

Anthony

In his mid 40s, Anthony was in a car crash that left him paralyzed and unable to work. After rehabilitation, he settled into a nursing home, but was determined to one day get out.

A former boxer and karate expert, he embarked on an exercise program. Eventually, he regained most of the use of his arms and the ability to step with the aid of a walker. Anthony made friends at the nursing home and became head of the Residents' Council. But the longer he stayed, the more restless he felt.

"I just couldn't see myself getting out of bed every day, going around and smiling at everyone but not really being happy," he said. "There was nothing more they could do for me. And I was getting only \$15 a month to live on. I couldn't buy no clothes, couldn't go nowhere. I said, 'I can't do it no more.' "I asked God to take me out of here."

The chance came when Anthony turned 60 and became eligible for PASSPORT. Council on Aging enrolled him in the program for in-home care services and also in Ohio's Home Choice program. Home Choice helped Anthony find housing and provided money for furnishings.

"You do see people in nursing homes who could come out, but they have zero," said Mary Beth, a COA Community Transitions Specialist. "They have nowhere to live, no furniture, no clothing. I've worked with people who have supportive families, but there are also many who are alone."

The transition is usually complex. Long-term care and medical services, other community resources, financial assistance and family support must all be found and coordinated. COA works closely with organizations such as Easter Seals and the Center for Independent Living Options to make everything come together.

COA has dedicated staff members who work with the 131 nursing facilities in COA's five county area to help people like Anthony return to more independent living settings.

Anthony has made the new apartment his own – his first place in 13 years. He set up an aquarium, cable TV and exercise equipment. "I got money in the bank and a charge card. I can go to the Zoo or a museum or wherever I want. [He uses Access transportation service.] The only thing missing is a girlfriend."

PASSPORT provides Meals on Wheels and a home health aide for a couple hours each morning and evening, seven days a week. At \$24,820 a year, Anthony's care plan is about half the average cost of care in a nursing home.

"It's a wonderful feeling," Anthony said, "when you've got your privacy and your own place."



After living more than 10 years in a nursing home, Anthony was able to move out and into his own apartment thanks to Ohio's Home Choice program, PASSPORT and Council on Aging's Community Transitions team. "It's a wonderful feeling," Anthony said, "when you've got your privacy and your own place."