

September 26, 2017

Sandra Strikes Balance in her Life due to Group Respite Program

Raising a family is no easy task, so like most moms, Sandra, put her own dreams on hold for years. She and her husband, Omar, cared for their family and raised four children. Sandra worked days as an RN at a dialysis clinic, and Omar, worked nights. This way they could devote round-the-clock care to their son, Wesley, who was diagnosed with an intellectual/development disability (I/DD).



After learning about CSS through Wesley's school, when he was just seven years old, CSS quickly became part of the family's life and support system. It was then that Sandra realized she could work on herself as well as caring for Wesley.

With the help of Group Respite on Wednesday nights at CSS, Sandra pursued her dreams without worrying about care for Wesley. She relaxed knowing he was in good hands with CSS staff. She decided to attend night classes. After a year, Sandra proudly earned her Bachelor's degree in Nursing from Benedictine University to further her career as a nephrology nurse. Now that she has reached this milestone, she is focusing on other dreams such as learning a new language and improving her health. Today Sandra is studying Spanish and visits the gym weekly. She can now devote time to herself and her health for one precious night each week.

"CSS is such a blessing for me. I finally have free time for myself while pursuing my dreams. Wednesdays have become *my night*."
~Sandra, Wesley's mom

Fortunately for Sandra, Wesley loves his outings with CSS. For example, this month, the group dined at local restaurants, shopped at Target, saw a good movie, and cheered on the White Sox at U.S. Cellular Field. The social outings are a great fit for Wesley. Even though he is nonverbal, wherever he goes, he is the life of the party.

Wesley carries his calendar of weekly activities, which have become sacred to him. Through CSS he has made some life-long friends who have all enjoyed group outings together for years. Wesley loves having fun with his friends and they constantly laugh and goof off together.



"We all have our tribe, CSS is Wesley's tribe."
~Sandra, Wesley's mom

CSS offers many different options for Group Respite activities throughout the week for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). These activities engage individuals in fun group outings including meals out, movies, seasonal activities, cultural events and field trips to nearby sights. Group Respite fosters social interactions, community integration, group decision-making and problem resolution among people with I/DD of similar ages and interests. For more information and a schedule of activities, please [click here](#).

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CSS News

Thank you to all of our amazing Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)!

CSS celebrated Direct Support Professional week to thank our dedicated DSPs. A special breakfast was held and 10 DSPs were nominated and given special recognition throughout the week for their outstanding hands-on work with our participants. To see the DSPs that were highlighted, [click here](#).

A Virtual House Warming ... Yes, Even a Coffee Maker Can Make a Difference!



Community Support Service (CSS) is preparing to open a new group residence. It will be home to five women with intellectual / developmental disabilities. You can make this house a home for these ladies by participating in our virtual housewarming party. Gifts start at just \$9.99. [Click here](#) for registry information.



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OUR MISSION

CSS is a private nonprofit agency that initiates, provides and promotes services for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families, within their communities, in order to strengthen their independence, self-esteem and ability to participate in and contribute to community life.

Illinois' largest Respite Provider

Each year, more than 377,890 hours of service are provided by our dedicated staff. We serve 814 individuals and their families throughout 51 communities in Chicago's western suburbs.