

**Higginsville  
Habilitation Center**

**Successful  
Transitions into the  
Community**



**Higginsville  
Habilitation Center  
and  
Northwest Community  
Services**

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**Moving  
into the  
Community**

**Sharing Success stories  
Of Two  
Individuals  
Judy and Al**

## AL

Al came to America 6 years ago speaking very little English. He came to live at Higginsville Habilitation Center in 2006. He lacked social skills, hygiene skills and language skills. Because of these deficits, Al was very challenging to support and was unable to express anger and frustration appropriately. Al's parents wanted him to become "Americanized" but Al resisted as he wanted to continue his customs. Al was 17 and was considered "school age" so he was given home-bound education through the local school. Through determination, structure and consistency Al thrived on learning English and the American way of life. Al has learned good personal hygiene, eating skills and social skills. With the assistance of the Inter-disciplinary Team approach, Al acquired the appropriate skills and was able to tell us that he wanted to be included in community life by living in his own home in the community.

A typical day for Al was having limited choices into what he had to eat for the day, sharing the bathroom with 13 other gentlemen and his room was properly cared for by others. Now Al chooses what he wants to eat for the day, only shares the bathroom with 1 other housemate and can enjoy a peaceful home environment. Al does his own grocery shopping and has more access to community activities, hangs out with friends and makes more personal decisions.

Al transitioned into his own home on September 7, 2011. Since then, he has been involved in a lot of community activities, such as football games, and shopping for household items. Al is learning to keep his bedroom and home clean, takes part in cooking meals and doing laundry and was elected President of HHC/NWCS Consumer Advocacy Alliance.

## JUDY

Judy Brown is an 'amazing' lady who truly has an 'amazing' success story to tell! Judy spent many years of her life living in an institutional setting, working in the on-site work area. At that time, she was considered to be a person who would be very unlikely to succeed if moved into the community. She displayed many challenging behaviors that clouded family members, care takers and professionals view of her capabilities.

Judy's journey to success began when she showed a strong determination to overcome her challenges and found the right people to agree to support her in the community. In 1993 Judy moved into her own home with two housemates. She was supported by Northwest Community Services, a provider agency established by Higginsville Habilitation Center. She became very close to her strongest advocate (NWCS support staff) Dorothy Tonnar.

Three years later, Dorothy and her family were contemplating a move to Union, MO. She and Judy came up with a plan for Judy to move with them and become a part of the family. Judy's mother, who is very involved in her life, gave her blessing since she knew that Dorothy played an important role in Judy's progress.

They worked with the Regional Office, Higginsville Habilitation Center's Personnel Department, and MO DMH to put Judy's plan in motion.

Today at age 54, Judy continues to live an amazing "real" life as a member of the Tonnar family. In Union, Judy worked various jobs including a sheltered workshop. The family then moved to Booneville, MO where Judy worked at Wal-Mart. They currently live in Blackwater; MO. Judy has been successfully employed at the 87 Diner since 2000. Her boss, Kathie has nothing but good things to say about Judy's work ethic.

Judy makes decisions that affect her own day to day life and is a proud member of her community. She bowls every week on a town bowling league and loves being considered just one of the girls. She and her friend started a weight loss support group and they hold regular meetings with friends in their home. Judy is an active member of her church and has volunteered in the child care center there. She is a member of the organization, "People First" and is serving as treasurer

Judy continues to be a thriving member of her community and LOVES living her life! Because of her job she now realizes buying power. She has accompanied the Tonnar family on many wonderful trips to other states, with Judy's mother often joining them. She even went on a Caribbean cruise. Judy is proud of her accomplishments and looks forward to whatever the future holds.