

October 16, 2019

Dear Governor Wolf,

Community living is about choices, opportunity, and connection. When people have the opportunity to live in a home in their community, the likelihood of living an everyday life increases. The change in lifestyle opens many doors and leads to a happier life.

In November 2017, three ladies, who lived in the Hamburg State Center for over 50 years, moved into a community home. Their families were nervous and scared about the idea of such a huge change for the ladies as well as themselves. The thought that their loved one could live in a community setting and be taken from a place that they called home for most of their life was terrifying. However, once the family and individuals saw where their house would be and became part of the process to personalize it into a home, the fear turned to excitement.

Over the past two years, these three ladies have become part of their community. They are volunteering with Meals on Wheels, taking day trips to the beach, experiencing their first overnight vacations, and making new friends. Every day they have the option to go out and explore the world or stay inside and relax in their home. This is a simple luxury that every person has the right to. They invite new friends over and have cookouts on their back patio. Every Halloween and Christmas they choose to host their friends and families for a celebration. Their lives have transformed and they have been given back their right to make life what they want it to be.

The ladies are enjoying every moment of their lives in the community. They are building a new foundation and lasting relationships. Family members commented:

“I haven’t seen three happier girls in a long time. They were sisters at Hamburg and are still sisters. It was God’s will that they were able to live together. This is their home, their rooms, their space. They do not need to worry about people walking in and out.”

One of the ladies has always said that she wanted her own home just like her brother and sister-in-law. Now she says that she has her own home and “it’s everything [she] dreamed.”

Sincerely,

Carol Keeler, Elsie Potoczny, Amelia Socki (people receiving supports), Harry McGinnis (brother), Yolanda McGinnis (sister-in-law).

