

# There's Nothing Like Being Home: Helen's I Choose Home NJ Success Story



Helen's home—a private space in her son's house—is a magnet for visitors, especially her family of three grown children, 13 (mostly grown) grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, not to mention the family dog Oreo and the neighborhood birds and rabbits.

Neighbors and their dogs will stop by, along with members of her congregation. She is in a much happier place than the two years she lived in a nursing home.

Helen credits her faith, friends, and family for helping her through her nursing home stay to reach her goal of community living.

"My faith got me through a very hard part of my life," she says. Life in long-term care was not *all* bad. Helen fondly remembers many nursing home staff members for their kindness and helping her when she needed it most. She became close friends with her former roommate as well. "My roommate was my heart. We did a lot together. I [still] talk to her every day."

Helen was 80 years old when she left the nursing home behind in March 2023 and moved into her current home.

"I have my own things now," Helen says. "I have my own kitchen. The [home health] aide that comes to my apartment is very nice."

Helen recently obtained a motorized wheelchair, and she plans to make good use of it exploring her community. She looks forward to attending religious services in person and going back to her former nursing home to visit her friends and the staff.

Her advice to anyone thinking about taking the leap to community living?

"Do it now," she responds. "Do it right away. There's nothing like being home. There's nothing like your family."

I Choose Home NJ is a federal demonstration program to help individuals transition from institutions into the community. For more information, visit [www.ichoosehome.nj.gov](http://www.ichoosehome.nj.gov) or call 855-466-3005.

