

## A Nursing Home May Not Be the Only Option!



*"I am doing so much better physically and I am just so much happier."*

David was not destined to lead an ordinary life. Born in Bamberger's department store in the Garden State Plaza mall, he started working in kitchens as a teenager, later becoming a classically trained chef. While working and living in a beautiful castle (true!), David suffered an accident that crushed his trachea/neck and sent him into a coma for 3 months. He regained consciousness just as his family was signing paperwork to send him to a Philly area nursing home.

For the next 5 years, David was in and out of NJ hospitals and nursing homes, fighting hard to talk, walk, and use his arms again. During one of many nursing home stays, David met Marsha, a nurse from the I Choose Home NJ program ([www.ichoosehome.nj.gov](http://www.ichoosehome.nj.gov)) who told him it was possible to find an apartment and live independently with Medicaid services. Together, they applied for every housing opportunity possible. Finally, in February of 2019, David moved to his beautiful, light-filled apartment in North

Jersey with his parakeet, Irish. His home health aide comes 6 days a week to help with whatever he needs. David's favorite part of community living? "The feeling of total freedom and my ability to cook what I want, when I want. I'm half Italian, so that's my thing, but as a chef, I can basically cook anything. I like to cook enough to last a few days. I could never do that in the nursing home."

David also enjoys attending mass and local Knights of Columbus meetings. Another bonus: his landlord, Ruth, has become a close friend, stopping by to help him and just hang out. When asked how community living compares to his time in nursing homes, he says, "I am doing so much better physically and I am just so much happier."



David's pet, Irish.

***I Choose Home NJ is a federal program designed to move people out of nursing homes into independent community settings with Medicaid supports. If you are interested in learning more, please call ICHNJ at 1-855-466-3005 or visit [www.ichoosehome.nj.gov](http://www.ichoosehome.nj.gov).***

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman  
Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, LTC Ombudsman  
[www.NJ.GOV/LTCO](http://www.NJ.GOV/LTCO)

FOLLOW US

