

MORE than you think.

THE INITIATOR

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Independent Again: A Look at Nursing Home Transition

When hospitals send people to nursing homes for rehab, ideally, it's a temporary stay. But for some, it can feel more like a dead end, as medical expenses and unpaid utility bills mount and former homes are no longer suitable.

That's where Disability Network/Lakeshore steps in. Through our nursing home transition program, we provide the support people with disabilities need to return to the housing of their choice. Created by Governor Granholm's Long Term Care Task Force, the program is federally funded using fines from nursing homes, and anyone who is enrolled in Medicaid and able to live independently is qualified.

At Disability Network/Lakeshore, occupational therapist Judith Morris manages the transitions. One of her recent successes centered on a woman named Lyn, who had gone to the nursing home following a diabetes-related amputation.

"When her wounds healed, the options counselor at West Michigan Longterm Care Connection referred her to me, and we started the process of transition," says Morris.

Lyn was eager to get out on her own. She says, "I was ready. I could do everything for myself, and I wanted to be independent, too." She continues, "I had lost basically everything when I went into the nursing home, but Judy helped me get restarted on my own. I made the choices about where I would live and things like that, but she helped me look. We found an apartment that suits my needs, and

she helped me shop for furniture, talk to the telephone company, and all the rest."

Now happily settled in her new apartment, Lyn says she'd recommend the service to anyone else who is interested. "They don't even know how much they've helped me out," she says. "I feel like I've met a new friend."

Morris is excited to play a role in giving back people's independence. "I've had several people say they didn't know they even had an option to leave," she says. "Others are fighting for their independence but lack the money to start. When I took Lyn out shopping for furniture, she said, 'I forgot how much fun it is to do things like this.' She's looking forward to going to church, spending time with her family, and getting her life back. It's a great feeling to be able to help."

As it turns out, nursing home transition is good for taxpayers, too. Morris explains, "When I tell people we can pay for their first month's rent, utilities, and furniture, they often ask, 'Where do you get all that money? Isn't that a waste?' They're surprised when I say our costs are usually under \$3000 per person, and that's less than Medicare and Medicaid pay in a month."

In fact, statistics show that Medicare/Medicaid pay an average of around \$4,410 per month on each person in a nursing home. "Multiply that by 12 months and the number of people we help, and that's a tremendous savings for taxpayers each year," says Morris.

However, ask Lyn, and the real value of this program is simply "getting my life back again."



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Nursing Home Transition benefits:

- The individual, who returns to an independent and fulfilling life in comfortable surroundings
- The community, which gains from the presence, ideas, and economic contributions of each person who is free to take part in it
- The taxpayer, whose small investment in the program is many times less than the costs of housing someone in a nursing home

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Volunteers

We rely on our wonderful volunteers for so much of what we accomplish. To find an opportunity that fits your skills, interests, and schedule, please contact:

616 396 5326

Donations

As a non-profit organization, we welcome gifts of all sizes. You may make a tax-deductible contribution by calling 616 396 5326 or mailing a check (payable to Disability Network/Lakeshore) to:

Disability Network/Lakeshore

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Join Us

Your gifts of time and resources can help us change everything for the better.



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Who we are

Most people equate disability with limitations. But it's our job to change the perceptions and realities that prevent people with disabilities from sharing in the community. Every year, we provide training, mentoring, and referrals to help people with disabilities and their families live productive lives. Because disability touches so many people, we also work on a larger scale, helping governments and businesses make changes that benefit not just those with disabilities, but everyone in the community.