



# MISSION MOMENTS

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### *30 Years of Independence*

On an uncharacteristically sunny and warm day in early April, Doris and her sister, Irene, sit on the porch at Doris' house, a group home owned by Tangram. The two women listen to the radio and make small talk as they prepare to share a story nearly 80 years in the making.

Doris was one of seven children in her family. She was born in Osgood, Indiana and lived at home with her parents until she was 40 years old. In 1980, she moved to Greenfield and lived in a nursing home, as was typical of many adults with disabilities at the time, but she didn't like living there because she didn't have much freedom.

In 1985, Tangram, then known as Bright Way, was founded and established the first group home in Greenfield. Doris was one of the first individuals to live in this home—and 32 years later, she is still there.

Irene has always been active in her sister's life and maintains a notebook filled with stories and letters of encouragement for Doris. In these pages, she acknowledges Doris' disability, but tells Doris that she shouldn't let it stop her from building her life the way she wants. She explains that, in reality, everyone has disabilities and how we overcome those barriers shows our true colors.

Anyone who knows Doris knows that she doesn't let anything hold her back. Her sharp wit and sense of humor endear her to everyone she meets. "Her nickname is Sparkplug," Irene says, laughing.

She has worked at Shares, Inc. in Greenfield for 30 years, doing a variety of order fulfillment and packaging jobs. She loves to travel and has been to Washington, D.C., Hershey, PA, The Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, and Disney World. Each year, when it's time to harvest vegetables from the group home's garden, Doris has a special job—"She's a champion pea-sheller," Irene explains. Doris is also an avid bowler and has won several medals.

Doris has certainly lived a full life, surrounded by a family that loves her and roommates that have become her family over the years. Doris was raised by parents who encouraged her to be independent and, with support from Tangram, she has been able to live independently and chase her dreams. At 77 years old, Doris isn't slowing down. She plans to stay active and continue doing the things she loves.

In remembering the past 30 years with Tangram, Irene says, "It's been a blessing. She's real happy here."



Doris reflects on the past 30 years.

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