



We rise by lifting others.

-Robert Ingersoll

Dawn of Hope ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

We thank you for the extraordinary support you have given Dawn of Hope for more than 40 years! As we draw to an end of the 2014 year, we are extremely grateful to everyone who has helped us enrich the lives of adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities. This year our Foundation has raised more than \$100,000 for our programs, creating opportunities for our Service Recipients that they may not have otherwise. The crucial life enhancing services we provide would not be possible with your generous support. Chris' heartwarming success story is one of many, but one that may not have been possible without you...

If you walk into the local animal shelter, you may not notice twenty-six year old Chris who is happily taking dogs out of their cages for some exercise. A stout young man with a quick laugh, contagious smile, and a friendly, laidback nature can be heard joking with the staff and volunteers. When he leaves he stands a little taller, shoulders a bit broader as he tells fellow volunteers that he has to head to his second shift job. You won't see him on that job as he comes in after closing, but you will see what he leaves behind: a clean, organized lobby, the uniform carpet lines only made possible by a vacuum cleaner and the sparkling restrooms with that "just cleaned" scent still lingering in the air. You would never guess that just over a year ago Chris was unable to look anyone in the eyes, paced nervously when in the company of others, and was plagued with uncontrollable emotional outbursts.

Chris' family tried to support his desire for independence while balancing his need for assistance with basic life skills. Chris faced a constant struggle between wanting to live independently and support himself and not having the skills or means to accomplish it. Chris and his family were stuck in a multi-year downward spiral with no idea how to make it stop, and in 2013 a final emotional outburst left his family with nowhere left to turn. Dawn of Hope stepped in to help.

Chris immediately moved into one of the single family homes in the Residential Program and obtained a job within the Vocational Program on assembly line contract work. The first weeks were not always easy, but surrounding Chris with the right people and giving him a sense of autonomy truly made the difference in his progression. Bonds of friendship forged through similar struggles, video games, and action movies emerged quickly with his peers. Warming up to the 24-hour staff was a longer process, but when Chris saw their good intentions and genuine loyalty, it happened. He became more comfortable in his new surroundings and in turn was receptive to staff assistance. He learned how to care for his belongings, to establish a good hygiene regimen, to clean his room and home, to create shopping lists, and to assist with preparing meals. When things didn't go as planned, the Dawn of Hope staff utilized the opportunity to teach Chris more effective ways to express his emotions, and in doing so, they enabled him to make healthier life choices. Clearly, the sun had started to shine brighter on Chris' future, but then the unexpected happened.

Arthur, one of Chris' dear friends and roommates, had been suffering from a terminal illness and had passed away. Those close to Chris feared the possibility of him regressing, becoming consumed by a haze of sadness, but something entirely different occurred. Instead of retreating inward, he reached out and embraced Paul, another roommate who was distraught after Arthur's passing. Chris was there for his friend, listening and encouraging him through a very difficult time. The ability to support Paul when he needed it the most further fueled Chris' self-confidence and catapulted him toward his goals. With this growing confidence, his personal determination, and the combined efforts of the vocational and residential staff, Chris began to successfully manage his emotions. He excelled in his position at the Vocational center and even requested additional responsibilities. He developed a healthy relationship with a young lady he met through his contract work. Finally, with the support of his job coach, Chris found a job in the community!

Chris continues towards his ultimate goal of living independently. He is working with the Dawn of Hope staff to learn life skills, and he still wants more for himself. He wants a fulfilling daytime community job. He wants to continue his friendship with Paul and others, and he wants to marry his now fiancé in 2017. Yes, you could say this is a happy ending, but for Chris it is merely a bright new beginning.

Through his own hard work and dedication, Chris changed his own life, but without the support and care from Dawn of Hope, his story could have been much different. We ask that you help us continue to provide services to individuals like Chris. A person whose potential knows no end, but a person who needs guidance in how to get there. This year, our goal will be to raise \$20,000 through our Annual Fund, and each dollar will go to enhancing the lives of real people. Real people like Chris. You can give by returning the enclosed envelope or by visiting www.dawnofhope.com. We thank you for supporting our mission and for believing that no individual should go without the support they need and deserve.

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