

Spreading Her Wings



It took two tries, but Harmony Mayak has graduated to living on her own! The Freeville woman spent several years working on her goals and making great strides towards independent living. At the new year, it was time to spread her wings and see if she could do it. So far, so good!

“I moved into my own house on January 1,” said Harmony. “I worked hard on my goals – learning to knock, food portions, cleaning my room – and became independent. [Unity

House staff member] Nancy [Cheri] helped me a lot to meet my goals. We are going to make homemade curtains together for my new home now; we already measured the windows.”

Harmony and her cat Angel are settling into the Lower Creek Trailer Park in Freeville, near Dryden, where she had lived in a supportive apartment setting managed by Unity House since August 2012.

“Harmony had developed the skills she needed to live independently,” says Dryden Program Manager Laura Thompson. “We did some safety training with her, and her mother and Ithaca day hab staff helped her look for an appropriate apartment. Harmony did a great job advocating for herself, met her goals, and moved out on her own. A real success story!”

Originally from Walla Walla, Washington, Harmony and her mother moved to the east coast in 1993 to be near family. Harmony has participated in the Special Olympics since she was eight. Her mother coached her in bowling, volleyball, and swimming. “It’s a good opportunity to meet people and make new friends,” said Harmony.

Now 29, Harmony keeps busy during the week. She attends Unity House’s day habilitation program twice a week, and takes the TCAT bus to work at Challenge Workforce Solutions as a receptionist the other three days. She says: “I enjoy it because I’m a people person. I get to meet people from all walks of life.”

Well done, Harmony!