



INALLIANCE

Building A More Livable Workable World

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Something to Talk About

Folsom, CA- Scott Grochowski is a young man with a great sense of humor and a compassion for animals, but up until about a year ago Scott's neighbors had never seen that side of him. Instead, Scott was known for violent outbursts and aggressive behavior. The 26-year-old has been diagnosed with Mental Retardation, Autism and mild Cerebral Palsy, which severely limits his ability to speak. This verbal communication deficit meant people who came into contact with Scott had a difficult time understanding him.

The frustration Scott endured from his inability to communicate with his community caused him to lash out. When angry, Scott might yell, run at dangerous objects or bite his own arm. Scott's family and neighbors believed that he did not like meeting new people and hated dogs, because he had hit several individuals on the street and was known to kick at dogs that crossed his path. Neighbors began crossing the street and walking their dogs in the opposite direction when Scott came their way; he had alienated the people in his community. In the middle of 2010, Scott began using an assistive communication device. The small black box features a series of images that correlate to the users needs. Scott can navigate through the images and the machine "speaks" for him. For the first time, Scott was able to vocalize his thoughts and needs in a manner that those around him could understand.

Within a few months, Scott was able to greet someone using the communication device, and his actual speech and dialect skills noticeably improved. Scott no longer has to yell and make loud noises to get the attention of the people in his life; he can tell them what he wants and where he wants to go. Violent outbursts are a thing of the past, because Scott is able to "talk" to the world around him.

This new found freedom has allowed Scott to make friends in his community, many of which are of the four-legged nature. Scott plays fetch with local dogs and neighbors wave and greet him regularly. When he sees a new dog, Scott will calmly ask the owner if he may pet it, and allows the dog to smell his hand first. Recently, Scott became a volunteer at Sundance Ranch where he feeds the horses and cleans stalls.

Scott's entire demeanor has changed. He is even known to use his communication device to make jokes, such as making it say "no cheating" when he is playing a game. Scott spends a great deal of time handling his device and expanding his communication abilities. Scott smiles and enjoys meeting people in his community. His neighbors no longer avoid him, and now he has the confidence and skills to be heard and subsequently understood.

About INALLIANCE:

INALLIANCE is a nonprofit organization that supports people with developmental disabilities throughout the greater Sacramento area. Since 1952, INALLIANCE has supported the belief that people with developmental disabilities have an absolute right and responsibility to participate fully and equally in society and to maximize their own quality of life. Services focus on job placement, employment training and the facilitation of supports necessary for integrated employment and community living.

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Serving People with Developmental Disabilities Since 1952

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