

# PEBBLES & SAND

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## NEW SLP VANS ARE MAKING EVERYONE HAPPY

Positive changes are on the road ahead for Stone Belt Supported Living clients. A small fleet of Ford minivans has been leased for their daily use helping clients better access the community. Ward B., Stone Belt CFO, shares, "Several years ago Stone Belt started an effort to reduce the number of large unreliable vans and replace them with reliable vans that were better suited to the needs of programs. For many years the options for small accessible vans were not ideal for the typical Stone Belt SLP site. While there were many options for these types of vans, they all came at the cost of losing the middle row seat.

This meant that in most cases the vans could only accommodate the driver and two passengers. The new van we are using is the first to not only provide an easy to use accessible ramp for clients in wheelchairs, but also maintains the middle seat, allowing the maximum capacity of the van to be five passengers plus the driver. While this set up is not great for a setting

that needs a van that accommodates multiple chairs, it does fit the profile of most of our sites that need accessible transportation."

Nancy S., SLP Director for Monroe County, added, "We plan to use the vans as a resource that will help with some of our staffing issues. Staff can pick up clients from different locations who share the same interests or attend the same social events and provide clients more opportunities to get out and do the things they want to do, even when we are short staffed or when their roommates are not interested in getting out. The vans are not only more economical to drive, but due to their smaller size they are easier to drive and maneuver. They also provide us with more confidence when we are driving out of town!"

Shirley F., an SLP client who utilizes a motorized chair, took a break from painting in Lifelong Learning's Making Space to answer a few questions about the vans. When asked about her overall opinion, she nodded enthusiastically, and

indicated that she rode around in one. She appreciated that it was a smooth ride. She reported that the stereo system was superb. She hopes to have one parked at her house.

Stacey D., another SLP client that also tested the van, agreed with Shirley "the vans are real comfortable and not so bumpy," and she added a safety feature, "I like the van because the hook up can go on my chair before it's in the van. This keeps the wheelchair on the ramp. You don't want to roll back."

Stacey added, "At first, due to the size, and my wheelchair's size, I thought I was going to hit my head, but I did not."

Currently, Stacey uses an older model group home van, which she says is "too bumpy." She thinks the compact vans will also be easier for staff to drive.

As far as the color white, Stacy laughed and said, "Why did they pick white? Because it's going to get dirty. I would've picked red or dark blue."

She agreed that taking the new vans through car washes will be easier than an old "turtle-top."



## JESSICA W.'S DREAM HOUSE

When Jessica talks about her new family home, the first thing she expels is, "my backyard is huge!" Then she unrolls her mind's blueprints that feature "a zip line, a trampoline, and tree house/playhouse," showing off that she has no trouble filling the possibilities of a good Indiana backyard.

She and her family are preparing to move to Ellettsville, still in Monroe County, but outside of the Bloomington city district. This will constitute a transportation change for Jessica, who currently rides BT Access, but would switch to Rural Transit.

In thinking about that, Jessica states, "I will miss by bus driver Charlie—he's hilarious! He will miss me—I will pop in and see him whenever I can."

When discussing the actual house, Jessica shares there will be a room dedicated to karaoke, and a room next to that for playing with her nieces. She also shared that her family will turn a space in the basement into its own apartment with a separate kitchen for her brother and her niece.

"I get my own room," and, "of course, my mom and dad will live there too."



## MARYLIN

BY JESSICA W.

Marylin was so sweet to me. We always loved to sing Carrie Underwood. We always sang "Undo It" or "Jesus Take the Wheel." She was my dear friend. She's in my heart and mind.

This is a very true story.

The end.

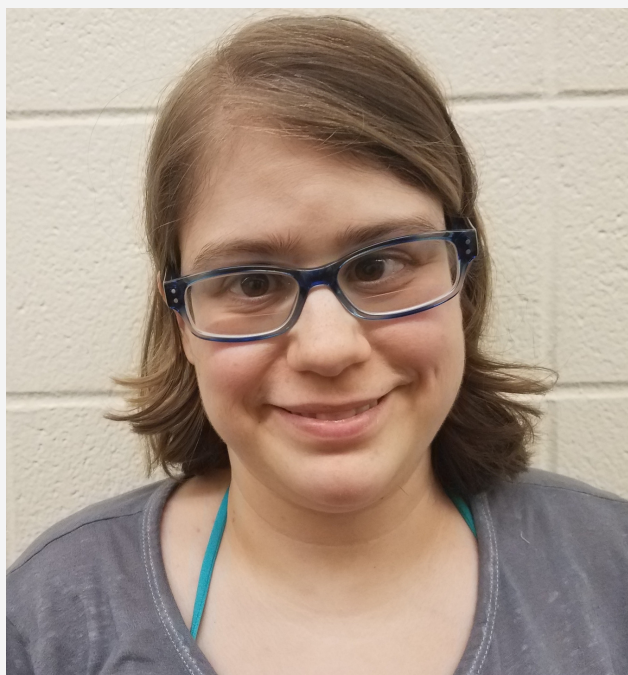


## DREAM HOUSE CONT'D

"Right now, I'm packing my old room up, boxing stuff up, cleaning. Dad and Mom will help move the heavy stuff."

She said she'll share her new address with Stone Belt once the move is final.

We're wishing Jessica and her family a smooth and successful move.



## HOMEcoming

BY BRITTANI P.

I first came to visit Stone Belt on my birthday. I was around 26 years old. It was my mom Gwen's idea. Blackstone was the only Stone Belt female group home with an open room. I lived at Blackstone for three or four years. I started Lifelong Learning and Manufacturing around the same time I moved into Blackstone. In the end, there were some personality difficulties with housemates—real life drama stuff, that led me to look for other places to live, and the pursuit of a waiver.

At the time I moved from Blackstone, there were no open Supported Living (SLP) sites at Stone Belt, so I found a place with TSI/Mentor, and I've been with them for two or three years. Now, there is

## HOMEcoming CONT'D

an open space in Stone Belt SLP.

I am going to miss everyone at TSI, and I have mixed emotions. So I'm a little happy and a little sad. Happy to have some of the opportunities that I've discussed with Stone Belt like attending Self Advocates group, and re-connecting with some old friends outside of day hours. I'm sad, because I'll miss the staff and friends at TSI. I'll miss Jamila the most. I feel like she really cared about me.

Just between you and me, I haven't packed anything. I need a plan to get started. My friend Betsy said she plans to help me with boxes. I'm excited to have a bigger room and plan sleepovers, as long as it's ok with my new housemates.

## SUMMER DREAMS, MAKE ME FEEL FINE

When we think of summer, we think of our summer plans, and those plans often start as winter dreams. Those dreams usually don't include sunburns, bug bites, and poison ivy (we like to forget about those little summer unpleasanties), instead they involve swimming pools and sparkling blue water, baseball games, and outdoor concerts.

Christy R., a supervisor in one of Lifelong Learning's community-focused teams used her winter time to dream up experiences we could share with clients in our day program. With creative thinking and sense of adventure, our clients had summer experiences like a trip to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for qualifications, a summer blockbuster matinee, a day out at the Bean Blossom Bill Monroe Music Park, a French Lick train ride—and what summer would be complete without a trip to the zoo?

The Indianapolis Zoo was thought of as early as 1944, and twenty years later it opened in 1964 in George Washington Park on East 30th Street.

Since the beginning, the zoo has focused not just on fun, but on education. When the zoo moved to its new 64 acre location in White River Park it showed its animal collection in series of habitats called biomes. Biomes are created to resemble the natural habitat or homes the animals came from. That is why the penguin exhibit is cold, and the desert is hot with cacti growing among brown rocks. It gives the animals a sense of home, and gives visitors a sense of their home, even while we're standing in our own state..



Of the two zoo trips planned, over 6 clients were able to attend with individualized staff focus. The planning involved finding transportation, figuring out costs, and being aware of all personal and accessibility needs. Some of the clients we serve have guardians who help them make life decisions. When notified of the trip, one guardian said, "That is HAPPY news!"

Christy R. said the trip up to Indy was used to talk "about all the animals we would see and give our thoughts on how they would act once we arrived."



Eric H., DSP, recalled, "The weather was cloudy and rainy, but our group ignored the unpleasant conditions and explored the grounds. Clients saw little monkeys cuddle and jump from tree to tree. We decided to be brave and see the tigers. We went into a little glassed in area and got to stand next to a giant tiger. It frightened us a little, but we felt safe behind the glass and admired the majestic creature.

Our group was also mesmerized by the underwater life (at the Oceans biome). We saw many strange fish and even tried petting sharks. We were able to see creatures that would never be able to see in person due to where we live.

The zoo allowed us to explore and be a part of life and nature that we typically only get to see on television programs."

No visit to the zoo is complete without a trip through the gift shop. One of our zoo visitors had an even more enjoyable experience by visiting the gift shop at the start instead of the end, so she could enjoy the zoo without the burning sensation of money in her back pocket.

