

Living and Loving Life, continued...

Sharon lives in an apartment with a roommate and 24/7 staff support through Freedom Mountains, Inc., a new organization with the mission is to provide a home where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities/autism are free to lead meaningful lives and achieve their highest potential. Laverty says the organization spent some time getting to know Sharon, her living needs, and her vision of independent living before the move.

Today, the middle-aged woman who had been totally dependent on her parents, now visits them on Sundays, and they visit her parents visit her every Thursday. It has been a healthy transition for the whole family.

“Sharon decides how long the visits are,” Laverty said. “She has created a life without her parents, and she has control. She’s discovered her own wants and needs.”

In addition to the marked improvements in the seizure disorder, Sharon, who uses a wheelchair, has started walking short distances. She had also been attending an adult day care 5 days a week, but decided to cut back to just two days a week, allowing more time to participate in new interests.

“She shops a couple times a week, and wants to go bowling again soon,” Laverty said, noting Sharon’s other interests include drawing, doing math problems, college football, hockey, and watching her favorite television show, *Leave it to Beaver*.

For more information about Freedom Mountains, Inc., visit the website, www.freedommountains.org.