

Transitioning to Independence – By: Nicole Stefaniszyn



For those of you who don't know me, my name is Nicole, I am thirty years old and have only been on my own for three and a half years. Here's a little bit about how I was able to move out on my own. In 2001, I heard about a program offered by Grant MacEwan College downtown for the disabled who want to learn how to become independent and live on their own. It's called "Community Enrichment". It offers simple budgeting skills, grocery shopping for those who need help, cooking and a lot more.

It's a two year program. The best part of the program was that it offered a chance to live in an apartment for one month and try out all your newly learned skills. At the end of my two years, I was unfortunately unable to find housing right away, it wasn't until 2006. The waiting list is real long. Since I've been on my own I have been able to do all the things I never thought to be possible, for example, I volunteer with different organizations, work on a part-time basis, I love to host parties, I'm also part of The Wheelchair Curling Association (a new Paralympic sport).

Thinking back, I know I wouldn't have even thought I could make it on my own if it weren't for the people in my life, they are my family and friends, if it weren't for their love, support, and encouragement I don't think I'd be where I am today. In conclusion, I would definitely recommend the Community Enrichment program to anyone who has a disability, who wants gain independence and live on their own.

Thank You!