

# Mission Moments

*Made Possible By YOU!*

Edition 53, October 2020

## Come Fly with Me

Creating extraordinary lives for people with disabilities can make for some truly amazing moments, as Tangram Direct Support Professional (DSP), Barbara Mussler, recently learned.

At Tangram, Barbara is known for her commitment to helping clients get out and about to experience activities that enrich their lives, something that was quite a challenge during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. "I have seen firsthand the clients struggling with mental health issues when they couldn't get to day programs and jobs. I saw the results of social isolation. That has been one of our jobs as DSPs—to support people struggling in that area."



Left to right: Barbara, Chris, and Connie prepare to go flying

To help her clients overcome feelings of social isolation, Barbara used her trusty skill of creativity. She said she helped her clients get connected to virtual groups like Bible Study and Tangram's Music Club, which met over Zoom. She also encouraged going outdoors and getting exercise, knowing that even a little physical movement can provide a boost to mental health.



Barbara works with one individual, Chris, who loves to experience flying and has gone on "discovery flights" since 1994 at the Indianapolis Metropolitan Airport in Fishers. These 30-minute flying sessions are designed to introduce flying to potential pilots. C.P. even gets to steer the plane sometimes!

On a recent trip to the airport, Chris spotted a flier for helicopter tours and decided to take one. He was allowed to invite two

# Mission Moments

*Made Possible By YOU!*

Edition 53, October 2020

people to join him, so he invited his roommate, Connie, and Barbara.

The flight lasted about 20 minutes, during which time, the passengers saw lots of Indianapolis landmarks like the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and downtown. Chris said he always wanted to go up in a helicopter and reported that it was “nice and interesting.” Connie was a little nervous, but she ultimately enjoyed herself and said that she would like to fly again. And as for Barbara? Her voice is warm and genuine when she reports, “I just had a blast! I think I have the best job in the whole wide world.”

Barbara is always searching for fun experiences for her clients, saying, “Fun is my middle name!” This sometimes means calling upon the generosity of her friends. Years ago, when she worked for another disability agency, Barbara met a man named Dick and his daughter, Donna. She has remained friends with Dick and Donna, and in the summertime, Dick offers to take Barbara and her clients on boat rides on Geist Reservoir. Earlier this summer, she was able to take a few of her clients out on the boat with Dick and Donna and they made a day of it, enjoying a meal at Wolfie’s to cap off their excursion. And the amusement will continue through the autumn months. The next adventure that she and her clients are looking forward to is The Headless Horseman hayride at Connor Prairie.

But there is a greater purpose behind all that fun. Barbara explained, “Our job is to build relationships and connect people with their community. My clients have truly made new friends in Dick and Donna, who have become part of their circle.” This is true of the people they meet during other outings as well, such as when Barbara invites clients to swim at the pool she belongs to.

In talking to Barbara, it’s easy to feel her positivity and her love for the people she serves. She is a shining example of a dedicated DSP, using all her energy and skills to ensure that her clients can live full and happy lives.

“It gives me so much happiness to see other people enjoying life. It warms my heart.”

**Tangram salutes all of our front-line professionals who make a difference every day for individuals living with disabilities. You can honor their work and the outcomes they achieve with a donation to Tangram: [www.thetangramway.org/donate](http://www.thetangramway.org/donate).**