



PLAN|NJ

Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of New Jersey

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Lifetime Advocacy for People with Disabilities

Dear PLAN|NJ supporter,

Imagine you are raising a child with significant disabilities. Their well-being depends solely on you, and the question of who will care for them after you're gone looms large. Imagine a world where your child's future is uncertain – this is a daily reality for many. While siblings or extended family may provide some support and solace, many families face the daunting prospect of having no one to turn to. We want to introduce you to Josie* and tell you how the advocacy and planning we have been providing for her family have created a safe way forward; we have become a true lifeline for her.

Please read on...

PLAN|NJ came to know Josie just after her father had died from a short bout with cancer. She was living with her mother, who faced mental health challenges, as well as her grandparents, who provided the structure and stability Josie needed to thrive as a young adult with autism. Josie completed her schooling and enjoyed working part-time and participating in several Special Olympic programs. As a Trustee of her Special Needs Trust, PLAN|NJ visited periodically and assisted Josie and her family as a source of advocacy when needed.

As Josie's grandparents aged and passed, she and her mother remained in the family home. Worsening mental health challenges plagued Josie's mother, leading to an unstable home environment for both. PLAN|NJ staff increased support and home visits to ensure they were receiving the necessary care and living in a safe situation.

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*Name changed for privacy

We also made sure, when Josie developed multiple chronic health conditions, that she received proper medical care and supervision to monitor her changing needs. Staff attended medical appointments, scheduled follow-ups and ensured medications were renewed when necessary.

Not long after **PLAN|NJ**'s increased involvement, Josie's mother received a devastating terminal diagnosis. It was necessary for her to move to a long-term care facility, leaving Josie in the family home, unsupervised. Fortunately, **PLAN|NJ** had already begun preparing the necessary applications for Medicaid and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and successfully advocated for Direct Support Professionals to care for Josie in her home. The Direct Support Professionals provided companionship and assistance with grocery shopping and meal preparation.

However, Josie's own health conditions were worsening and she now faced the new threat of homelessness, as the family home would need to be sold to pay for her mother's care facility. So we increased our advocacy efforts with DDD again, this time to secure an emergency residential placement for Josie. It was imperative that she receive the medical care necessary to stabilize her significant medical conditions, and the companionship and structure that had been missing in Josie's life.

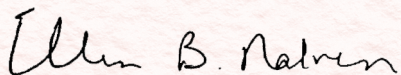
Just as I began writing this letter to appeal for your support, we learned that Josie's mother had died, leaving her with no living relatives.

I am so relieved to say that DDD recently approved our urgent request for Josie's emergency residential placement, and not a moment too soon. Plans for her future were in motion when this sad day came. A new home is already available, and she can look forward to continuing the work and activities she enjoys, while living in a safe and stable environment. I envision a new chapter for Josie filled with new friends and improved health. She already has a supportive network of professionals who believe in her and are dedicated to making her life healthy and joyful.

Josie's strength and resilience are shining through, even in the face of adversity. She has already experienced the unwavering support of her **PLAN|NJ** family. We hope you will recognize the important role our organization plays for families impacted by disability.

During this giving season, I urge you to consider making an online donation to **PLAN|NJ** at www.plannj.org/donate. Your generous contribution will allow us to expand our reach and offer the same kind of care to others like Josie who may be isolated and vulnerable. Should you prefer to mail a check, please make it payable to "**PLAN|NJ**" and mail it to **PLAN|NJ**, PO Box 547, Somerville, NJ 08876-0547. Please call or email us with any questions or visit our website today.

Yours sincerely,



Ellen Ball Nalven
Executive Director, **PLAN|NJ**