



ADVOCACY & INCLUSION MATTER of West Central Minnesota

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W I N T E R 2 0 2 6 NEWSLETTER

SAVE THESE DATES

Dec. 18– People First Event & Elections

Jan. 2– Warhawks Game

Jan. 10– AIM Winter Bowling League begins

Jan. 15– People First After New Years Party

Feb. 9– Barn Theatre –Sandy Toes & Salty Kisses

Feb. 19– People First Game Night

Mar. 19– People First Event– TBD

Mar. 24– Disability Service Day– Watch Party

Mar. 26– Advocacy Fair

Apr. 6– Barn Theatre– Beating a Dead Horse

Apr. 9– MN Capitol & History Center Tours

Apr. 16– People First Event– TBD

Apr. 27– Pizza Ranch Fundraiser

More details on these events inside the newsletter

**AIM provides opportunities and resources to
support inclusion and independence for people
with disabilities.**

What Does Advocacy Really Mean?

Advocacy is about speaking up for what's right & making sure every voice is heard — especially when it comes to things that matter most in our community. It's about learning, sharing & working together to create change that makes life better for everyone.

We've got some exciting ways for you to get involved, have fun, and make an impact!

Talk with Policy Makers

Here's your chance to share your story and connect with the people who help shape our community's policies. When we speak from the heart, leaders listen — and that's how change begins.

Capitol Tour: Learn How Government Works

Ever wondered what really happens inside the Capitol? Come join us for a fun and educational tour to see how laws are made and meet some of the folks who make them. You'll walk away with a better understanding of how your voice fits into the big picture!

Disability Service Day Watch Party

Let's celebrate together! Join us for a watch party full of inspiration, connection & pride as we highlight the amazing work being done in disability services. It's a great time to come together, share stories & cheer each other on. You don't have to be an expert to be an advocate.

Every time you show up, ask questions, or share your story — you're making a difference. Come join us and see how powerful your voice can be!

Upcoming AIM Events and Programs

Winter Bowling League SATURDAYS

JAN. 10, 17, 24, 31
FEB. 7, 14, 21, 28
MAR. 7, 21, 28



TIME: 10:30AM - 12:00PM

\$11 PER WEEK OR \$121 FOR THE JAN.-APR. SEASON

LIMITED TO THE FIRST 40 PEOPLE WHO SIGN-UP. PUT YOUR OWN TEAM TOGETHER OR WE CAN PAIR YOU WITH NEW TEAMMATES! REGISTER WITH THE AIM OFFICE



Spring Advocacy Fair

Thursday, Mar.26

5:30-7:00pm

at Lakeland School

\$10 includes meal

Come explore AIM's Four Pillars
(at your own pace)

ADVOCACY
WELLNESS
EDUCATION
SOCIAL INCLUSION

Vendors, Demonstrations,
Classes to be announced.



Monday, Feb. 9, 2026
7:00pm



Monday, April 6, 2026
7:00pm

AIM thanks the Barn Theatre for tickets to their dress rehearsal performances. Our tickets are limited so sign up early!

Christmas Light Take Down

Dates to be determined.
Last year was mid- April

Start Time: TBD
Robbins Island

Join us to help take down lights with
Engan & Associates staff

Upcoming AIM Events and Programs

MN Capitol Tours April 9, 2026

This fun day includes a tour of the Minnesota State Capitol and a self-guided visit at the Minnesota History Center. Tour and transportation are covered. Just bring money for lunch!



Our bus leaves promptly at 8:00 am from WCI. Will return at approximately 4:30 pm

Registration is limited. Register Early and must have AIM signed waivers to attend.

Glacial Ridge Adaptive Curling

Curling is on Thursdays from 4-5pm
December 4, 11 and 18, 2025
Willmar Civic Center



Cost is \$3 per week (cash or check paid to Willmar Rec.)

FREE transportation from Civic Center to your home (in Willmar area only). To sign-up call 320-979-0191

Community Service Announcement

**Your Voice,
Your Family,
Your Community,**

Kandiyohi County is exploring a Family Resource Center—
and we NEED your voice!

FRCs are welcoming spaces where families connect to supports, strengthen well-being, and build on their strengths. We're committed to listening and shaping solutions that reflect what matters most to local families.

►►► **It's as simple as 1 - 2 - 3!**

Family Resource Center
Community Survey
English
Español
Af Soomaali
S'gaw Karen

Scan Here



1 Scan the QR code!
Open and select your desired language.

2 Answer a few short questions!
Let us know about the needs of your family.

3 Submit your survey!
Your responses are anonymous and will help shape the direction our county takes.

Willmar Warhawks Hockey

Friday, Jan. 2, 2026
Willmar Civic Center

Doors Open & Food- 6:10pm

Game- 7:10pm



Cost \$18

**Includes VIP ticket, food & water.
Register and pay by Dec. 22, 2025**

Upcoming AIM Events and Programs

Healthy Living Classes

Healthy Living Class- 3:45-4:45pm

Exercise Class 5:00-5:30pm

Fridays:

January 16 and 30

February 13 and 27

March 13 and 27



Cost is \$15 per person, per class

Sign Up by January 9

Classes taught by Amber Silva

Spring Dance

Date- To be announced in early 2026



Gardening & Planting Class

Thursday, March 12

5:00pm

AIM Office - Conference Room

Learn about gardening and take some seeds home to start your own garden! Free event but pre-registration is required.

WATCH PARTY! Disability Services Day



More details to come

Disability Services Day at the Capitol is Minnesota's largest rally to advocate for people with disabilities, their irreplaceable support system, and their right to live independent and rewarding lives.

Join us on March 24, 2026
at WCI

1300 22nd St SW- Willmar

AIM Fundraisers

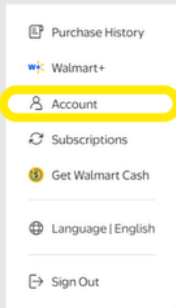
2 ways to support AIM at Walmart

- 1) **Donate change by rounding up your purchase at checkout on Walmart.com**
- 2) **Donate products from a nonprofit's registry & have the items shipped straight to them.**



JOIN OUR FUNDRAISING MOVEMENT!

1. SIGN INTO YOUR ACCOUNT



2. FIND MY PROFILE THEN CLICK ON GIVING & IMPACT

My profile

Reviews **10+ items to review**

Pets

Vehicles

Recipes

Giving & impact



3. CLICK ON SELECT LOCAL CHARITY

Your preferred charity

You are not currently contributing to a charity.
Start making an impact today!

Select local charity



FIND ADVOCACY AND INCLUSION MATTER OF
WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA



ROUNDUP WHEN YOU SHOP!!



**Future fundraising with
Healthy Fusion.
More information
to come.**

Fudge Sale Pick-up

Pick-up your orders on
Tuesday, December 9
3-6pm at the AIM office

FORMAL DRESS COLLECTION

PLEASE DONATE NEW OR GENTLY USED
FORMAL DRESS. ALL SIZES AND COLORS.

JANUARY 2 TO JANUARY 31, 2026

Drop off Locations:

**AIM Office
Bremer Bank
General Mailing
Mainstream
Boutique
Ridgewater College
The Barn Theatre**



Pizza Ranch Fundraiser

Monday, April 27, 2026

Time: 5:00-8:00PM

Thank you Willmar Pizza Ranch for hosting our AIM group! All tips and a portion of sales from dine-in and take out help support AIM programming. Mark your calendar!



People First – Events & News

People First Officer Election for 2026-2027

Every two years we select new officers. This group helps plan our events, fundraisers and community projects. The time commitment includes an officers meeting on the first Tuesday of each month at 4:30pm and our People First Event on the third Thursday of each month at 6:00pm. Officers are expected to make 75% of these commitments.

If you have an interest or more questions ask Jeff or VaLoris

DEADLINE TO FILE FOR AN OFFICE IS DECEMBER 12, 2025

After New Year's Party

Thursday, January 15, 2026

6:00-7:30pm

St. Mary's Church

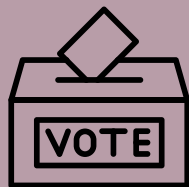
Welcome to 2026!

Bingo, Prizes and a catered meal including chicken or ham with mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, dinner roll & treat

Cost: \$14 - Sign-up
by January 8



People First Program & Election of Officers



Thursday, December 18

6:30-7:30pm

Vinje Church

Meal Included- Cost TBD

GAME NIGHT !

Video & Board Games

Thursday, February 19, 2026

6:00-7:30pm

Vinje Church



Free Event with snacks and water.

Save the Dates:

People First Events

Thursday, March 19

Thursday, April 16

Thursday, May 21

A Look Back at our Fall Service Projects

Willmar Welcome Week Booth



Robbins Island Christmas Light Set-up



Dog Park Clean-up with Lions Club



Pizza Ranch Fundraiser

A Look Back at our Fall Events

Fall Dance at the American Legion



Disc Golfing at Ridgewater



Centra Care Ambulance Tour and Program

A Look Back at Fall Events



**Prairie Woods
Environmental
Learning
Center
program**

Bugs & Birds



**AIM
Fall
Festival**

Walking Club finishes up for the year!



**Congratulations to those
that made the 10 mile and
20 mile club!**

A Look Back at Town Hall Forum & Annual Meeting

Town Hall Forum

A big thank you to our elected officials for taking the time to tell us about your work and listening to our ideas and questions



AIM Annual Meeting & Awards



Anne Miller Volunteer Award- Brittany Norris



Mary Rhude Advocacy Award- Amy Zitzmann



Ruth Mossberg Professional in Disability Services Award- Michelle Prahl



Community Partner Award- Pizza Ranch



People First Year in Review & Awards

People First Officer's highlighted their events, fundraisers and community service projects in 2025.

Caleb Bender receiving the People First *Member of the Year Award* from the People First Officers.

AIM Donor Recognitions

Corporate Sponsorships

AIM is excited to introduce a new sponsorship program to help support our mission. Whether you're a business, an individual, or part of a service group, there's a place for you to get involved and make a difference.

Advocate
Gold

\$1,000 +



**Joel &
Patty
Gratz**



Advocate
Silver

\$500

Jennie-O

Advocate
Bronze

\$250

**Cleaning Plus
Eagles of Willmar
Insurance by Strehlow
Gurley's Food LLC
Northern Radiator
Dooley's Petroleum**

Grants Received



Various Donations- August 16 - November 12, 2025

Thrivent

Mark & Lynn Stier

Dan & Deb Hanson

In memory of Mitch

Gripentrog

Jody Weddle

On the Run Productions



In Loving Memory- Amy Myrick

Memorials for Amy Myrick

Terry & Jody Fernholz

Roger & Barbra Bengston

James & Mary Hawkinson

Sheila & Steven Ellingboe

Donna Conroy

Divine House Inc.