Posted on:
25 August 2023

The future looks bright for Jeff Gooding. He feels he has found a new family – a house manager, support workers and house mates who all have his best interests at heart.

Jeff, 50, has Multiple Sclerosis (MS). He also has seizures resulting in partial memory loss.

Both challenging conditions, Jeff lived in Woolloomooloo with his elderly mum, who cared for him until she sadly passed away.

Never married, an only child and with no children, Jeff lived alone until he had a fall.

Not able to walk or manage on his own, he ended up in residential aged care.

‘I was 45 when I went into a nursing home. It was different but I was cared for’, he said.

In aged care, Jeff was able to access physiotherapy which helped him to walk again, but he mainly relied on a motorised scooter. Then another fall saw Jeff hospitalised again.

‘They say I had a seizure, fell, and I broke the top of my leg. I just woke up in hospital. I couldn’t remember anything. I was in hospital for 4 months doing rehab,’ he said.

In Sydney’s St Vincent’s Hospital, Jeff said Disability Network Manager Natalie visited him regularly.

‘Natalie talked to me about my situation. How I was living in aged care and after my fall how my needs had changed,’ Jeff said. ‘She said the NDIS may be able to support me to move out of aged care. She suggested I lodge an NDIS plan reassessment, so I did.’

Knowing Jeff was an NDIS participant, Natalie contacted Helen, a National Disability Insurance Agency Health Liaison Officer about Jeff’s admission.

To support Jeff to leave hospital and move to more suitable accommodation, Natalie and Helen helped him gather reports and started his NDIS plan reassessment.

‘In Jeff’s case, he was living in aged care. He was too young. It was clear he needed a housing assessment with increased care needs,’ Helen said.

‘The NDIA Home & Living team found Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding were the best fit for Jeff, then they let me know.

‘Then Natalie, her team and I worked with Jeff and his support coordinator to find a suitable place for him to live, one which would cater to all his needs.

‘We all had a planning meeting with Jeff and together we were able to help him build a new, more suitable NDIS plan. He was so happy with the outcome. Then it was time to support Jeff to assess places to live and get quotes.’

Helen said throughout the entire discharge process Jeff, his support coordinator Peregrin, St Vincent’s, and the NDIA were all engaged.

‘It was a real collaborative effort,’ she said. ‘We were all so pleased to see Jeff leave hospital and aged care and head to his new home. It’s a fantastic result. It means he can start living his life again,’ she said.

Jeff said it ‘was so good to be out of hospital’ and living in such a lovely home.

‘People have been so nice. I can’t believe I’m doing it,’ he said.

Jeff’s Scope house manager Cindy said she was also involved with his hospital discharge.

‘We have a 5-bedroom house here at Belfield. We had a spare room. Then through Scope’s Connections team we heard Jeff could be a good fit,’ she said.

‘Jeff visited and met the staff. After several meetings with the Transition team and with all his management plans finalised, he arrived here straight from St Vincent’s.’

Able to do some daily tasks himself, Jeff said it’s lovely to have support workers to help.

‘I’m walking now. I wasn’t when I came here,’ he said. ‘I’ve got so much better. The physio brings a walker with arm rests. It also has a belt, so it helps me to take small steps. I can go from the loungeroom up the hallway now. I’m proud of myself. It’s amazing,’ he said.

‘The NDIS has made a huge difference to Jeff’s life. Now he has access to so much – therapies, equipment, and support workers 24/7. He has all he needs,’ Cindy said.

‘He has new clothes, his own room, he’s got colour in his face, he’s healthier. He’s just doing so much better.’

Keen to get out in his community too, Jeff said he’s really looking forward to going fishing.

‘I haven’t been for a long time. My support worker said he’ll take me,’ he said smiling.

‘I’m really happy living here. Everyone is so supportive. It’s like I have a new family.’

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