



**Participant Moment with Pat H.
March 2025**

By most accounts, Pat H. has had a challenging life.

But you won't hear her complaining. Instead, she chooses to dwell on the gifts.

"Sometimes," she says, "you've just got to take your medicine. Life? It is what it is."

Born in Grand Rapids 77 years ago, Pat dropped out of Union High School at 16 to get married, which required her mother's signature. She had two children before divorcing less than three years into the relationship. A third child was born later, and today, Pat counts five grandchildren and 18 "great-grands" among her extended brood.

Beginning in her teen years and well into adulthood, she labored at a variety of jobs – as a retail clerk, welder, health care worker and school bus driver. That last job she performed for 14 years, covering an array of routes for Grand Rapids Public Schools before retiring in 2014.

One of her most challenging stints was caring for seven kids during the day and then heading out to clean offices until 10 or 11 at night, something she did for nearly a dozen years.

Pat's early childhood was a mixed bag. Though she loved frolicking at nearby Pulaski Park with three siblings and other neighbor kids, life at home included time spent with an alcoholic father who didn't always provide: "Lots of days, it was just popcorn for dinner," she recalls. "Or maybe biscuits and gravy. Sometimes, my grandmother would give us pork and beans from a can."

Pat also endured more than one abusive relationship, and she whispers something about "black eyes" and "hair being pulled from my head" before letting the rest of her sentence evaporate.

Eventually, Pat came to lean on her Christian faith to sustain her. "I used to believe in God, but I didn't practice it when I was living with an empty fridge. I've come to believe, though, that God came into and saved my life, and took me away from what I was – an alcoholic myself."

Pat treasures her time at Care Resources, where her medical needs are met, and she gets to spend time with friends both old and new. That would include a participant whose grandson Terry used to ride on a school bus Pat piloted to and from the youngster's school, where he was enrolled in special education classes.

"I was able to rekindle my relationship with Terry – he's 21 now and lives in a group home – all because of Care Resources," says Pat. "So do I like this place? Yes, very much!"

Through all of life's ups and downs, Pat says she prefers to see the glass half full: "I tend to take things as they come," she says. "And I tell myself it's how you respond to tough times that makes your life what it is.

"I like this place and the comfort it provides," she says, "and I love its people."

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