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**For Immediate Release**

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**Frail Senior Gets Wish of Being Home For The Holidays Instead of Being in a Nursing Home**

Patricia had many blessings to be thankful for over the holidays. Top on her wish list was getting out of the nursing home and being home for the holidays. "All the people from the Area Office on Aging's PASSPORT Program and the Ability Center who enabled me to get out of the nursing home and come home have been the greatest blessing of my life," Patricia said. These words mean a lot coming from a person who was pronounced dead for over six minutes and was brought back to life. She was in a serious car accident and was ejected from her car and almost had to have her left leg amputated. This accident caused problems with her lymph system.



After being in the nursing home from a recent fall that she wasn't able to get up from, it looked like Patricia was going to be in the nursing home for a long time since she needed assistance with bathing, dressing and meals. Instead of Medicaid paying about \$60,000 a year for Patricia to be in a nursing home, she found out the PASSPORT Program could bring services like she received at the nursing home right to her own home instead, at a cost to tax-payers that is only 1/3 of the cost of a nursing home. PASSPORT also provides an Emergency Response System that allows her to push a button she keeps on a necklace to get help if she falls again.

The best news was that Patricia did not have to sit on a waiting list for these services. Thanks to the Home First provision state legislators set up, people in nursing homes can by-pass the waiting list for PASSPORT and get in-home services right away.

Since Patricia was in need of financial assistance to make the transition from the nursing home back into the community, she was also assisted by the HOME Choice Program which helped with funding her security deposit and 1st month's rent on her apartment, as well as some household items she needed.

Patricia is thrilled with her transition back to having her own place. Patricia stated, "It saved my life! I was so depressed at the nursing home, trying not to give up. I wouldn't have gotten out without these programs. It was so overwhelming being in the nursing home, sharing a room with a stranger and having to be around people with emotional problems. I needed to be there for awhile to get stronger and to lose weight, but it is so nice to be home."

She said, "I have plenty to give thanks for at this time of year. Being out on my own will allow me to be a contributing member to society." Patricia, who is a retired teacher, said she just finished helping a person pass their GED test.

When asked what she thinks of her 700 square foot apartment, she smiles and says, "It's like being in a castle."

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