

# Pride in living independently

As a young person living at Faribault State Hospital, Cindy Asrouch's future was filled with uncertainty.

Even after she left Faribault to live in a group home, it was unknown whether she could ever work in the community or live independently. Cindy's challenges include a hearing impairment and a developmental disability.

But the 49-year-old Minneapolis woman is certain about one thing: independence is important to her. Today, with Opportunity Partners' help, Cindy lives in her own apartment and manages most of her daily activities including laundry, cleaning her home, caring for her two cats and cooking meals.

Cindy's residential services are provided through Opportunity Partners' Semi-Independent Living Services (SILS) program, a cost-effective option that makes it possible for people to live on their own with several hours of staff involvement each week.

"Cindy takes such fierce pride in being independent," remarked Rita Lowinske, Cindy's SILS worker. "I'm just really proud of how well she's done."

Rita visits Cindy four hours each week to help with menu planning, grocery shopping, banking and bill paying. The four hours of service is a fraction of the hours Cindy needed initially through SILS, and is quite remarkable considering at one time she was being cared for in a state institution.

"She is strong-willed and has a positive attitude," Rita said. "Those traits have really served her well in getting her where she is today."

Cindy has worked her way off Social Security, thanks to a steady job sorting checks at Ameriprise Financial, a position she has held for seven years with coaching and support from her day program.



Cindy has lived in an apartment with a roommate since 1991 when she moved out of Clara Doerr Residence/Lindley Hall. Opportunity Partners closed that facility in June 2000 and relocated residents to four-person community homes and apartments.

She has shown great initiative in living successfully on her own. She keeps her apartment clean and tidy, rides city buses to and from work, does her own laundry, and buys most of her own clothes, even taking them to the tailor for alterations.

She also has an excellent memory, with a knack for remembering dates of important events in her life. She is an avid sports fan and particularly enjoys Gophers and Vikings football and the Minnesota Twins.

Cindy is quick to smile when asked how she feels about living on her own. "I'm proud," she said.

◀ Cindy Asrouch receives help paying bills from her SILS worker Rita Lowinske.



Cindy Asrouch pets one of her two cats at home in her Minneapolis apartment.

## Residential options

Opportunity Partners offers several residential options that make it possible for individuals to achieve the greatest possible independence at the lowest possible cost.

Some clients are able to live independently with a few hours of staff support each week. Others live with roommates or family members and need more frequent assistance from staff. In all cases, Opportunity Partners staff is accessible to clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if issues arise that clients are not able to solve on their own.

Opportunity Partners' 20 community homes make it possible for people with higher needs to live in safe, comfortable homes in residential neighborhoods, while working and participating fully in their community.

More information about Opportunity Partners residential options, can be found online at [opportunitypartners.org](http://opportunitypartners.org) or by calling 952-938-5511.