

NEXUS CHAMPION

CHRIS WILLMON



Russ shared that Chris especially enjoyed going to Camp Higher Ground this year, a weekend-long camp for adults with special needs that offers all kinds of activities, from horseback riding to swimming. He also explained Chris liked a recent group outing to Top Golf, to which Chris remarked, **"I really liked that outing because I'm a golfer. I was able to practice hitting the ball."**

Chris has also taken day trips to Astros games and long weekend vacations to Galveston. His father also explained that a major highlight for Chris is when his kids come to visit from El Paso or when his sister, aunt, and other family members stop by.

Brain injury rehabilitation is also very important to Chris. The Life Care program aims to maximize a resident's recovery potential while improve his or her quality of life. Chris works with therapists to improve his strength and cognitive function to reach his goal of more independence.

"He really seems happy in the different therapies," said Russ. **"He keeps up with sports and takes the current events class where they read and share stories with each other. He's also really good with his math and finance skills. He's also doing really well mentally. His long- and short-term memory continue to get better, which are real positives for us. The staff has really helped him and they're so incredibly patient with him. I know Chris appreciates all they do to help him."**

Chris shared that right now his goals include **"practicing my walking, so I can do that a little bit more, and following instructions. I'm working on those skills."**

Ultimately, Chris' family hopes he will continue to progress so that he can have more independence. Even Chris looks forward to coming home one day, even if it is just part time or over long weekends. But for now, this humorous charmer is thriving in the structured, consistent environment the Nexus campus has to offer. He's also enjoying his time with peers, sharing fun experiences and taking advantage of the many programs offered.

Chris Willmon was injured on the job when a heavy metal hose detached from the drilling rig he was assembling. In addition to shattering the upper end of his spine, Chris suffered a traumatic brain injury.

"We thought he was going to be paralyzed, but he was not," explained Russ Willmon, Chris' father. **"Today, he can walk and participate in the therapies he needs. It's really kind of a miracle."**

Chris stayed at the trauma center of Plano Hospital and a Plano rehabilitation hospital for three months before he moved to Nexus Specialty Hospital. His father remembers, **"Everyone agreed Nexus was the best place for Chris."**

"He stayed at Nexus Specialty Hospital for a while and near the end of that stay, moved to Nexus Neurorecovery Center," said Russ. **"The campus-like setting in the woods is beautiful. We've watched the campus go from a few houses to what it is today. They've built a new gym and buildings and turned it into a great facility."**

Chris stayed with Nexus for about 12 months over the course of 2013 and 2014. After living at home briefly, he returned and has been living on-campus for the past five years, participating in the Life Care program and receiving the help he needs to live a meaningful and productive life. He's lived in both Churchill and Windsor, and now calls Somerset home. The long-term therapeutic environment offers therapy, programming, and activities tailored to Chris' needs and hobbies.

"I enjoy everything throughout the day," said Chris. **"But what I like the most is everything is laid out for me at the beginning of the day, so I know what I'm doing from hour-to-hour and that helps me."**

Chris' stepmother, Linda Willmon, explained, **"The facility has special days for both holidays and different events, like spa day or crafting. They do really neat things and Chris enjoys these events and outings."**

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