

# NEWS

## Freedom House Opens to Serve Victims of Domestic Violence with Disabilities

Barrier Free Living was planning to celebrate the grand opening of Freedom House, an emergency shelter specifically designed to serve victims of domestic violence with disabilities, on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Freedom House anticipated taking in its first residents on March 1<sup>st</sup>. **New Destiny Housing Corp., a New York City not-for-profit developer of supportive and affordable housing for low-income families partnered with Barrier Free Living Holding Corp. to fund and plan Freedom House.**

“Barrier Free Living has been providing services to disabled victims of domestic violence since 1986. From the very beginning, we saw the need for Freedom House,” said Paul Feuerstein, President/CEO. “We are thrilled to reach the day when we can provide a full range of services to help people with disabilities become free from abuse.”

Freedom House will feature 44 studio, one or two bedroom apartments for disabled victims of domestic violence and includes a comprehensive range of therapeutic and recreational activities that encourage independent living and life management skills. There will also be an emergency child care and after school program on site.

“Freedom House is a ground breaking new development that is reaching out to the domestic violence community in a way that no other facility has done in the past,” stated Freedom House Director Isa Martinez.

The facility is a natural extension of Barrier Free Living’s current non-residential program which serves over 211 people with disabilities who are either victims who are still living in domestic violence situations or survivors of domestic violence who are still dealing with its impact. “Upwards of 70% of the hotline calls we get have been for people seeking shelter,” says Feuerstein. “Up until now it has been extremely difficult to get a person with a disability into a domestic violence shelter, particularly if a person is a wheelchair user or is deaf.”

The facility was designed by the architecture and interior design firm of Cetra/Ruddy and built by Lettire Construction. It is fully wheelchair accessible, and features other design features to accommodate the needs of its residents, including oversized doorways, bathrooms and even stairwells for emergency evacuation purposes. For information about Barrier Free Living and its programs call 212-677-6668 or visit [www.bflnyc.org](http://www.bflnyc.org).

