

Kenneth's Story

Kenneth Jackson is from Camdenton, Missouri. He enjoys his home, loved ones, hobbies, and community. Over the years of his life, he certainly has experienced his ups and downs throughout this life, but his story is one of perseverance and personal success.

When asked to share about his experience with Self-Directed Service, Kenneth did not hesitate. His biography written in this narrative begins fifteen years ago. In 1998, a few weeks before he graduated from high school his grandfather passed away. Kenneth went to stay with his grandmother to help her. Kenneth's mom and dad moved to Springfield but Kenneth did not want to move there. Instead he decided to stay with his grandmother. This was a great match as Kenneth provided companionship for his grandmother. Looking back his support team agrees this was mutually beneficial while they both supported each other and grandma provided the supervision that Kenneth needed at that time.

A few years later, Kenneth faced another challenge when his dad passed away. He had a great dilemma and felt he should return home to take care of his mom. However, Kenneth desired to stay with Grandma. Kenneth and his mom made the decision together that it was best for him to remain residing with his grandmother. This way Kenneth could live in the town where he grew up. He lived in his hometown since he was three.

There were many reasons to stay here. Kenneth had his paid job, friends, volunteer work, and other activities. It turned out that mom moved back to his hometown. Since mom's work took her away from the home, it was still best to stay with grandmother. Kenneth remained active with his employment and volunteer opportunities. Kenneth has always loved being active and helping others.

Kenneth began dating Jessica in 2007, and the couple became engaged in 2010. They planned their wedding and had a date set for May 2011.

In 2010, the family experienced another trial when Kenneth's grandmother passed away after a battle with cancer. Her death was devastating for Kenneth. This was not only because he was so close to her, but so many changes were coming at him at once. While Kenneth went to live with his mother for a few months, Kenneth's mom became concerned for Kenneth's future and knew he needed to learn to live independently. This was necessary because Kenneth planned on staying and living in "his" community.

Plans continued while he worked to reach this goal. Kenneth and his mom discussed mom buying grandma's house so Kenneth could live there. Kenneth decided he wanted to live in his mom's house since it was smaller and much easier to manage. He was at a crossroad and pivotal time in his life. Kenneth needed supports and training in order to develop the quality of life he desired.



It was this part of his life when he decided to pursue Self-Directed Services. As the planning process unfolded, it became clear that SDS was the best-fit to meet his needs. What a great fit it was! Kenneth demonstrates the principles of self-determination by planning his schedule and choosing his activities and designing his own schedule and routine. Kenneth has learned so much and continues to learn. Since SDS began for him, his confidence has grown and Kenneth continues to thrive. With the programs available to him he is able to live an independent and productive life.



Today Kenneth continues to work and volunteer. Kenneth's staff support his health needs and assist with shopping and meal preparation. He feels great and enjoys his support. Kenneth shops wisely and actively budgets his money. Without the services Kenneth would be living with his mom. If this were the case, his activities would be limited. Mom feels better knowing when she is no longer here, Kenneth will have the skills and supports to live the life he wants.

Kenneth and his girlfriend Jessica love their lives. They spend a lot of time together and cherish each other. It truly is a pleasure visiting with them about their hobbies and interests.

Kenneth loves to hang out in the "man cave" while enjoying his television, videos, and country music. Kenneth also loves going dancing with Jessica. Jessica enjoys dancing, cooking, country music, and shopping.

They are involved with Special Olympics and several community activities. Both Kenneth and Jessica participate in a bowling league. Jessica is the President for People First and Kenneth serves as the Vice President. They enjoy attending their local church together. At the present time, the couple continues to keep their wedding on hold, but they are looking forward to this special day, possibly in the coming year.



Kenneth's story describes the value of decision making power and Self-Directed Supports. Looking back, it is fair to say this life transition was easier for Kenneth than for mom, but she is so proud of Kenneth. She wants to see him be happy and succeed. Kenneth is a true champion and clearly demonstrates the principles of self-determination.

