

Brett — a Green Street Commons Story



Brett grilling for Green Street Commons residents

Before moving to Visions Green Street Commons when it opened in 2021, Brett, who is in his early 40's, had spent his entire life in his family's home. The middle child of three, he was raised in a close-knit, loving family.

As the siblings grew up, Brett's sister and brother established their separate lives as adults, while Brett stayed with their parents. "Outside of what we did as a family, getting together for holidays, annual trips, etc., Brett's life revolved around going to work, coming home, and getting on the internet or watching movies," says his sister Heather.

"Then two years ago, in December, our father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and passed away in January." The sudden illness and death were hard on everyone, but Brett's life was significantly impacted because their dad

had been Brett's primary caregiver. Dad, who ran a funeral home right next door to their family home, had always been there for Brett.

"Our mother's cancer diagnosis had also re-emerged," Heather says, "and all of us were very concerned that Brett should have a place of his own."

These life-changing events caused the family to realize that there was no solid plan for where Brett would live and who would care for him once their parents were gone. This is the role Visions was founded to fulfill—providing for the needs of adult children with disabilities as their parents age, and then pass on.



Brett with his sister, Heather, and brother, Trevor.



Brett with his mom and sister in Florida, 2022

"Our parents had always been hesitant about Brett leaving home," says Heather, "Dad's focus was on keeping him where he was safe and sound." It was time to rethink their approach.

"We had visited Sunrise Farm in Enfield for an open house 6 or 7 years ago," continues Heather as she tells the story of how Brett connected with Visions. "I was immediately blown away by the rich and vibrant community, and how proud everyone is of their apartments. At the

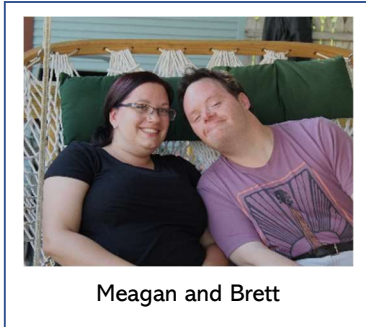
time I thought, man, this would be perfect for Brett."

With their father's illness, "that was the opportunity," says Heather. "We reached out to Sylvia and though she explained that there was a significant wait list, we were prepared to wait."

"When Sylvia called just a few short months later to say that Visions might have a place for Brett and a perfect roommate, it felt like divine intervention," says Heather. "We were so blessed. And Mom was relieved of one of her biggest worries – Brett. It went from there."



Proud roommates.



Meagan and Brett

Visions Program Manager Meagan Hartley, who has known Brett's family since 2010, is very proud of how far he's come since moving in. "Those first days were a bit rough," says Meagan, "We weren't sure he was going to make it. He had never lived anywhere other than with his parents and he didn't want to be alone. But he stuck it out!"

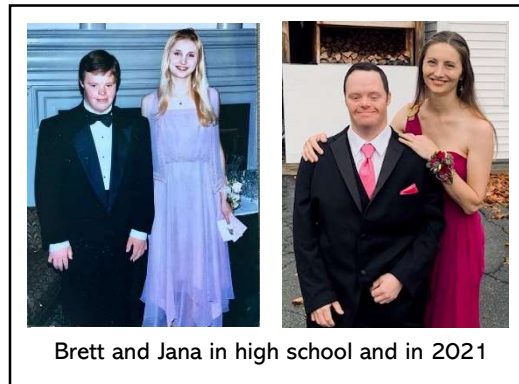
As is true for each Visions resident, Brett was assigned a primary direct support staff mentor who supports Brett by ensuring his apartment is clean, he has safe transportation to and from work, he keeps up with medical and dental appointments, and all his physical and emotional health needs are addressed. This has included helping Brett to connect with a counselor to help him with the process of grieving for his father.

Heather has nothing but good things to say about Visions and Sylvia, whom, she says, has created something "truly amazing, particularly when compared to group homes and other options offered after deinstitutionalization."

Brett agrees: "This is cool," he says, when talking about living at Visions Green Street Commons. "Friends and staff. My apartment. Shopping with Eric, good for me."

After a year at Green Street Commons, Brett has seamlessly integrated life in his new home at Visions with the people and places that have always meant the most to him. "I love Mark and Mom, Christina and AJ, Trevor and Jana," Brett says, as Meagan describes how Brett's brother Trevor flew up from Florida shortly after he moved in to see his apartment and help Brett get settled.

One aspect of his life that has not changed, is Brett's long-term friendship with Jana. This friendship is quite remarkable because it is rare that people without disabilities become true, long-term friends with a person with a developmental disability. As it became time for his senior prom, Brett's family was afraid that it was a cruel joke when Brett told them Jana had invited him to be her date. It was no joke, however; and to this day they get together every week for dinner after Brett enjoys a good workout with Jana's boyfriend, a personal trainer.



Brett and Jana in high school and in 2021

Moving to Visions didn't change that friendship and it didn't change Brett's weekly trip to Dunkin' Donuts that he had always enjoyed with his dad, Sunday dinner with his family, or his job at Dartmouth Dining Services where he has worked Monday through Friday from 11AM – 3PM in the 53 Commons dish room (formerly Thayer Dining Hall) for 18 years.

"I can't say enough about the level of care – holistic care – that Visions has offered my brother."

