Transitioning to Independence

Your gift helped Pam go home to reclaim her independence.

Laying in her room at a local nursing facility, Pam was mentally making plans for the day she would be discharged, and she’d be back in her own apartment. It was a small series of illnesses that had landed her in the hospital, and then for a brief stay at this facility. Or so she thought.

“The day they came in and moved me out of my room to a different ward is when I realized everyone thought it was permanent,” says Pam. “I never intended to stay in a nursing home. Not until I’m old and feeble and can no longer help anyone.”

After spending several months on this new ward, Pam was speaking with her nurse who asked her outright, “You don’t want to stay here the rest of your life, do you?” Without hesitation Pam notes to us she replied

“No! I want to get back in my own apartment.”

(continued on page 3)
Welcome

Your support of GSIL is touching lives every day. In this issue, you will learn about three individuals your support has directly impacted. But beyond the day to day support it gives to our consumers, your contribution allows GSIL to take advantage of the New Hampshire first in the nation presidential primary by acting as a leading voice for the nation's disability community to raise issues facing persons with disabilities into the national conversation.

Candidates need to develop positions on vital issues affecting all, whether it is in education, health care, technology, employment or civil rights enforcement, voters with disabilities have a lot at stake in this primary season.

GSIL's role is to advocate to Campaigns so they are accessible to all our voters.

GSIL urges candidates to assure their campaigns and public events are physically accessible, have adequate interpreters for persons who are deaf, campaign websites accessible to voters who are blind or visually impaired and literature should also accommodate voters with limited vision. These small steps taken by presidential campaigns will speak loudly of a candidate’s view of an America that includes all.

With sincerest gratitude,

Clyde E. Terry
Chief Executive Officer

Whooping it UP!

We are pleased to welcome Merrimack County Savings Bank as the inaugural Presenting Sponsor of the GSIL Hoops on Wheels Wheelchair Basketball Tournament. Come out and join us on March 23rd to cheer on the teams and help support our signature event. Can’t make it to the event? You can always support online.

Teeing it UP!

To better accommodate you golfers out there, we’re mixing up our annual Chipping in Fore Independence golf tournament and traveling around to new venues. In 2018 golfers had a blast at Canterbury Woods Country Club. This event welcomed GSIL friend Victoria Arlean and included a silent auction as part of the reception.

Mark your calendar 09/19/19! We’ll be hosting our next tournament on September 19, 2019 at Stonebridge Country Club in Goffstown, NH.

Grab your friends and line up your foursomes now!

For more event details, visit www.gsil.org/golf.
Pam, who has lived with disability all her life, has learned to advocate for herself. She knew she still had her own power of attorney, and she knew she was capable of living independently again. Having worked with GSIL in the past, she picked up the phone and made the call. Erica and Tiffany [GSIL employees] – “I’ll never forget you.”

Without your support of GSIL and our nursing facility transition program, Pam would have had no one to call.

As we speak with Pam, her GSIL personal care attendant Margaret is busy in the background cleaning up after helping Pam with her tasks of daily living. “This is the second time I’ve worked with Pam through the years,” says Margaret, as she poses for a photo. “When she was home again, she called and asked if I’d work for her once more, and I called her right back.”

Through the Consumer Direction program at GSIL, individuals are given the control to hire the persons they want coming into their home.

Pam opens up as she speaks of her ordeal of moving back to her own independence. “Like a prisoner who’s been locked up and just got out of jail. They may look fine, act fine. But you have to realize when you first get out, you’re so scared because you’ve been locked in something and you have to take the world in slow motion at first.”

And Pam was able to do that, because your support of GSIL enables our Coordinators to be there guiding individuals as they readjust to living independently.

As we continue speaking with Pam, she gets the usual sales call interruption on her phone, dismisses and complains as we all do. “When I was 2 ½ years old, they told my mother to put me in an institution because of my physical disability. She told them ‘no – there’s a brain in there.’” We learn how Pam was instrumental in raising her younger brother, how her older brother was and is her savior. She loves country music and tropical-flavored yogurt.

“When I moved into this apartment in September [2018], I needed help from GSIL again because it wasn’t accessible.” Pam obtained a number from Information and Referral, but she did the leg work herself to get an automatic door installed and a roll-in shower. Services that GSIL could have assisted with; but as she told us, she knows her rights and advocates for herself when she can.

Your support of GSIL allows Pam to once again live at home, independently. As we prepare to leave, Pam reflects on her ordeal and notes it was a fight, “tooth and nails” to get back to independence. “Without GSIL I wouldn’t be sitting here today. I want everyone to know that.”
Their Future is Bright

Your generous support of GSIL is shaping a bright future for at-risk students throughout New Hampshire.

Throughout his first three years of high school, Tyrese managed to keep his grades up, attend school and play football for Manchester West. But the last six months of his junior year, Tyrese was put on various medications for mental health related issues and this started affecting his motivation and desire to attend school. With dismal grades and lack of attendance, his next plan was to drop out of high school, feeling he’d never be able to graduate. “My counselor told me about Earn & Learn™, to think about it before signing my drop-out papers,” says Tyrese.

“I wanted someone to understand my story and what I am about. I had no teachers looking out for me. It was just four walls and I felt like I was being suffocated. For me, to reach out and seek help was a big thing. Now I’ve learned it’s okay to ask for help when you need it,” says Tyrese.

Tyrese worked diligently in E&L™ so he could catch up and earn the credits needed to graduate with his class this spring. He was also able to continue playing football his senior year. And while he is very proud of his academic success, he is just as proud of the paycheck he is now earning as an employee of Panera Bread.

His plans for the future? “I want to work two-three years and save up for school, so I can pay for it and not go into debt right off the bat,” says Tyrese. He hopes to pursue sports management/recruiting as a career option. “Earn & Learn™ saved me, tremendously. And for that, I’ll be forever grateful.”

“I just didn’t want to go to school or do the work. I thought it was all fun and games,” notes Nicole as she shares how she came to Earn & Learn™. “I earned two credits my Freshman year and only half a credit my Sophomore year. My guidance counselor gave me two options to look at, and I chose GSIL.”

Or perhaps GSIL chose Nicole. “I hadn’t been to school in over a week. I didn’t even know the day I went in that they [GSIL] were doing interviews. I thought I did awful. I was rude, and it was still a joke to me.”
Fortunately for Nicole, GSIL educators saw something in Nicole that she didn’t see in herself. But she didn’t get it right away. “At orientation I was goofing and laughing the whole time. I was not the person I am now.” In fact, Nicole has since learned that she was close to being dismissed from the program. But through friendships built with both classmates and educators, Nicole saw the importance of her education and made corrections without being given that official warning.

Nicole learned from her job internship that she really likes working with children and has since been hired part-time at the child care center she interned with. “This in addition to working part-time at Chipotle, and attending E&L™.

Her plans for the future? “First, I want to save up for a car and get my license, so I can work full-time this summer. Then when I graduate, I’d like to go into child care, or interior decorating.”

“It all clicked when I got here,” says Nicole. “This program has helped me a lot. I’ve really grown,” and again Nicole notes, with pride, “I’m not the same person I used to be.”

Funding Highlights

A gracious shout-out to USI New England for selecting GSIL as one of the beneficiaries of their annual golf tournament fundraiser. This event raised over $3,000 for GSIL!

Many thanks to our foundation and corporate friends for their recent support:

• Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation - $10,000 in support of our Spinal Cord Injury program.
• NHCF - $9,500 in support of home and environmental modifications.
• Mary Louise Billing Trust - $5,000 in support of our Nursing Facilities Transition Program.
• Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund - $2,000 in support of our student IMPACCT™ program.
• Boston Shamrock Foundation - $1,000 in support of the USI New England Golf Tournament benefiting GSIL
• NH Housing $125,000 - to continue the Home Accessibility Pilot Program

Special thanks to the following businesses for their new support!

• Alosa Rental Properties
• Bottomline Technology
• Bow Plumbing & Heating
• Charron Medical Services
• Gratis Gives New Hampshire
• H.R. Clough Inc.
• Ledyard National Bank
• The Lawson Group
• Watts Water Technology
• Wirebelt

Earn & Learn™ Opportunities Program Fall 2018 Class Graduates
The GSIL Serendipity Fund

The **Serendipity Fund** is an account created and funded by employees of GSIL to help support programs for consumers of GSIL. Funds are raised through a variety of ways and is led by a team of staff volunteers. Their latest endeavor was creating a GSIL Cookbook which consists of recipes submitted by staff members.

If you’d like to support the **Serendipity Fund** and get your own coveted **GSIL Cookbook**, you can do so by going to www.gsil.org/donate and give the suggested donation of *$5 or more*, and note that you are purchasing a GSIL Cookbook. We’ll get back to you and email you a PDF right away.

**With your support, so much more can be done!**

*Amount over $5 will support all services provided to GSIL consumers, including transportation and home access modifications.*

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Thank You to our 2019 Hoops on Wheels Sponsors!

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EVENT SPONSOR: CGI Business Solutions; Mobility Works; NH Healthy Families

COURT SPONSOR: Concord Rotary; Eastern Bank; Granite Investment Advisors; Northeast Rehabilitation; Rath, Young, Pignatelli; REQ; The Lawson Group

ANNOUNCER TABLE: CCA Global; Capital City Sunrise Rotary; New Hampshire Federal Credit Union; Pif Technologies; Residents of Bienvenue

BACKBOARD SPONSOR: Area 23; Carlson’s Motor Sales; East Coast Lumber; Melanson Heath; Windham Group

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