



MISSION MOMENTS

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Nice to Meet You, Racheal

"I think it is just a combination of the right people, at the right time, using the right approach."

This is how Megan Lauman, a Tangram Behavior Consultant, explains the reason for the recent change in Racheal, a Tangram client. That change has been many years in the making and it is causing a lot of people to wonder, "What happened?"

Recently, Racheal has started to do something she rarely did before: talk. This new development has been cause for celebration among many longtime Tangram staff members.

"Racheal used to sit on an exercise ball and flip through magazines all day. She attended a day program, but was very withdrawn and wouldn't interact with anyone," reports Megan, her behavior consultant.

Now, Racheal takes any opportunity she can to speak to people. Her program manager, Julie DeLoughery recalled, "Last week, we were walking through the mall and a former teacher of Racheal's came up to us to say 'hi.' She commented on how much Racheal was talking. It's incredible—she knows everyone and everyone is always so shocked to see how talkative she is."

Megan attributes Racheal's progress to all the staff members who work with Racheal. "Before the current staff members started working with her, there was never an expectation that Racheal should help out around the house or pick out her clothes or decide what to do for the day. Now, things are different. The staff members share a special connection with Racheal and they empower her to drive her own life."

"She loves to be engaged. If you invite her to help with dinner or help with the chores, she opens up. She is so loveable and I think she responds to the staff members' love for her," said Miatta, one of the staff members who works with Racheal.

Racheal's progress doesn't stop at talking. "She actually seeks out opportunities to engage with people," said Megan.

One example of this is a recent trip to a restaurant at the mall. While Racheal and Miatta were eating lunch, Racheal spotted another customer and walked up to him to ask him his name. After telling her his name, he asked the question in return and said, "It's nice to meet you, Racheal." Miatta thought maybe Racheal and the man knew each other, but he said they had never met. Charmed by his experience in meeting Racheal, he bought the ladies their soft drinks and wished them well.

"I have only ever known the talkative Racheal, but I know that she has come a long way by the reactions of people who have known her a long time. The staff members really deserve recognition for this journey. She blossoms more each day, and I'm excited to see where she'll go!" exclaimed Julie.

Racheal's story highlights the fact that milestones look different for different people, but have real impact on the quality of life for those we serve, no matter the degree of progress or success. Her story also highlights the importance of quality staff supports—one of our greatest resources.



Racheal at home

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