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29 June 2022

An accident at 20 left Warren Coconut with a brain injury, but thanks to NDIS funding and dedicated remote disability providers, he’s got all the support he needs to rebuild his life so he can enjoy greater inclusion in his community.

Thirty years on from his injury, Warren now receives daily meal preparation, support with weekly house cleaning, he has a new scooter, and he receives four hours of one-on-one support a week from providers My Pathway and Napranum Aged and Disability Service.

Weekly one-on-one support is helping Warren to relearn simple tasks like colouring in and drawing. To everyone’s delight, his artwork is triggering his memories prior to the accident, many thought would never return.

Warren is also being supported to rebuild other life skills like reading, writing, banking, budgeting, shopping, and learning to keep track of time so he can manage his day-to-day life better.

He is also enjoying greater independence on his new scooter, able to drive himself around his community actively engaging with people and visiting his favourite spots – the beach and the Embly river where he likes to fish.

Warren’s mum, respected Napranum elder, Maryanne Coconut said these simple supports have had such a positive impact on her son’s life and it’s a result of genuine collaboration between, herself, My Pathway and the Napranum Aged and Disability Service.

“Warren fell and hit his head on a bitumen road when he was 20. He was rushed to Townsville Hospital and had to have an operation on his head. When he woke, he couldn’t move his right side, he lost his speech and he couldn’t walk properly,” Maryanne said.

“We thought he wouldn’t walk again, but he is very courageous, strong. He started trying to walk around the house, then he got stronger and started to walk a bit better.

“Then his voice came back, and he started to talk. At home we have always encouraged him to do things. He gets up in the morning, showers and shaves and he can make his own tea.”

Maryanne said Melissa, from My Pathway, has been a great help and the one-on-one support she provides has really helped to improve Warren’s life.

“Trusting someone to help is a big thing for us, but I can see Warren has a lot of trust in Melissa. He looks forward to her visits and I can see he enjoys doing activities with her.”

Melissa said while she had worked in community on and off for 8 years, she didn’t know Warren and Maryanne at first, but Maryanne soon helped her to understand Warren and where he required support.

“I found Warren got agitated easily and quickly, so I started to implement art activities, and these have had a very calming effect on him,” she said. “I find he really starts to focus, and it has helped him to remember parts of his life prior to his accident.”
Melissa said when Warren has a memory, he gestures to his head.

“Last week he drew a bus with people in it. I asked him what kind of bus it was and who was in it. He said it was his school bus and he was in it with his friends, and they were heading to Weipa North, which is where he went to school,” Melissa said.

“I’ve been amazed at what he’s been able to remember. It just shows this kind of support is fantastic for triggering memories. It’s also good for Warren’s broader mental health.”

Melissa and Maryanne said they were so proud of Warren and his determination to achieve.

“Warren is improving more and more each week,” Melissa said.

“It just goes to show simple supports do work and they can make a world of difference in improving people’s lives.”

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