



ADVOCACY & INCLUSION MATTER of West Central Minnesota

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

320-231-1777 www.aimwcm.org
PO Box 214 - Willmar, MN 56201

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

SAVE THESE DATES

Mar. 10–Apr. 17– Annual Rose Sale Fundraiser

Mar. 21– People First Event– YMCA after Hours

Mar. 24– Disability Service Day– Watch Party

Mar. 26– Advocacy Fair

April 1– First Day of Walking Club

Apr. 6– Barn Theatre– Beating a Dead Horse

April 16– People First Event– Movie Night

April 25– Spring Dance

Apr. 27– Pizza Ranch Fundraiser

April 29– Lions Dog Park clean up project

May 18– Rose Delivery Pick-up

May 21– People First Event– Bikes & Picnic

May 22– Oak Knoll Cemetery clean up project

June 1– Barn Theatre– Cinderella

June 7– Stingers Game

More details on these events inside the newsletter

From the Executive Director

Time to look back but also forward. Recap, in 2022 AIM's board chose to do a strategic plan for 2023 – 2027. The board worked with Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) to brainstorm status in 2022 and growth to 2027. Three focus areas are Advocacy, Social, and Financial. What do those areas mean?

Advocacy: Participate more with Disability Service Day at the Capitol. Growth of Town Hall Forum and Annual Meeting.

Social: Evaluate and change up events yearly. Re-engage former and attract new members (16-35). Create a People First Youth (ages 16-25). Engage members' families & community.

Financial: Explore/purchase a database, review/update public materials, connect with donor base twice a year, evaluate organizational needs & growth.

AIM has been able to stay on track. In 2024, we purchased a database called Little Green Light (LGL). This has been a work in progress with connecting to participants, family, staff, community, and local events. Please help us by keeping your information current. We have updated the AIM website, brochures, and business cards. We also hired a part-time program coordinator to engage AIM's younger crowd and keep events going. This has made us able to create different opportunities for all. Finally, we created a watch party for Disability Service Day at Capitol, a tour at Capitol and the Town Hall Forum. We connect with participants, families, and donors to continue the growth of AIM in the future.

VaLoris Anderson

Upcoming AIM Events and Programs

2026 Walking Club

Wednesday's 4:30-5:30pm

April 1 thru September 30, 2026

Robbins Island- Meet near playground

Take it at your own pace!

We take different routes to make it more fun!

Led by AIM volunteers!

Water & Snacks provided!

Cost is \$10 and includes T-shirt.

Registration forms available at the AIM office



Last Years 20 mile walking club members

Spring Advocacy Fair

Thursday, Mar.26, 2026

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 thus far include:

AED demo
Woodland Centers- Mental Health
CCT Bus
Gardening Tips
Crafts
And More!

Call CCT for a \$2 ride to this event



Monday, June 1
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 and times to be determined.

Last year was mid- April

Robbins Island

Sign-up with AIM to help take
down lights with Engan &
Associates staff

Upcoming AIM Events and Programs

MN Capitol Tours Thursday, July 23

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

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



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



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!

If you miss our March 12 class, take note that we will have future classes!

AIM Service Project Lions Dog Park Clean-up



Wed. April 29
6:00-7:00pm

We work with the Lions Club to do a general clean-up. Not handling any poopies!

Lions Dog Park
22nd St. & Willmar Ave.

Stingers Game

Sunday, June 7, 2026

Picnic- 4:00-5:00pm

Game-5:05pm

\$20 includes picnic & ticket

Register at the AIM office



Upcoming AIM Events and Programs

**LATE SPRING & SUMMER
2026 PREVIEW - Save the Dates!**

Little Crow Ski Team

AIM Night- Friday, June 26
Adaptive Skiing Day- TBD

Volunteers Needed:

Summer Running Series

June 27 - Foot Lake 4
July 5- Green Lake Road Race
Aug. 9- Green Lake Triathlon

Willmar Community Center

April 25- Father/ Daughter dance

Plus- Look for information rolling out for Let's Go Fishing, Stingers Miracle Minute, Camp Joy, Kandiyohi County Fair, Willmar Fest, People First events and more!

USA Special Olympics

June 20-26



The games bring 4,000 athletes and 75,000 fans from all 50 states here to Minnesota! Featuring 19 sports!

They also have volunteer opportunities for the games in Blaine.. Visit their website for details

Spring Dance

Saturday, April 25, 2026

Dancing in Paris

5:30pm- Check-in

6:00-9:00pm- Dance

Willmar High School Cafeteria

\$10 per person in advance or \$15 walk-in
Staff are free to attend but still must register



SAVE THE DATE!

Summer Dance

Tuesday, June 23

6:30-8:30pm - \$5 at the door

Willmar Community Center
Willie Wonka Theme



WATCH PARTY!

Disability Services Day



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

10:00am at WCI

1300 22nd St SW- Willmar

AIM Fundraisers

AIM Annual Fudge Sale

Total Amount Raised = \$4,585

That's 883 boxes!

Thanks to those that helped sell fudge!

**Eric & Paige Wankerl, Eric Guevarra,
Lindsey Harms, Riana Halvorson, Michelle
Prah, Leah Baune, Tasha Stangeland,
Caleb Bedner, Kari Benson, Taylor Tripp,
Jill Williams, Patty Kelm, June Laechelt,
Denise Weitzel, Deb Downey, Mandy Lush,
Dawn Engelkes, Jacob Ludvigson,
Scott Rhude, Robert Gilland, Betty Kraemer,
Brenda Simning, Angela Remus**

ANNUAL ROSE SALE

March 10 to April 17, 2026

Red or Lollipop Half Dozen \$15

Red or Lollipop Dozen \$27

Spring Bouquet \$20



**Drive-thru pickup on
Monday May 18th**



Time: 12:00pm to 5:00pm

New Location:

Robbins Island -Shelter 1

**Volunteers needed for rose delivery day.
Sign-up sheet at the AIM office.**

FORMAL DRESS FUNDRAISER- "THE GLAM SHOPPE"

OPEN SUNDAY MARCH 22 • 12 PM - 3 PM

OPEN SATURDAYS MARCH 14 & 21 • 10 AM - 4 PM

PLEASE STOP BY TO GET A DRESS FOR ALL FANCY OCCASIONS

2211 1ST ST S, WILLMAR - BY MAINSTREAM BOUTIQUE



THANK YOU TO AIM AMAZING VOLUNTEERS NICHOLE & KHLOE BREDESON, ROSE SNAVELY, GINNA CALVIN, SUE ENSTAD, AMY COURNEYA, PATTI & RON NOYES, JESSICA HANSON & RON JOFFER, BRITTANY NORRIS, DREAM TECHNICAL ACADEMY, JILL WILLIAMS

THANK YOU TO MAINSTREAM BOUTIQUE, SCHWEGMAN'S, MAURICES, RIDGEWATER COLLEGE, THE BARN THEATRE, OLD NATIONAL BANK, WCI, NUVISIONS, AND GENERAL MAILING.

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 Officers for 2026-2027

The new People First Officers elected at our February People First Event:

President- Brian Lippert
Vice- President- Lindsey Harms
Treasurer- Brenda Simming
Secretary- Caleb Bender
At Large- Riana Halvorson



Pictured left to right- Brian, Brenda, Lindsey and Riana. Missing Caleb.

Bikes & Barbeque

Thursday, May 21, 2026

6:00-7:30pm

Miller Park- Willmar

Bring your bikes to this event for a summer tune-up and obstacle course challenge.

Food includes Hot dogs with all the sides, chips and flavored water

FREE but you must register
Sign-up by May 14, 2026



MOVIE NIGHT



Thursday
April 16

6:00-7:30pm

Vinje Church
1101 Willmar Ave SW

Popcorn & Water

This event is free
but pre-
registration is
required

People First Event - YMCA AFTER HOURS

Saturday, March 21 from 5:15-7:30pm

Kandiyohi County YMCA – 1000 Lakeland Dr. SE, Willmar

We have access to the gym for basketball, pickle ball, kids-gym, pools, waterslide & more.

Wear comfortable clothes, sneakers & bring your swimsuit & towel if you are going to swim.

Note: This replaces our Mar. 19 People First event.

Free Event – Snacks Provided.



A Look Back at our People First Events

January New Years Party, Bingo & Election of Officers



February Game Night

A Look Back Recent Events



Winter Bowling League wraps up on March 28

Thanks to everyone at



Focus House Participants

February 17, 2026

Eric G, Tasha S, Scott R, Heidi H & Brenda S
(pictured left to right) were on the panel.

Jessica Johnson (standing) facilitated the discussion.



Willmar Warhawks Hockey



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

Willmar American Legion



Advocate
Silver

\$500

Jennie-O

Advocate
Bronze

\$250

Cleaning Plus

Fraternal Order of Eagles

Insurance by Strehlow

Gurley's Food LLC

Northern Radiator

Dooley's Petroleum

Suzanne Hass Insurance

Grants Received



Various Donations- November 12, 2025 - February 26, 2026

Craig and Lori Schellberg

Ronald Joffer & Jessica L Hanson

Alvina & Odee Hendrickson

Tammy & David Knapper

Naomi Lindquist

Elden & Dorothy Pickle

In honor of Elwood & Gloria Throndrud family

Dennis Schaeftbauer / Ann Hedershott

GiveMN

Building Three Thirty LLC

In honor of David Slinden

Kevin Crowley

True Journey Advisors

Joel & Cathy Halbritter

Bev Kingman

In Memory of Shannon Bolter

In Honor of Eric Guevarra

Jenith Benson

Charles & Barb Ludvigson

LuAnn Kruger

Anonymous



PO Box 214
Willmar, MN 56201

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