

Mission Moments

Made Possible By YOU!

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Mondays with Jerry

Friends are an important part of life, but it is increasingly common, in today's society, for people to feel isolated and lonely. Our changing world is making it more difficult for us to connect with one another and build lasting friendships. This problem is compounded for people with disabilities, who have historically been at even greater risk for isolation and loneliness than the general population. That's why it is comforting to know that some people are taking a stand against loneliness, like the two men featured in this month's Mission Moment, Jeremy and Jerry.

Late in 2018, Jeremy was searching for volunteer opportunities when he connected with Tangram. Volunteerism had always been important to Jeremy, thanks to his mom, whom Jeremy credits with instilling in him the spirit of service at a young age by taking him to visit with seniors in nursing homes.

"I have been volunteering regularly for five years, but primarily in group settings. I wanted to push myself to take my service work from group settings to individual, one-on-one experiences where lasting, meaningful relationships might be created. It was a priority of mine to connect with individuals that might be experiencing loneliness, not just to provide them with possible friendship, but because I was experiencing loneliness too and wanted to take action against living in that state of being," Jeremy explained.



Above: Jeremy (left) and Jerry (right) smile for a photo during one of their weekly get-togethers.



Tangram introduced Jeremy to Jerry, one of Tangram's longtime clients and a person who really needed a friend. Each Monday, Jeremy visits Jerry at his home where the two catch up on what they've been doing and make a few moves on their ongoing game of Scrabble (a very competitive game which Jerry was leading at last count). "Jerry humors me. I bring him bird pictures and he lets me talk about them because he knows I like birds. We talk about the Pacers and the Colts and our families. Jerry teaches me a lot about patience and being kind to people. He gives me advice, and I always feel better after I have talked to Jerry," said Jeremy.

One look at Jerry and you know he feels the same way. He lights up when Jeremy talks about their friendship.

“It gives me something to do. I just like his company,” said Jerry with a smile.

And the two get along so well that it doesn’t even feel like volunteering.

“I have found lasting friendship with Jerry. He has helped lift me out of my loneliness and I hope I have done the same for him. Our weekly time together has transcended the concept of volunteering to a place where we are simply two friends enjoying time together. I think that’s what we like most—we both need friends,” reflected Jeremy.



We can’t wait to watch this friendship grow!

During this National Volunteer Month, Tangram salutes Jeremy and all of our volunteers who give selflessly of their time and talents to ensure that our clients are able to live meaningful and joyful lives.

If you would like to join our volunteer team, please contact Lindsey Hill at lhill@thetangramway.org or (317) 968-9048.

To support more friendships like Jerry and Jeremy’s and our other volunteer opportunities, please make a donation at www.thetangramway.org/donate. Thank you!

