

**Podcast 099 A Whole New Life**

**Host: Tania Anderson, CEO of ARISE**

**Guests:**

**Billie Horr, Sennett Meadows Resident**

**Marie Phillips, home health aide**

**TRANSCRIPTION:**

**Tania Anderson 0:15**

Welcome to the ARISE Podcast. I'm Tania Anderson, CEO at ARISE, and I'm really excited for our conversation today with Billie Horr, who is someone that lives in Sennett Meadows outside of Auburn in Cayuga County, and that we support through one of our programs here. And also, Marie Phillips, who works directly with Billie as an aide and as an assistant. So welcome Billie.

**Billie Horr 0:44**

Thank you.

**Tania Anderson 0:45**

And welcome Marie.

**Marie Phillips**

Hi!

**Tania Anderson**

I'm going to talk to you first, Billie, if you can tell me a little bit about your story. You identify as a person with a disability, and just tell us what was going on in your life before you connected with a rise, and how you connected with arise?

**Billie Horr 1:04**

One of my neighbors just lived next door to me, and she was the one that mentioned this program to me. She asked me if I heard of arise. I said, yes, I've heard of them. And so, she connect me up. That's how I learned about this program.

**Tania Anderson 1:25**

And when you were first connected with ARISE, what was your living situation? What was what was going on with you in your life?

**Billie Horr 1:33**

Well, the house I was renting had no smoke detectors, no carbon monoxide smoke detectors. And because if the building is owned by the landlord, it's his responsibility for those.

**Tania Anderson 1:50**

Okay, so you were in, you were in a not good housing situation, right?

**Billie Horr**

That's correct.

**Tania Anderson**

And you also, you have a disability?

**Billie Horr**

That's correct.

**Tania Anderson**

What is your disability?

**Billie Horr 2:00**

I have a learning disability, which I can manage my own money. I can manage just about everything.

**Tania Anderson**

Okay, but you need a little extra support sometimes?

**Billie Horr**

Yes.

**Tania Anderson 2:11**

Okay, so you're connected with arise and we have a program that is supported housing initiative, where we have advocates, trained staff that will connect people with housing, right? And then so Senate Meadows is the place where we are physically located to help people. And so you landed in Senate Meadows? What do you think of that apartment that you have at Sennett Meadows.

**Billie Horr 2:40**

It's easier to keep clean. I can come, go, come, go, as I want to. I sometimes I go out to treat myself to a cup of coffee and stuff. And I am a shopaholic.

**Tania Anderson 2:57**

Oh, well, yeah, I think we're all guilty of that sometimes. So, I want to bring Marie into this conversation. How Marie, how would you describe your role in the relationship to Billie?

**Marie Phillips 3:11**

Well, when I first met her, she was, she acted a little down, you know, and like, depressed and stuff.

**Tania Anderson 3:21**

Well, let's back up a little bit. How did, how did you meet Billie?

**Marie Phillips 3:25**

I met Billie by putting in an application for home health aide.

**Tania Anderson 3:29**

Okay, so your formal role in her life is as a home health aide. Great. Okay, so you connected that way, and then so you were starting to describe how, how you experienced Billie, when you first started working together,

**Marie Phillips 3:43**

She, you know, she was silent a lot. She was in a wheelchair, you know, she didn't get out much, really. And we, we just kind of like started talking and, you know, I was trying to see where she was coming from and what she had going on.

**Tania Anderson 4:05**

And you started to form a relationship.

**Marie Phillips 4:11**

And, you know, we become good friends, and we do things together. We go out to lunch every Well, every day. And, you know, and do those things. I've taken her to my house a few times. She stayed the weekend with me.

**Tania Anderson 4:29**

So, wow. So, so, so Billie, it sounds like you know, Marie is more than a home health aide to you, she's really been a support. Do you think it's; do you think you have seen a change in yourself since you started living at Senate meadows and being by Marie?

**Billie Horr 4:45**

When someone is used to helping others and when I started receiving help, it was awkward.

**Tania Anderson 4:54**

Oh, it was hard.

**Billie Horr 4:58**

Yes, yes. I had to adjust to it, which that took me time to adjust,

**Tania Anderson 5:03**

But you have adjusted. And so, what is that like now?

**Billie Horr 5:08**

I'm comfortable. I'm in a safe place. I don't have to worry about people coming up to your house, taking going through your mailbox, take whatever they want.

**Tania Anderson 5:19**

Oh, that was happening at your other house, and Senate Meadows is much more secure for you.

**Billie Horr**

Yes, Yes,

**Tania Anderson**

Oh, that's great. That's great. Do you feel like you are more social, that you're more engaged in the community now that you've got the support? What is it? What does that look like for you? Marie talked about going out to lunch. You mentioned that you like to shop. What are the things that you like to do that you couldn't do before?

**Billie Horr 5:44**

I couldn't when I was in a wheelchair. I had to depend on handicap transportation. I had to be careful going out in the snow, because the bearings in your wheelchair is are not waterproof. They're not waterproof.

**Tania Anderson 5:59**

Yeah, that's a bad thing to have. Bad bearings don't work in a wheelchair. And so talk a little bit about the wheelchair, because I don't see a wheelchair right now. What's going on?

**Billie Horr 6:12**

Well, I went from a wheelchair to a walker, and now I'm walking on my own.

**Tania Anderson 6:17**

So, Marie, can you describe how that happened?

**Marie Phillips 6:20**

Well I, figured if she can roll to the bathroom and get out of that wheelchair to go to the bathroom, she can get up and walk. So, I asked for a walker, and we started working on that and going into the exercise room and exercising her legs and stuff. And then finally, I took the walker away and let her, you know, walk on her own with some support.

**Tania Anderson**

Obviously.

**Marie Phillips**

She don't even hold my arm anymore. She just goes.

**Tania Anderson 6:47**

So, I know you're not a physical therapist and you're not a doctor, but you obviously were very in tune with what Billie can do. What do you think was from in your opinion? You know, what was? Why was she using a wheelchair and not using her muscles in the ways that you encouraged her to do so

**Marie Phillips 7:12**

Well at one point in time, she was very heavy. That's part of being in the wheelchair. I don't know what happened before I got with her. But if you know, she's rolling around with her feet, instead of really using the sides of it, she'd roll her feet and stuff. So, I said, Well, if you can do all that, why can't you just use a walker? You know?

**Tania Anderson 7:34**

Yeah. So, yeah, it was just so, sounds like, Billie, you needed some encouragement.

**Billie Horr 7:40**

Yes. Yes, yes, and a little encouragement wouldn't hurt. If I didn't have Marie, I would still be in that wheelchair. I would still be in that wheelchair.

**Tania Anderson 7:53**

And now you're not and you're moving around the community, and you're more active.

**Billie Horr 7:57**

Can't keep up with me anymore

**Tania Anderson 8:02**

So maybe Marie, you need a skateboard or something to keep up with her, right?

**Marie Phillips 8:05**

She wants roller skates. She's not ready for roller skates.

**Tania Anderson 8:10**

Maybe that's next year's goal, right? No?

**Billie Horr 8:12**

Maybe, maybe, I don't know yet. Don't know yet.

**Tania Anderson 8:15**

Wow, so, I mean, I think it's remarkable for both of you to have that recognition of the potential to do more and to stick with it, and to achieve such a goal, was whether some of the other changes Marie that you've seen in in Billie, since you started working her.

**Marie Phillips 8:35**

She's a lot more happier.

**Tania Anderson 8:37**

Yeah, how can you tell.

**Marie Phillips 8:40**

And you know, of course, we go shopping with her, wanting to go first. And why not we go to Walmart. She now walks around Walmart instead of using the walker or the or the scooters they have the electric scooters, walks .And that goods are good. You know the good exercise.

**Tania Anderson 9:02**

And I hear Billie that you're pretty engaged in the community at Senate Meadows. What are the things that you're doing in that community?

**Billie Horr 9:12**

I sometimes go to Walgreens. I do what I have to do there. I walk over on Grant Avenue without a walker.

**Tania Anderson 9:19**

Wow. And within the apartment complex itself, are you interacting? I've heard you're maybe a gardener. Do some arts and crafts.

**Billie Horr**

I am a gardener. Yes.

**Tania Anderson**

So, are you actually like planting the flowers around the apartment complex?

**Billie Horr 9:36**

Well, I have what you call hens and chick plants.

**Tania Anderson 9:39**

I love hens and chicks.

**Billie Horr 9:41**

And they multiply quicker than rabbits. They will multiply, and you can't tell them to stop.

**Tania Anderson**

So you're transplanting the hens and chicks throughout the garden plots. Is that's gonna happen?

**Billie Horr**

Yes!

**Tania Anderson**

Oh, wow. And Marie, are you a gardener? Is she teaching you how to be a gardener?

**Marie Phillips 10:01**

I garden at home, but I've, I've, you know, helped her and watched her plant the hens and chicks. And, you know, she's got, like, a terrarium inside the house where she's got cactuses planted. We planted those.

**Tania Anderson**

Quite the Green thumb.

**Billie Horr 10:20**

Yes,

**Tania Anderson 10:22**

And when you're gardening in the complex, is that an opportunity for you to meet your neighbors that also live at Senate Meadows?

**Billie Horr 10:30**

I do educate them on certain plants.



**Tania Anderson**

Oh, great.

**Billie Horr**

Like Jennifer never saw hen chick plants. Taught her how to take care of them properly.

**Tania Anderson 10:44**

I always had a problem when I had hens and chicks in my gardens that the squirrels would eat them. Do you have that problem?

**Billie Horr 10:52**

No, No.

**Tania Anderson**

What's your magic?

**Billie Horr**

The magic is you get plant food. It comes like, looks like a little small pencil. You take your finger, and you put in the dirt, you put that all around your plants. What that does? It gives to plants nutrition,

**Tania Anderson 11:11**

All right, so I will have to try that again. Okay, thank you for that tip. I got off topic, but so what are the some of the other things that you're doing now for fun, other than shopping and gardening that you weren't doing before now that you've got, you know, a stable, safe place to live

**Billie Horr 11:27**

Before I moved to Senate Meadows, before I heard of this program, the house and neighborhood I was living in wasn't a safe neighborhood. I had too many house guests. And everybody gets house guests, and they say I had too many of them. People stopped by and asked me if I needed any help with cleaning. With something, you know, I would say, I mean, you can help clean or whatever.

**Tania Anderson 12:02**

So, Marie, it sounds like maybe people were coming in to the house that weren't necessarily supposed to be there, and now it's much safer.

**Marie Phillips 12:10**

It sure is she, you know, she locks her door every time she leaves, yeah, and even when I leave her apartment, and I have her lock the door behind me.

**Tania Anderson 12:22**

So, you're teaching her, really some skills that we all need as part of being safe, in the community. And so is knitting and arts and crafts. Is that also a thing? Is that something Marie, that you working on with her?

**Marie Phillips 12:40**

I've helped her crochet, you know, because I know how she's doing that part of it. If she had done any other pattern, forget it. I wouldn't have been able to help her, but she crochets, and then sometimes I'll grab it and I'll do a few rolls for you know, so it doesn't take her as long to get it done. And we've also have gone swimming. I've taken her to the lake. I've taken her to the pool.

**Tania Anderson 13:04**

Oh, is that new? Is that new for you?

**Billie Horr 13:07**

Yes.

**Tania Anderson 13:08**

What do you think about the swimming? Billie,

**Billie Horr 13:10**

I like to swim. And we get we go into the lake. It might be a little bit cold, but once you get used to it,

**Tania Anderson 13:20**

Yeah, that's great. And I'm sure with the walking that you're doing and then that exercise, I mean, how do you feel physically?

**Billie Horr** 13:28

I feel good physically. But if you go into a lake that has lots lots of stones in it, wear an old pair of shoes or and old pair of sneakers.

**Tania Anderson** 13:39

Yes, that's good advice.

**Billie Horr**

What that does it will protect the bottom your feet. So, you won't cut them, get stone bruises, stuff like that.

**Tania Anderson**

Marie, do you wear shoes when you go into the stony water too?

**Marie Phillips** 13:57

I try not to go into the stony water.

**Tania Anderson** 13:59

Okay, that's also a plan. You know, this story has just been amazing. I guess I'll ask you, first, Billie, and then I'll ask you, Marie, what advice would you give to someone who's listening this and thinking, you know, I'm in a place where I don't really feel safe, or I don't feel like I'm doing everything I can to make myself happy. What would you tell that person to do?

**Billie Horr** 14:26

Never give up. Never give up.

**Tania Anderson**

That's great advice.

**Billie Horr**

Once you put your mind on something go for it.

**Tania Anderson** 14:34

Absolutely Marie, what would your advice be to someone

**Marie Phillips** 14:37

Stick with everything you've accomplished, and not to give up, you know, just keep going with it. And we're working on stairs and stuff too lately. So.

**Tania Anderson** 14:50

So, achive one milestone, and you just, just put another one on the list and check them off.

**Billie Horr**

Yep!

**Tania Anderson**

Oh, wow. You're both an inspiration. And thank you for sharing this with me, and I, will take your advice about Chicks and hens. I will wear shoes when I'm in the stony water and I can't wait to see what you do next.

Thank you both.

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