

**Michael**

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All I need is an accessible apartment...

Michael, now 53 years old, has lived in a nursing home for 15 months. He worked as a carpenter "for all of my adult life," but because of a degenerative neurological condition, Michael had to stop working.

"My condition began to worsen about three years ago. I was living in a third floor walk up. As my symptoms got worse, it became more and more difficult to walk up and down the three flights of stairs.

"I had to stop working. My life consisted of watching TV and reading the newspaper. I was depressed because I was so isolated. I couldn't get proper treatment for my condition or my depression because it was so hard to get out of my apartment."

In December 2003, Michael was hospitalized and told he would no longer be able to walk. He began to use a wheelchair. Returning to his third floor apartment was impossible and finding an accessible apartment that he could afford on his monthly social security disability payments of \$661 per month seemed unlikely, so he was transferred to a nursing home.

"I went to the hospital and never came home again. I've done my time in the nursing home. After 15 months, I'm ready to move out. I was told it could take up to five years for an affordable accessible apartment to become available. I can't see why I should have to be in a nursing home if I don't need that type of care. All I need is a one-room accessible apartment that I can afford. A lot of people in nursing homes should be in other types of housing – like me, they don't need to be there.

"Finding CIDNY was a life saver for me. My nursing home social worker knew very little about how to find an apartment or connect me with VESID. The help, support and information about housing and independent living skills allows me to teach my social worker what she needs to know. I want to go back to work. I can be productive, self reliant. I just need the accessible housing and the job training and I can make my own way."