

## Journey to Good Times by Vicki Eichenlaub

I will write about the success that I have had adjusting to life after my acquired brain injury. I suffered a subdural hematoma that changed my life.

In 2005 NABIS introduced me to Janet Neil from WJS Alberta, my Supports for Community Living (SCLS) worker. Prior to my connection to SCLS, my family played a major role with getting the help that I needed; because of their support I was admitted to the Misericordia Hospital and then the University of Alberta Hospital and eventually the Glenrose Hospital.

My connection with Janet complimented the support that my son Tim and out of town family members provided; Tim assisted with household shopping and home and yard maintenance. He and other family members provided a lot of emotional support during my challenging periods. The SCLS program connection has brought hope, balance and freedom for me. My family is free of worry about how I am able to cope with living independently.

Janet and I worked on identifying needs and setting up realistic goals to help me regain my independence. She introduced to me strategies on how to cope with everyday living again. She came to my home and we discussed things I wanted to accomplish. She made suggestions on how I could cope/ adjust with life after my acquired brain injury. She ensured that I understood how and what I needed to do to reach my goals. Each week we would review my progress or challenges and adapt my goals so that I could reach them; the process made me feel good. The SCLS connection has allowed me to be more self-sufficient, increased my positive thinking and increased my self-confidence.

I was supported to doctor appointments, dental appointments, etc., until eventually I was able to do these activities alone.

I was introduced to a day group called "Mingles" in Spruce Grove, which consists of a group of people who also suffered from acquired brain injury and other disabilities.

Connection with the group has increased my circle of friends and, subsequently, influenced by decision to move to Spruce Grove. The group meets every

Friday and this is something I look forward to each week. I give back to the group by baking "sweet treats" weekly. Contributing to the group in this way allows me to have a goal to work on each week and I love having goals. I feel everyone has accepted me in general, despite some of my shortcomings. Without the help of the SCLS worker a lot of things I would not have accomplished.

I have accomplished the following:

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- Home management filing
- Independently shopping for groceries/ personal items that I had not done for myself for 3 years.
- Problem solving regarding moving out of my family home, where I had lived for 44 years. This included making decisions as to which community I wanted to move to, what type of housing I wanted to have, reviewing my budget to see what would be manageable for me, prompting me to move out and getting the process completed.
- With help from SCLS I was able to select a lawyer and a real-estate agent. Janet took me to the various offices and provided help with understanding the processes and advocated where needed.
- Viewing housing on the Internet gave me insight as to the cost of a house.
- Traveling alone to a city in Alberta. Janet provided encouragement helping me to follow through with this trip.

On a final note, my outlook on life is now more positive and I am satisfied with my life in general. One of the biggest contributing factors to my success was my ability to have a positive relationship with my SCLS worker, Janet Neil, from WJS Alberta. I believe it is important to have humor mixed with support as we strive through the many challenges that life presents. Remember "laughter is the best medicine."



Janet and Vicki on their Journey

**I WOULD LIKE TO  
ENCOURAGE OTHERS  
WHO HAVE A BRAIN INJURY  
NOT TO GIVE UP!**

