

Outstanding Personal Growth Award Nomination

Award Description:

The Outstanding Personal Growth Award will be presented to a person who receives services from an InterHab member and who has attained significant goals in his or her personal life. (e.g. move from institution to the community, independent living, education, relationships, etc.)

NOMINEE: Harry Cagle

ORGANIZATION: Starkey, Inc.

Provide a narrative including answers to the following questions. You may also attach a maximum of three letters of support. Additional information may be attached if necessary.

- What challenges has this person faced?
- How has he or she met those challenges?
- What are this person's significant accomplishments?
- What supports did this person have in accomplishing his or her goals?
- Are there other goals this person is working on reaching?
- Provide a biographical sketch of this person.
- Additional information.

NOMINATION NARRATIVE:

Harry's first years at Starkey were spent in some of the more restrictive program settings designed to provide intensive support for people who have behavioral health needs – and challenging days. In those programs, Behavior Support Specialists work with individuals on interpersonal interactions, anger management and routines and schedules to help them build on skills they already have.

Harry, like so many others, experienced ups and downs on the path to his current level of independence. In the old days, when Harry was angry he looked to do what he called “real damage” to others, lashing out with words or even physically. If he was asked to do something for another person, he would immediately expect to be rewarded for his efforts. If food was put out for everyone to enjoy, he would take it all. On the surface, Harry seemed to be in it only for himself.

But his trainers, specialists and supervisors recognized Harry's potential and worked with him to communicate about his feelings, to take a pause, to take turns and reflect on how others might be interacting – and to make him feel safe and

supported. Medications helped. Routines and expectations were important. But Harry did much of the work himself.

Lakenya Thomas, Semi Independent Living Supervisor, celebrates where Harry is currently – living mostly independently for more than a year in his own apartment. He also got hired at a local grocery store, to earn the money that helps him pay rent.

“The first time Harry was angry after he moved in, he talked about how he would have handled it if it was the ‘old Harry,’ doing real damage and hurting the other person’s feelings,” she said. “He wanted to talk through the situation. It took several times to process what had happened in order for him to understand the other person’s point of view. In the times after that incident, Harry handled his anger well by going to his apartment to cool off, or just deciding to walk away from his triggers.

“Even now, he always wants to take time afterwards to understand what happened. He is great at reflecting on behaviors he has had in the past, pointing to how he overreacted and could have handled it better. He will call me when he gets off work to get advice on events that happened, to see if he could have done something differently. I love his willingness to learn from situations he’s not sure about.”

Harry’s growth is evident in other ways, too. He has become the resident “food tester,” and will try a new dish before others, without hesitation. He no longer expects rewards for volunteering or helping, and is an extremely helpful friend to others. When food is offered at a gathering, he takes only his share – and also works on portion control and overeating when cooking in his own apartment, as well.

“Harry’s ultimate goal is to live independently and no longer require any support services,” Thomas said. “I know he can do it!”

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I have reviewed and agreed to the criteria for filming the awards video.

I have obtained approval for this nomination from the submitting agency's Executive Director.

Send this form via email to mshreve@interhab.org