

# HELP FOR GOOD

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Gretchen



Stark County  
Board of  
Developmental  
Disabilities



# Gretchen Hoffman

Meet Gretchen Hoffman 41 years old born in Pittsburgh, Pa. Within 3 days of birth, her parents, Richard and Connie Hoffman, were informed of her life-threatening medical problems and advised to baptize her in the NICU before transferring to Children's Hospital, where she remained for 1.5 months. She was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and seizure disorder. For the next few years her life revolved around endless doctor appointments, infant stimulation and therapies which allowed her to develop into the beautiful person she is today. At that time our life was a whirlwind and balancing act because we also had a 3-year-old son at home.

Our family moved to Stark County in early 2001 and immediately enrolled her at Southgate School for the final 2 years of education. At Southgate among other things, Gretchen was the Prom Queen and was involved in her class graduation ceremony by using a chin switch to give a message. The growth and development she achieved there far surpassed her opportunities in West Virginia public schools. As parents, we often wondered what her life would be like if she had the opportunity to attend Southgate School for 12 years. The attention and therapy she received at Southgate was remarkable.

After Southgate Gretchen transitioned to the Stark DD Whipple-Dale workshop for several years before currently enrolling at TWI West in Massillon for dayhab services. The care and attention she receives at the TWI workshop is exceptional and she is truly loved there. Besides taking care of all her needs, the staff puts her in her stander almost every day to help strengthen her and rolls her around to visit friends and





staff, while in the stander. Going forward we are extremely pleased with the care she receives at TWI West.

Siffrin Community Homes is Gretchen's residential provider. She lives in a community group home, in Massillon, Ohio with three wonderful ladies. She has lived in this home for approximately 5 years and in a previous home with another provider for an additional 9 years. Gretchen loves her roommates, each of the staff and the nurses who visit twice a day. This is a high needs house, but the ladies and staff have fun together.

Gretchen's smile is her trademark!! Every person she has ever met remarks about her infectious smile. She lights up every room she comes into and if you really want to see that smile on display talk to her about her older brother Braden and her nephew Connor. Even though they live in West Virginia, she is very close to both of them. Taking long car rides to see new things and simply being around people are two of Gretchen's biggest pleasures. There are many other joys in her life, but those are her happy places. She loves to watch the Voice, America's Got Talent, visiting Mom and Dad, spending time with her roommates, carnivals, DD dances etc. She even has a boyfriend.

Gretchen is a positive, loving, unbelievably happy person while living with many challenges.

Gretchen's Individual Option (I/O) waiver, which is partially funded through local levy money, allows her to live independently. The support and services she receives from the staff of the Stark County Board of DD, the staff at TWI Workshops and the staff of Siffrin Community Homes, also funded by the Waiver, allows Gretchen to live as independently as she can and is able to be the best person she can be. We, as her parents are thankful for the Waiver, and for all the organizations involved in her daily life.

