Advocacy at Work

Ed Roberts, founder of the Independent Living Movement noted that the power of Independent Living Centers like FREED is: “advocacy, advocacy, advocacy”. By providing leadership at the state and local level FREED works to make the lives of all people with disabilities better.

FREED is unique as a social service organization in that a key piece of our mission is to help elevate the voice of real people and real experiences, into local, state, and even national policy. While we pride ourselves in our direct services, we are equally proud of the role we play in making policies and systems work for people. We look for opportunities to make systems more human designed, and then advocate for those systems to innovate and change.

Looking back over the last year, there was a lot of “Advocacy at Work”.

- We worked to establish ongoing state funding for the Traumatic Brain Injury Program, while also working with the newly formed Statewide TBI Advisory Committee to develop a strategic direction for TBI community reintegration and supported living.
- We elevated the voices of our rural communities, and identified real solutions for the Governor’s Master Plan on Aging and disability.
- We worked alongside community members to advocate for transportation options and safe and accessible sidewalks and recreation opportunities.
- We worked collaboratively with local and statewide community partners during the PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events to make sure people in our community who rely on power for durable medical equipment and life saving devices, had access to alternative power.

This is what FREED does, we support the individual, while looking at the larger system improvements needed so that we ALL can live, work, and play where and how we like.

Towards Independence,
Ana Acton,
Executive Director
Mark Fenicle,
Board Chair
As an Independent Living Center, we are a one-stop shop for people of any age including seniors, regardless of type of disability. We value community partnerships and collaboration to ensure people get connected to the services in our community they need and want. Our services are peer delivered and we work with each individual based on their own unique goals, needs, values, and situations. We support people to come up with their own answers and we strive to make sure that no-one ever feels like we can’t lend a hand.

**Enhanced Information & Assistance**
Connecting people with disabilities and seniors to needed programs and services related to long term services and supports.

**Person Centered Counseling**
Assist in identifying goals and needs through a discovery process honoring the individual’s needs, preferences and values. Supports connection to public and private-funded long term services and supports in the community.

**Transition Services**
Planning and coordination to assist people in moving from institutional to community settings successfully. Including nursing home and hospital transition.

**Short-Term Service Coordination**
Provides individuals at risk of entering a nursing home or other institution with expedited coordination of services and supports so people can continue living in their residence of choice.

**Independent Living Skills**
Developing a wide-range of skills consumers need to live self-determined lives.

**Individual & Systems Advocacy**
Working to make sure systems are meeting the needs of all people with disabilities.

**Assistive Technology**
Providing information and guidance around finding and funding appropriate devices to meet individual needs. Providing gently used medical equipment, and loaning and demonstrating other devices.

**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.

**Fix-It Program**
Provides minor home repairs and modifications to assist people to live safely in their own homes.

**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.

**Friendly Visitor & Phone Reassurance**
Coordinates community volunteers to visit isolated older adults and people with disabilities or to provide friendly phone calls to meet socialization needs for isolated adults in Nevada County.

**Senior Transportation Vouchers**
Providing vouchers for older adults to use on para-transit in Yuba and Sutter Counties.

**Traumatic Brain Injury**
Provides individuals who have sustained a brain injury with a variety of services to support their success and re-integration into the community.

**HIV/AIDS Options**
Providing financial resources to cover medical and social needs.
1,571 individuals provided comprehensive service
4,525 information & referral services provided

**FREED Services Provided**

- Assistive Technology - 686
- Housing & Home Mods - 466
- Peer Counseling - 193
- Advocacy/Legal - 146
- Transportation - 109
- IL Skills Training - 97
- Youth Services - 39
- Other - 228

**Consumer Satisfaction**

% of Consumers who agree...

- I am better able to perform activities of daily living. 91%
- I am better able to access my home environment. 86%
- I am better able to access my community. 75%
- I feel more connected to my family and friends. 69%
- I feel more connected to my community. 69%
- I am better able to make well informed decisions about services and supports. 77%
- My overall quality of life has improved. 85%
- I am satisfied with the services I received. 96%

**They provide resources for a wide range of disabilities.**

The service is unparalleled in scope and breadth. FREED has great team efforts in resolving particular dilemmas.

The staff understood our concerns and were accepting. We are feeling a sincere sense of hope for the future of our son and his wellbeing.

Their help makes a difference! FREED knows how important small details can be.

They will go to bat for you and find whatever resources are available.

FREED never makes you feel like a "welfare case".
$1,470,737 TOTAL INCOME

CA Dept of Rehabilitation - $630,120
US Dept of Health & Human Services - $228,896
Other Grants & Contracts - $368,997
Area 4 Agency on Aging - $153,785
Fees for Service - $39,189
Fundraising - $44,812
Other - $4,938

$1,493,559 TOTAL EXPENSES

Personnel Costs - $894,080
Rent/Utilities/Phone - $145,865
Contract/Professional Services - $135,285
Consumer Materials - $133,651
Depreciation - $56,414
Miscellaneous & Outreach - $46,934
Supplies/Postage/Printing - $28,036
Travel & Training - $18,125
Other Operating Costs - $35,196

Note: FREED depreciated equipment for the first time to come into compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
Disaster Preparedness

Are you prepared for the next disaster or power outage?
Here are 4 steps for you to begin to prepare.

**Step 1: Find Your Five Trusted Allies and Share Your Plan**
Identify five people that you trust to check on you, and communicate with you before, during, and after a disaster or emergency so that they know you are safe or if you need help. List their phone numbers, email and street addresses on paper and/or a phone app. Have at least one person who lives out of the area.

**Step 2: List Your Health Needs**
List your medication, disability-related supplies or equipment, and anything else you need daily. This information can be useful for your support team, first responders, or shelter staff. Have you list on paper and/or on a phone app.

**Step 3: Create Your Emergency Supply Kits**
Keeping important items with you is key to successful emergency and disaster planning. Pack emergency kits to have in different places: one to carry with you; one in your car; one in your home; and one at work. Items to pack include: cash, credit card, cell phone/charger, snacks, bottled water, flashlight, extra batteries; medical supplies that you need; toiletries; and copies of important documents.

**Step 4: Plan How and When to Evacuate**
Make sure you know when to evacuate. Usually a city, county, or first responder will let you know - register for alerts. If it looks dangerous though, use your best judgement. Be familiar with all possible routes out of your home or office and to get out of your neighborhood. Develop a plan and a detailed map for yourself, your family, and your animal(s) to exit your home or your office when a disaster happens.

**Public Safety Power Shutoffs**
During the months of September, October and November, our local community experienced multiple PG&E Public Safety Power Shut-Off (PSPS) events. FREED quickly began organizing to respond to the PSPS in collaboration with the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers and PG&E to support individuals in our community that require power for critical life-saving equipment and independent living. For some, turning the power off becomes a life and death situation. Many people depend on power for oxygen, ventilators, CPAP machines, dialysis, or for other equipment such as power wheelchairs, hospital beds, and wound vacuums.

**Who we helped:** 305 Calls to FREED from people living in Nevada and Yuba Counties

**How we helped:**
- 67 Hotel Nights Provided
- 60 Back-up Battery Charging Stations Distributed
- 24 Individuals Provided with Meals
- 6 Individuals provided with transportation to hotels with power
- 9 People utilized FREED as a Device Charging Center
- Total Cost: $123,000 in direct assistance to community members
What is an ADRC?

What is an Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)?
The ADRC of Nevada County is a collaboration between FREED, and the Agency on Aging Area 4 in cooperation with over twenty local partner organizations and individuals working together to streamline the process of meeting the long-term-services and support and safety-net needs of older adults and people with disabilities in Nevada County.

How can the ADRC of Nevada County Help You?
• By providing in-person or online information about a wide range of services and resources.
• By presenting options for long term services and supports so that informed choices can be made about care planning.
• By offering short-term services (up to 90-days) to address urgent needs and prevent unnecessary admission to a nursing facility or hospital.
• By coordinating relocation from hospitals or nursing facilities back to a home or the community and arranging for needed support.
• Call 211 or visit FREED at 435 Sutton Way, Grass Valley to get connected! All member agencies in the ADRC of Nevada County can assist you with applying for and receiving needed services and benefits.

ADRC of Nevada County Partner Organizations
• FREED
• Agency on Aging Area 4
• Alta California Regional Center
• Anthem Blue Cross
• California Health and Wellness
• Chapa-De Indian Health
• Connecting Point – 211 Nevada County
• Falls Prevention Coalition of Nevada County
• Gold Country Community Services
• Gold Country Lift
• Helping Hands Adult Day Center
• Hospice of the Foothills
• Nevada County Department of Transportation
• Nevada County Social Services, Adult Services
• One Source Empowering Caregivers
• Partners in Care
• Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital
• State Council on Developmental Disabilities

What about the Yuba-Sutter ADRC?
Over the last couple of years, FREED, Agency on Aging Area 4, and other community partners have been working collaboratively to create an ADRC to serve Yuba and Sutter Counties.

Call FREED at (530) 742-4474, visit us at 1100 Butte House Road, Suite 120, in Yuba City, and check out our Yuba-Sutter Senior Resource Guide at www.FREED.org to get connected!

Yuba-Sutter ADRC Partner Organizations
• FREED
• Agency on Aging Area 4
• Ampla Health

Find Local Resources for Older Adults • People with Disabilities • Caregivers

Call: Dial 211
Click: www.211connectingpoint.org, for Disability and Senior Services
Visit: FREED, 435 Sutton Way, Grass Valley, CA 95945

A partnership of FREED & Agency on Aging Area 4
Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-14-19 in June 2019 calling for the creation of a Master Plan for Aging (MPA) to serve as a blueprint for state government, local government, private sector, and philanthropy to promote healthy aging and prepare for coming demographic changes. This plan must include recommendations to better coordinate programs and services to serve older adults, people with disabilities, families, and caregivers.

**Master Plan on Aging**

**Vision:** California for all across the life span

**Mission:** A person-centered, data-driven, ten-year California Master Plan for Aging by October 1, 2020.

**Master Plan Values:**
- Choices—meaning access, quality, and autonomy
- Equity—addressing cumulative disparities due to age, disability, geography, income, race, ethnicity, immigration status, language, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, and family status
- Dignity and disruption of age-bias, able-ism, and discrimination
- Inclusion and accessibility for all older adults and people with disabilities
- Innovation and evidence-informed practice
- Partnerships among local, state, and federal governments, philanthropy, and private sectors

**Goals for All Californians:**
1. Services & Supports. We will live where we choose as we age and have the support we and our families need.
2. Livable Communities & Purpose. We will live in and be engaged in communities that are age-friendly, dementia-friendly, and disability-friendly.
3. Health & Well-Being. We will live in communities and have access to services and care that optimize health and quality of life.
4. Economic Security & Safety. We will have economic security and be safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation, natural disasters and emergencies throughout our lives.

We are excited to have Jan Arbuckle, Grass Valley City Council Member, serving on the Master Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Ana Acton from FREED on the Long Term Services and Supports Subcommittee. Having local representation will help bring local voices to the table and ensure the needs of rural communities are represented.

FREED has actively been working to engage the community including through a Community Design Workshop hosted by the Scan Foundation in June 2019 were over 60 community members including older adults and people with disabilities who came together to identify 28 specific recommendations for the Master Plan on Aging. In December 2019, the California Department of Aging conducted a rural roundtable in Nevada County to discuss issues specific to rural communities including emergency preparedness, transportation, and volunteerism.

Thank you to all the volunteers who make our community great.

**Fix It Program**
- 5 volunteers
- 567 hours of providing minor home repairs and modifications for home safety and independence

**Friendly Visitor Program**
- 32 community volunteers
- 1682 hours providing home visits to reduce isolation

**Phone Reassurance Program**
- 19 community volunteers
- 1332 hours providing 5055 phone calls to reduce isolation

**Community Organizing**
- 40 community advocates
- 425 hours advocating for housing, transportation,
A Year in Review

Youth Transition
FREED organized weekly Social Skills Group consisting of youth ages 14-19. In conjunction with the Youth Social Skills Group, FREED supported a parenting class on Love and Logic for Parents of Youth with Disabilities. The parenting class took place at the same times as the Social Skills Group and provided a perfect opportunity for FREED to connect with youth while their parents attended the class. The Youth Social Skills group was facilitated by a school psychologist and Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst in collaboration with FREED staff with disabilities. They covered topics related to:

- Self-advocacy
- Bullying
- Healthy relationships
- Communication
- Budgeting
- Planning for events and other leadership skills
- Disability history and pride

FREED had a lot of fun in 2019! We organized 10 youth outings that included going to awesome places like the SeaQuest Aquarium, Sac Comic Con, California Automobile Museum, YO! Summit at Grizzly Creek, local trail hikes, and a fully accessible rafting trip on the South Fork of the American River. All activities were designed to increase decision making, leadership, communication skills, and independent living skills. FREED also developed a Youth Transition Curriculum for in-school activities that was shared with other Independent Living Centers throughout the State.

Office Move
FREED moved their Yuba-Sutter-Colusa County office to Yuba City on May 27th, 2019. This was a big change as the office had been in Marysville for about 14 years. The logic in moving to Yuba City was that the office would be more centrally located for all the three counties served. There were months of preparation for the big day and everyone pitched in to notify the community and consumers, organize and move. We had a Ribbon Cutting event one month later, announcing our presence to the Yuba City community. We have seen an increase in the numbers of people served in our new location.

CalFresh Assistance
In June of 2019, legislation went into effect that allowed people collecting Social Security (SSI/SSP) to apply for CalFresh, previously known as food stamps. This change affected millions of people, many of them people with disabilities. In many cases this means that people on very limited incomes don’t have to choose between purchasing medication or food. FREED is providing assistance to consumers with their CalFresh applications to expedite the process at the county level.

Traumatic Brain Injury
This has been a year of victories for the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program. Through advocacy at the capital, FREED consumers and staff have been working to support SB 398, a bill that provides ongoing funding for the TBI sites here in California. There are currently only seven sites that provide services to consumers with TBI here in California. FREED is one of those sites. FREED staff and consumers have been at the capitol this year advocating with legislators for increased and ongoing funding. The program sunset date has been eliminated and we were awarded a restoration of funding! On a day to day basis, FREED is meeting the needs of consumers with TBI in five counties through weekly peer support groups in both Yuba City and Grass Valley along with a variety of other supportive services offered. Those independent living services might include planning strategies, budget management, reminder systems, housing search, self-advocacy skills, or identifying and connecting with other community resources.

In 2020 Our Community
Aging and Disability Conferences will be virtual!

Watch for launch announcements later this Summer.

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
he had lost the use of his leg and could not walk more than 20 feet due to nerve damage caused by his disability. Through AT and Fix it services FREED was able, as he put it, to “set up” his place. Allen was able to obtain AT for the bathroom as well as fix-it services. Staff and volunteers worked together to install grab bars in the bathroom and a transfer pole in the living room. These tools assist Allen to get around independently, avoid falling and take care of himself.

Allen then expressed a need for a wheelchair that had working brakes. The wheelchair that he had lost the use of his leg and could not walk more than 20 feet due to nerve damage caused by his disability. Through AT and Fix it services FREED was able, as he put it, to “set up” his place. Allen was able to obtain AT for the bathroom as well as fix-it services. Staff and volunteers worked together to install grab bars in the bathroom and a transfer pole in the living room. These tools assist Allen to get around independently, avoid falling and take care of himself.

Allen called again at the end of December 2019 and asked where he could obtain a mobility scooter. He has been using his wheelchair but feels that the mobility scooter will help him to access the community even more. We were able to pull up some online resources that took his insurance. Allen is getting measured this week for his mobility scooter and should receive it soon. He expressed his thanks for all the help from the FREED staff over the course of this year.