

Hands-on Approach Makes a Difference, One Member at a Time

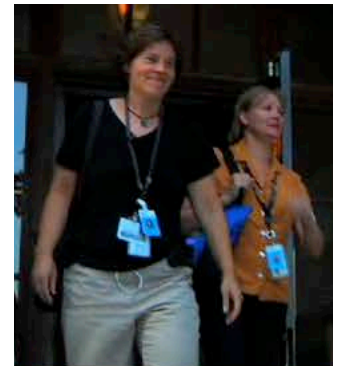
Living alone at home was taking its toll on James Dunbar. About four or five times a day, he would lose control of his muscles and fall. With no one to help, the only way up was to call 911. Independent living was looking like a fading dream, but that's when Amerigroup associates Karen Perlstein and Amy Hergenhan entered the picture.

Karen, a licensed clinical social worker, and Amy, a nurse case manager, teamed up, actively managing James with a hands-on approach. Karen and Amy knew they had to find a safer place for him to live, but they also knew he would not be inclined to enter a nursing home.

"James is a character," Karen says. "He is an old Harley-Davidson rider, and he loves telling people about the bike he had, the motorcycle. He talks about getting a motorized wheelchair, so he can speed down the roads."

Amerigroup worked with James and transferred him into an assisted-living facility, a place where he gets the help he needs but still feels empowered to live a fulfilling life. Of the people who are over the age of 50 and have disabilities, like James, 87 percent prefer to live in the least restrictive setting possible. Those settings can be a better option for the state because the average cost of providing care to one person in a nursing facility can be used to assist nearly three people in community-based settings.

"We go out and see our members in the community and try to assist them with their medical needs, their social needs, anything that might be going on with them," Karen explains. "We do most things together as a team, because a lot of these cases require both the nurse and the social worker. These members are very complex medically, and they're also complex in a social way."



Karen Perlstein, left, and Amy Hergenhan regularly monitor James' condition



James Dunbar is getting the help he needs

"Karen and Amy, they are God's angels," James says. "These girls go out of their way to make sure I'm getting everything I need."

At Amerigroup, we make it our duty to go the extra mile to get the right care to our members at the right time. We realize people are struggling to get the proper level of care, but our team approach to physical and behavioral health care offers a real solution, and if there ever was a time for real solutions, it is now.

"For us to see that, yes, we are actually making a difference, it just makes your whole life feel like it has some sort of purpose," Amy says.

Karen echoes the sentiment: "That's what we do this for."

To see Karen and Amy interact with James, or to watch other Real Story videos, please visit our website, www.amerigroupcorp.com