #1 most utilized service beyond connecting individuals to aging and disability community services.

What people may not be as familiar with are

our youth transition services that we have been working to develop and expand over the last year. FREED serves people of ALL ages and with any type of disability. We aim to support individuals with disabilities throughout their live span from birth to death supplementing the support they, their families and caregivers provide to whatever level the individual desires. Our youth services are designed to support the transition from high school into adult life, an area we find has significant gaps in services. We want youth with disabilities to find pride in who they are and develop their self-advocacy skills so that they can become empowered adults that follow their goals and dreams.

Our services are consumer-driven and come from a person-centered perspective. Our staff and Board of Directors represent the diversity in our community with over 65% being people with significant disabilities, representing youth to older adults. Our services are peer

delivered by people at different stages in their lives that have personal understanding of the needs and issues facing our consumers, and how to go about solving the problems that get in the way of living an independent life.

FREED strives to be the first place you call or visit when you need disability and aging information and assistance, support with finding resources in our community, support to just get through the day, or for when you are making decisions about independently getting through life itself.

One of the most meaningful parts of working with FREED is how much the community supports what we do! Thank you for being a part of making it all possible!

Please join us again by supporting our work – We know you will love it as much as we do!

Towards Independence,

**Ana Acton,**  
Executive Director  
**Mark Fenicle,**  
Board Chair

# WHAT

# WE DO

Vision: People with disabilities enjoy a fully accessible community strengthened by diversity and unified by a culture of limitless possibility.

Mission: To promote independence and self-determination for people with disabilities through person-driven services, collaborative community partnerships and education, and leadership that advocates for fully inclusive communities.

## **Independent Living Core Services**

- Individual and Systems Advocacy– Working to ensure systems are meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Personal Assistance– Providing resources and information to assist people to hire and manage personal assistants.
- Housing Assistance– Support in finding and maintaining affordable accessible housing. Social Security advocacy and financial assistance for homeless individuals who qualify.
- Information and Referral– Connecting people with disabilities to needed programs and services related to long term services and supports.
- Independent Living Skills– Developing a wide-range of skills consumers need to live self-determined lives.
- Assistive Technology– Information and guidance around finding and funding appropriate devices to meet individual needs.

- Nursing Home Transition– Planning, coordination, and funding to assist people in moving from institutional to community settings.
- Youth Transition– Services to assist youth ages 14-24 with the transition from a school-based system of services to secondary education, employment, or independent living.

## **FREED Programs**









- AT Reuse– Collects donated gently used durable medical equipment and provides that equipment to people in need.
- Device Lending & Demonstration Center– A state-wide program that provides short-term loans of assistive technology.
- Care Transition Intervention / Patient Navigation– coaching that assists people in managing their medical conditions.
- Fix-It Program– Provides minor home repairs and modifications to assist people to live safely in

their own homes.

- Friendly Visitor Program– Coordinates community volunteers to visit isolated older adults and people with disabilities to meet socialization needs in Nevada County.
- Phone Reassurance Program– Coordinates volunteers to provide regularly scheduled phone check-ins for isolated older adults and people with disabilities in Nevada County.
- Senior Transportation Vouchers– Providing vouchers for older adults to use on para-transit in Yuba and Sutter Counties.
- Senior Information and Assistance– Providing a reliable, up-to date source of information on services and programs available to seniors in Yuba and Sutter Counties.
- Traumatic Brain Injury– Services to individuals who have sustained a brain injury to support their success and re-integration into the community.

1,344 INDIVIDUALS PROVIDED COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE  
3,979 INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES PROVIDED



- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Assistive Technology - 593 |  Peer Counseling - 112 |
|  Housing & Home Mods - 378  |  Communication - 71    |
|  IL Skills Training - 137   |  Advocacy / Legal - 66 |
|  Transportation - 121       |  Other - 180           |

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

**95%** of consumers served are better able to perform activities of daily living.

**89%** of consumers served are better able to access their home environment.

**88%** of consumers served report their overall quality of life has improved.

**79%** of consumers served are better able to make well informed decisions about services and supports.

**72%** of consumers served are better able to access their community.

**66%** of consumers served feel more connected to family and friends.

“

I value not being judged when I walk in your door.

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Now I don't have to feel ashamed, and I feel more independent in and out of home.

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The staff are very well informed. I directly benefit when, for example, I qualify for a very specific kind of help. The generosity of the staff at FREED make me feel less alone on this journey.

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I speak highly of FREED every chance I get. Lots of folks don't know about you all so I educate others about what you do.

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I have been treated with respect and an understanding of my needs.

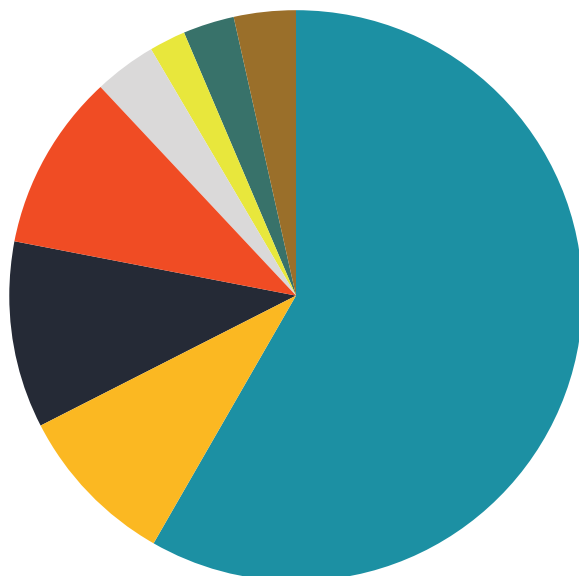
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## \$1,283,582 TOTAL INCOME



CA Dept of Rehabilitation	- \$630,599
US Dept of Health & Human Services	- \$226,382
Other Grants & Contracts	- \$148,930
Area 4 Agency on Aging	- \$134,189
Fees for Service	- \$81,757
Fundraising	- \$44,424
Other	- \$17,301

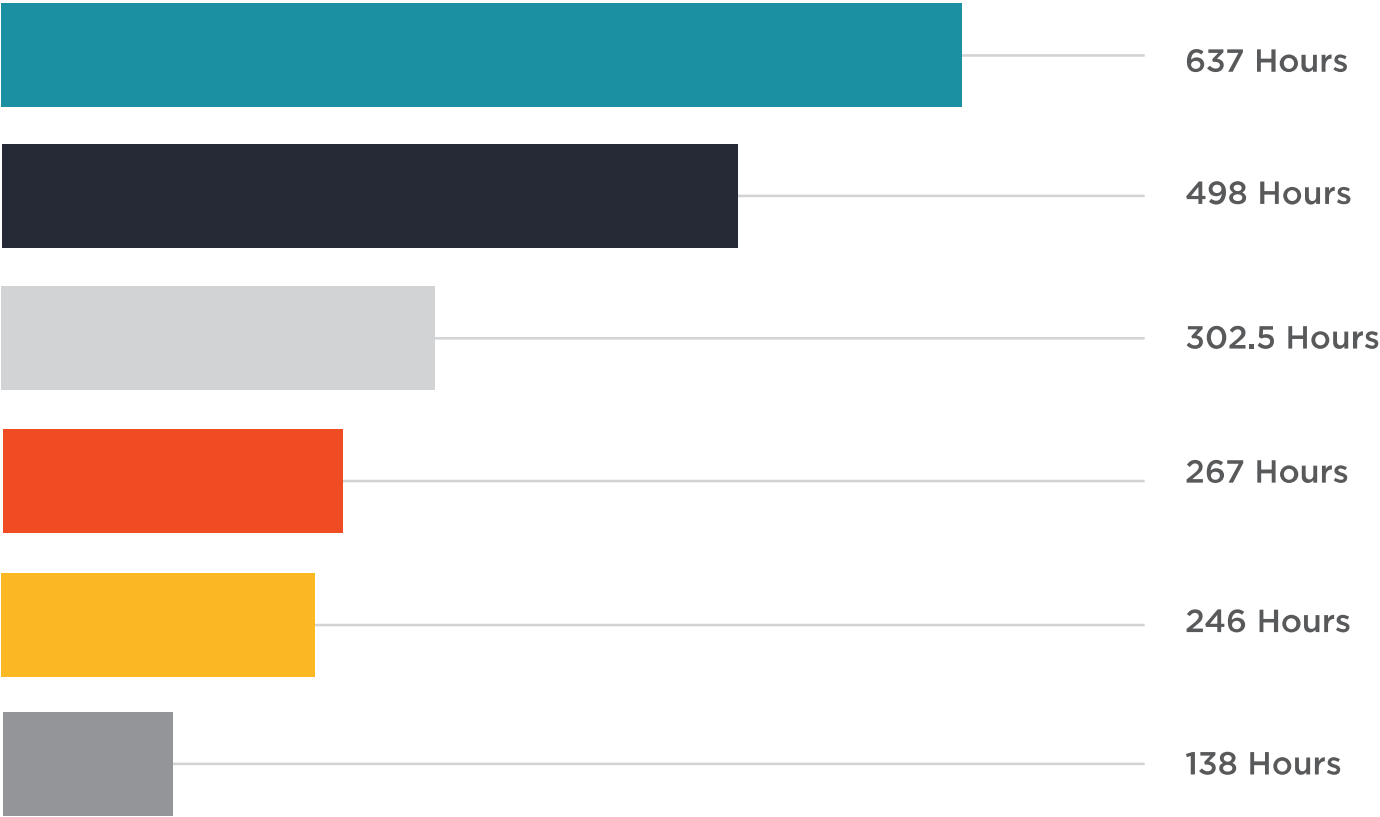
## \$1,261,802 TOTAL EXPENSES



Personnel Costs	- \$735,795
Contract Services	- \$116,203
Rent/Utilities/Phone	- \$133,754
Consumer Materials	- \$126,147
Miscellaneous & Outreach	- \$44,687
Travel & Training	- \$22,575
Supplies/Postage/Printing	- \$42,577
Other Operating Costs	- \$40,064



# COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS



- Other
- Collaboration & Networking
- Community Education & Public Information
- Community & Systems Advocacy
- Technical Assistance
- Outreach Efforts

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

2018 was a year of transition, FREED developed a new youth transition program, transitioned to a new Grass Valley Office, transitioned new staff into our team, and supported transition after disasters. Here are a few of the changes FREED has made in the communities we serve.



FREED staff and board pose for a photo after the 2018 retreat.

## **Youth in Transition**

In 2018 one of our main areas of focus was expanding the number of transition age youth we serve. These are youth with disabilities ages 14-24 who are in or around the time they will move from a school-based system of services into secondary education, employment and/or independent living. FREED received a two year grant to develop a program and curriculum that could be replicable at other

independent living centers across the state.

While we will serve any age youth, our program focuses on connecting with youth while they are still in school with the goal of providing ongoing support as they move through these major life transitions. FREED held regular summer activities, assisted youth to organize trips to Anime Con, went rafting on the American River, and took a group of youth to a summer

leadership camp held by Yo! Disabled and Proud. More activities are happening in 2019 as well, check out the “Get Involved” section for more information.

In addition to these activities, FREED is partnering with local high schools to come into classrooms and provide curriculum on disability pride, disability history, and independent living skills. It is key that students with disabilities have opportunities to see

adults with disabilities living empowered lives.

We also started a video project to interview and film youth with disabilities in an effort to break the stigma around having a disability. We were honored to have quite a few youth with all types of disabilities agree to share their stories. We will be posting to our social media channels soon.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

FREED consumers and staff have been working to support SB 398, a bill that would provide ongoing funding for the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) program that FREED provides. FREED is one of seven TBI programs in the state of California. TBI is a common disability. The annual number of brain injuries is greater than the rates of breast

cancer, heart attack, lung cancer, HIV and AIDS, spinal cord injuries, and multiple sclerosis combined. and widely recognized as lacking in supportive resources. After two years of advocacy

including visits to legislators, videos posted to social media, and attending hearings the governor signed the bill into law. SB398 provides funding for these programs through the year 2024. The Department of Rehabilitation has also formed a TBI advisory committee to include consumers.

### **Transition out of Homelessness**

FREED has partnered with Nevada County to provide social security advocacy and housing support to homeless individuals without an income. The California housing crisis has made it incredibly difficult to find housing even for those with an income. However, many homeless individuals are without any income at all, and many of those are folks living with a disability. FREED is working with qualifying individuals to provide specific advocacy to support these individuals through their social security application and to provide temporary

funding for housing while they go through this process. This allows individuals to become stable enough to complete the long and challenging disability benefits application process successfully which can lead to permanent housing opportunities.

This work happens through partnership with other community organizations such as Hospitality House, Advocates for Mentally Ill Housing, Project Mana, The Booth Family Center, and the Salvation Army.

### **Transitioning down the American River**

On August 13th FREED hosted 40 consumers and friends on a whitewater rafting trip down the American River. It was an incredibly beautiful, peaceful, rejuvenating, and exciting adventure. The trip was organized and executed by Environmental Traveling Companions, an organization that specializes in fully inclusive outdoor

experiences for people of all abilities. It was a truly transformative experience.

### **Aging & Disability Resource Connection**

The Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) of Nevada County is a partnership between FREED, Agency on Aging Area 4 (AAA4), and twelve community partner organizations. The goal of the ADRC is to streamline access to long term services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults through a No Wrong Door System of collaborative partnerships. The ADRC is a place where people of any age and any income level can turn for information and person centered counseling on their long term care options.

In 2018, FREED and AAA4 worked with community partners to continue to expand the ADRC initiative into Yuba and Sutter counties.

In July, The Aging & Disability Resource



FREED consumers of all abilities load into rafts that will take them down the American River.

Connection of Nevada County produced the 4th annual Our Community: Aging & Disability Conference in Nevada County with over 160 participants, 22 vendor booths, 8 workshops, and 2 plenary speakers and a panel of local elected officials.

In October FREED held its 1st annual Our Community: Aging and

Disability Conference in Yuba City! Thirteen local vendors were available to speak with the more than 150 attendees. Sponsorship was provided by Anthem Blue Cross, SCAN Foundation, California Health & Wellness, PG&E, and Sutter Health.

These conferences included opening remarks by Vance Taylor from the

Governor's Office of Emergency Services as well as workshops on preventing fraud, emergency preparedness, health care planning, falls prevention and more. We look forward to continuing this event in Nevada and Sutter Counties in the years to come.

### **FREED Phone Reassurance Program For Nevada County**

FREED now administers the Phone Reassurance Program. This program provides regular scheduled calls for isolated older adults and people with disabilities. The calls offer reassurance that someone will be checking on them on a regular basis. If the participant does not answer the phone, a procedure of safety checks is followed. The program also provides socialization for the participant and an opportunity to feel connected to the world, as well as peace of mind for family and friends. Calls are made Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM -4:00 PM by a team

of fantastic volunteers. This service is free and confidential.



Alice Litton, Phone Reassurance Volunteer

### **Voters Choice Act**

In 2018, Nevada County was selected to pilot the Voters Choice Act. This improved the voting process for all citizens, including those with disabilities. Every registered voter received a vote-by-mail ballot and voters choosing to cast their ballot in person were not limited to one polling place, but could visit any one of seven vote centers that were open longer hours, including weekends.

The Future of Nevada County Elections Coalition, which included FREED, League of Woman Voters of Western Nevada

County, The Sierra Fund, Truckee Family Resource Center, and the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) worked together to execute education and outreach efforts to inform the community about implementation of the Voters Choice Act. FREED received a grant from the Hopewell Fund and created educational materials including a public service announcement video to inform and encourage individuals with disabilities, older adults, and Spanish speakers to vote. Nevada County Voter turnout for the June 5th, 2018 Primary Election was 57.03%, the highest of the five Voter's Choice Act pilot counties.

### **Disaster Preparedness**

People with disabilities and older adults are disproportionately impacted during natural disasters. This is why FREED has partnered with other organizations to address the need on a local, statewide, and national level.

FREED is a member of

the California Disaster Strategies Coalition. A new group of local, statewide, and national organizations committed to advocating for access to emergency programs and services for people with disabilities and access and functional needs before, during and after disasters. Regular state-wide calls work to anticipate, identify and solve problems related to systemic issues that impact individuals ability to respond during a natural disaster. These include delays or failures in getting critical information and notifications in accessible format to individuals, lack of transportation to evacuate, lack of equal access to shelters, lack of access to health care services and equipment such as oxygen, dialysis, and durable medical equipment, and unnecessarily institutionalized due to lack of housing options, disruption in community-based services, or problems navigating the system. We have also noticed a direct correlation between the ability to respond during a disaster and isolation.

## SAVE THE DATE



### 2019 Our Community: Aging and Disability Conferences

**Nevada County**  
July 31, 2019

**Sutter County**  
October 30, 2019

## Become A Rolling Donor



As a **Rolling Donor** Donations are drawn directly from your bank account monthly or annually. You decide how much you can give and how often. Contributing this way provides on-going support so FREED can remain a resource to assist individuals with all types of disabilities live a self-determined life.

**Become a rolling donor at: [freed.org/donate](http://freed.org/donate)**

# CONSUMER STORY

Joan's family approached FREED with a simple request that is fairly common, they were looking for a hospital bed. Turns out Joan's needs were far greater. She and her family had narrowly survived the Camp Fire and in it lost everything.





Joan's daughter came into our Marysville office, asking about getting a hospital bed for her mom. After some interviewing, we realized that Joan was in a hospital in Chico and that the family had narrowly escaped the fires in Paradise. They had the same harrowing tale that we have been hearing repeatedly and they had lost everything! Initially, they were staying at the shelter at Wal Mart and then the fairgrounds. Joan became ill while staying at the shelter and entered the hospital. The family was fortunate to be able to locate an apartment to rent in the Yuba City area and they were moving in

with just the clothes on their backs. The mom, our consumer, would be living with them when she was discharged from the hospital. She was in the hospital because she had a pre-existing respiratory condition that was negatively affected by all the toxic smoke from the fire. We contacted Joan by phone while she was in the hospital and later met her in person. We worked together as a team and located a hospital bed, found other assistive technology equipment that Joan would need and got started with a transition grant through Department of

Rehabilitation. FREED staff worked together to support the family and consumer through all the purchases of furniture, clothing, and household items like dishes and pots and pans. By the time that Joan was released to go home, she had everything waiting for her that she needed. She was able to pick out most of the items on short trips during the days before she was discharged from the hospital and she was very happy and grateful for the assistance we provided. After her return home, she was able to purchase some clothing as well by going on line to shop during a home visit. Without the help from FREED and the Department of Rehabilitation funding, this woman would not have been able to transition back into a community setting. FREED staff went to visit Joan again recently. She was sitting proudly in her home, in a new armchair purchased for her with Department of Rehabilitation funding. When FREED staff visited her Joan told us that her health has improved greatly since going home.

# Get Involved!

## **The BEAT Group**

FREED's consumer advocacy group meets in our Grass Valley office on the first Friday of the month from 4pm to 5pm.

## **DOnetwork weekly organizing calls**

The DOnetwork is a group of ILC Systems Change Advocates and community members from across the state. We have weekly organizing teleconferences. You can join the DOnetwork at [www.disabilityorganizing.net/](http://www.disabilityorganizing.net/)

## **Voter Accessibility Committees**

Are you interested in making sure people with disabilities can vote independently and privately? Nevada and Sutter County have Voter Accessibility Advisory Committees. For more information contact Brian Snyder at FREED.

## **Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group**

FREED has weekly traumatic brain injury support groups:

- Marysville Office—every Wednesday from

10:30am to 11:30am

- Grass Valley Office—every Tuesday from 11am to 12:30pm

## **Aging & Disability Advisory /Community Living Council**

FREED has regular meetings with community stakeholders and consumer advocates. These groups develop collaborations, policies and procedures to streamline access to services and supports for people with disabilities and older adults.

Nevada County - First

Wednesday of the month from 12:30pm to 1:30pm. Yuba/Sutter Counties- Third Tuesday of the month from 2pm to 3:30pm. Call Ana at FREED for more information.

### **Women with Disabilities Peer Support Group**

This group is a cross-disability women's peer support group that meets on the last Monday at 1pm to 2:30pm at FREED's Grass Valley office.

### **Service Dog Peer Support Group**

A peer support group for individuals who have a service dog, are training a service dog, or who want to get one in the future. The group meets the 2nd Monday of the month from 1pm to 2:30pm at FREED's Grass Valley office. The group shares best practices and advocates as responsible service dog owners with individuals and businesses.

### **Become a FREED Volunteer!**

Our volunteers are an integral part of ensuring that people with disabilities and

older adults live self-determined lives. FREED is currently recruiting for the following volunteer positions:

- Fix It Volunteers – Nevada, Sierra, Yuba, & Sutter Counties – provides minor safety and accessibility home repairs and modifications.
- Friendly Visitor Volunteers – Nevada County - provides weekly home visits to isolated older adults and people with disabilities.
- Phone Reassurance Volunteers – Nevada County – provides regular telephone calls to older adults and people with disabilities who live alone. This program provides reassurance that someone is checking in on them on a regular basis.

### **Nevada County Transition Age Youth Team**

Join organizations and family members in Nevada County to support transition age youth, age 14 to 24, with disabilities. This group meets the second Thursday of each month from 3:30pm to 5pm at FREED's Grass Valley office Call Trina at FREED for more information.

### **Monthly Youth Activities**

FREED is working with local youth with disabilities to plan monthly outings. Join us to meet new friends, share new experiences and have tons of fun! Some of the outings planned for 2019 include: The California Automobile Museum, Hiking on the Independence Trail, Rafting on the American River and the Nevada County Fair. Family members, personal attendants, or other supporters welcome. For more information and a full list of activities call Trina at FREED. ALL abilities welcome!

### **FREED Summer Hangout**

Starting June 12, 2019 FREED will again host weekly youth activities in our Grass Valley Office. Every Wednesday from 2PM-4PM an Advocacy & Leadership Group will meet, and Fridays from 3PM-5PM will be gaming and movie day. If you are a youth with a disability from 14-24 and would like to meet others, learn, and advocate for your rights or just hang out and have fun call Trina at FREED. ALL abilities welcome!

**FREED** | 

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