Posted on:
13 October 2020

During these COVID-19 times Antun Duranac has been keeping himself busy, cooking up a storm in the home he shares with four other residents in Sydney's Ashfield area.

"His mother was a marvellous cook and it's clear that Antun has inherited her passion," says Kerrie-Ann Nothelfer, team leader at the home which is managed by Aruma Disability Services. "He loves cooking scones and apple pie, and above all else he loves chilli."

"And I like meatballs, with chilli!" Antun adds emphatically.

Antun, 50, has Down syndrome and has lived together with the other home residents for the past 30 years. He grew up in the Ashfield area and, while his parents died many years ago, he still has family connections in the area.

"He's very comfortable here – while he's naturally shy, he's got a very expressive side," Kerrie-Ann says. "He loves music, loves dancing and has been doing drama, art and music at the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre for 20 years."

The Neighbourhood Centre program moved online when lockdown restrictions came in so Antun, who is an NDIS participant, was able to keep grooving along to his favourite songs on Monday nights via Zoom.

However, he's happy to be back engaging once more in face to face sessions both at the Neighbourhood Centre and at the day program he attends three days a week at nearby disability support service Eurella with one-on-one support.

"Antun is now in a wonderful routine of wearing his face mask and sanitising or washing his hands at all times," Kerrie-Ann says. "He has purchased a special Tommy Hilfiger bag to contain all his personal PPE equipment when he goes out and is extremely good at practising physical distancing.

"All in all Antun has adapted well to the COVID lifestyle but it's great that restrictions are easing, as he really likes having time away from the other home residents who are all ladies," Kerrie-Ann says.

"His dietician Jessica was also able to come in and cook with him once a month while he couldn't go out. It's really helped build his cooking skills and doing it in his own kitchen means he feels much more comfortable. And when he's not cooking, he loves watching MasterChef and My Kitchen Rules on the telly in his room!"

Kerrie-Ann says the last big outing Antun managed to squeeze in before the lockdown was the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

“He was there from five till midnight, it was just him and a support worker,” she says. “He had an absolute ball, it was a great memory to sustain Antun through this time we’ve been in.”

As the lockdown restrictions ease, Antun has been back out dining at his favourite Thai and Chinese restaurants.

“Just today Antun was supported to have lunch at the local RSL and had a red wine,” Kerrie-Ann says. “The next thing he really wants to do is take in a show again.”

Asked if he’s enjoying getting back out into the big wide world and having some fun again, Antun has just one word: “Yeaaaaaahhhhh!”

Related Stories and videos

Online activities are the new normal for Stefan

Stefan’s new normal beats the lockdown blues

22 May 2020
Craig hopes kids learn key message from life story

Chef Craig serves up children’s book

22 September 2023
Peter Ohlson, an original 78er, will once again march with pride at Sydney’s Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras this year

Peter marches with Mardi Gras history pride, as original 78er

29 February 2024
More stories and videos