

William's Story

As told by his parents

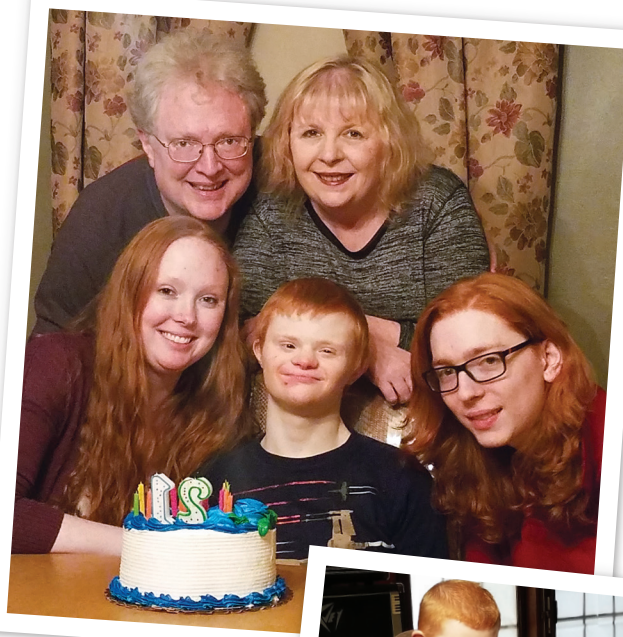
The youngest of three children in a close knit family, William has Down Syndrome and Autism. He is 21 years old, and in 2017 moved into one of our community homes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. His parents, Edward and Patricia, agreed to share his story with us in a recent interview.

Q. *Can you tell us about William's personality?*

A. William is a very happy young man — his smile can light up a whole room! He's a great listener; although his expressive language is minimal, he understands what you are saying. He loves to laugh and make jokes. He even has a few "inside jokes" he shares with us at home. Although Will is small in stature, he is very large in terms of making an impression. Most of all, he is extremely loving and gives the best hugs and kisses.

Q. *What are some of his favorite foods and activities?*

A. William loves all kinds of food. The top of his list are eggs, cooked any way! Pancakes are another favorite, along with hot dogs, which he calls "dog dogs." He also loves ketchup and



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would put it on everything if he was allowed to. He likes to go to the supermarket to pick out his favorite cakes.

William loves music, especially the band Rush, and he enjoys shows that are musical, such as Sesame Street.



CHILDREN'S AID AND FAMILY SERVICES

Q. *Can you tell us why you chose Children's Aid's community home for William?*

A. The location of the home is close to William's school as well as our home. There are three other young men living there that need similar levels of support, and we felt that William would fit in well with them. We wanted him to live with young people that were close in age to him, as this would give him important social connections. We also felt that the staff was a good fit for William. They've helped him maintain a consistent routine and develop important skills. Finally, they allow William to just be himself, which is important to his wellbeing.

Q. *What has this transition been like for William and your family?*

A. It was initially disruptive for William as it would be for anybody who is placed in a completely new environment, but he has now settled in and is doing very well. It was bittersweet for our family and we feel that we had a tougher time adjusting than he did. When you take care of someone you love deeply for 18 years and they are suddenly not living with you, you experience a feeling of emptiness. That emptiness never truly goes away, but we feel secure knowing that Will is cared for and in an environment that fits his lifestyle and needs.

Q. *You enrolled William in our STRIVE day program since he will be finishing school soon. Why did you select this program?*

A. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "strive" as follows: "to devote serious effort or energy; endeavor." The STRIVE program certainly lives up to the definition given the devotion, effort and energy in providing a dynamic program that

is supportive to the needs of its members. Children's Aid has put a lot of thought into the design of the programs as well as its physical layout. The facility is

brand new and is bright and welcoming.

There is a fabulous sensory room that would be the envy of other programs, and a kitchen that would garner praise from Gordon Ramsay!



Q. *How has Children's Aid helped William?*

A. We are extremely thankful for the support and services that Children's Aid has provided to William. Since he moved into the community home, the staff has done a remarkable job in improving his overall quality of life. It wasn't long before we saw extraordinary changes in William's day-to-day interactions. Children's Aid has helped to raise the bar and has supported William in his journey to lead a happy and meaningful life.

**It is only with your help
that we can help those we serve
with intellectual and developmental
disabilities, such as William,
to live lives of possibilities.**

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CHILDREN'S AID
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*Thank
You!*