

"We had Christmas and Thanksgiving together...first time in years and years and years," Danny explained to me with a huge smile across his face.

If you had been sitting inside the apartment with us, you probably wouldn't have guessed that Danny had been discharged from a skilled nursing facility just a few months earlier. In October 2011, an accident put him in a coma where he spent ten days on life support. When he woke up he had no idea what happened, all he knew was that he was in a nursing facility.

To Danny, the facility wasn't a place to call home; for seven months he felt like he had no real sense of independence. One day he got word that

his roommate was going to move out with help from a program called Idaho Home Choice. Danny hadn't heard of this program but if it was something that would get him out of the facility, it was something he wanted to know about. He spoke with Tabby, his roommate's transition manager and she explained what the program was and how he could qualify. At first he was a bit hesitant but the transition manager assured him that he would be a great candidate for the program and would thrive in the community. After some thought, Danny knew she was right and he began the process of transitioning back into the community.

His transition manager worked diligently to get everything in place so Danny would be successful when he returned to the community. As part of the program, each participant can use up to \$2000 in transition service money. Because all but \$40 of Danny's money was going to the nursing facility, the transition service money came in very useful. Part of it was used to put a deposit on a new apartment and to pay for the first month's rent. Another portion of the transition services money was used to furnish Danny's apartment and to get him a few essential groceries. On the day of his discharge from the facility his transition manager picked him up and brought him to his new home. When Danny walked in, the first thing he said was, "Wow, this is the nicest place I have ever lived."

Danny told me that there are a number of things that he enjoys about being out in the community. On the top of his list is his independence. Another great thing is that he has gone from the 13 medications that he was taking in the nursing facility down to just a couple for his blood pressure. "I can smile now," Danny said as he went on to explain that he recently had his teeth fixed. He also loves that he has reconnected with his family and has had the chance to meet his newest grandson who was born while Danny was still in the nursing facility.

Visiting with Danny and hearing his story was an inspiration. As he walked me out of his apartment he shook my hand and reiterated a hope that his story would help people learn about the program so they too could move back into the community.

Idaho Home Choice is an Idaho Medicaid demonstration program focused on transitioning eligible people from institutional care to home and community based living arrangements. The community living arrangement must be safe and meet the needs of the individual. To learn more, visit <a href="www.idahohomechoice.dhw.idaho.gov">www.idahohomechoice.dhw.idaho.gov</a>.