

## Shopping for Independence



Richard Gross can shop alone now! This may seem like a small thing to you, but for Richard, it is years of hard work paying off.

Richard first came to Unity House in the mid-1990s unable to care for himself. Over the years, with the help and support of his care professionals, Richard has been able to progress from being fully dependent to moving into his own apartment in 2013. Still, he needed help grocery shopping every week.

Senior Counselor Cheri Westmiller has worked with Richard for over a year, and advocated for a more independent approach in his life. For months, she took him to Aldi's and went in with him, but gave him space. Little by little, Richard became more confident, insisting Cheri wait at the front of the store while he shopped.

Finally, on December 16, Richard asked Cheri to wait for him outside in the car while he went inside to shop on his own. He met his goal: to shop alone before Christmas. Congratulations, Richard!

"He had such a sense of accomplishment," said Cheri. "He always had the desire to do it himself, and it's a huge thing that he has that spark. When he came out, he had the biggest smile on his face; I teared up. This is the moment that people in this field work for – to see these folks succeed."