

Betty Younkins, Grove City, PA

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Cousin of Robert Carson, Polk Center, Northside Cottage 4

Robbie has been living at Polk for the last 30 years and what I can see and observe when I go see him is that he absolutely loves living at Polk. Before moving to Polk 30 years ago he was in a group home and anytime I would go with his sister to visit him he was not the happy man like he is at Polk. When we would go see him he acted mean and hateful. I asked different times to different workers why he always acts unhappy and mean and hateful and the worker(s) would respond, "That's just how he is" or "He's not having a good day". While we would be there visiting him I can tell u this much, none of the workers at the group home tried to reassure him all is ok or good. To my understandings they didn't care. They were there to do a job and collect a paycheck only NOTHING extra. I NEVER have seen any of the workers go above and or beyond to make him feel safe secure and loved. As time when on his parents seen that the group home wasn't working out with him so with help they sent him to Polk Center. That was the absolute best choice ever.

Since he has been at Polk Center he's always smiling, laughing, happy and always as neat as a pin when I go with his sister unannounced. What I can see when I am visiting the workers go above and beyond with any issues he may have or that may arise. They make him feel loved, safe and secure. I have seen firsthand how much he has improved over the years at Polk. At the group home, he would not let Marilyn [Robbie's sister] get close to him. Sometimes he didn't even want her to sit beside him at all. But at Polk and with the work and help from the staff, he has grown so much more. Now he will even let her give him kisses on the head and let her give him a hug [and even give hugs back to her].

I was there one day and we went to see him and we took a walk down the hall and he reach out and took Marilyn's hand to show us the way. It was so touching and made me want to cry. It was the first time he went to her on his own and took HER hand. I got a head of them so I could get a picture of that so Marilyn would have that memory. The staff does a great job there. He has grown so much, he can take out the garbage, goes to his job [shredding paper], goes on outings, goes to the canteen for snacks [he loves his snacks] and even camping.

So I feel he should not be forced to leave his home at Polk Center and go to a group home because the way I feel is I am afraid he will go to the way he used to be before being very unhappy mean and hateful. I feel so bad for all the others like Robbie. Many of them do not have family to look out for them. This would be as devastating to them as it is to us. Please make this right!!

Thank you,

Betty Younkins