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It will be a celebration to remember when Nicholas Crawford hosts his first New Year's Eve party.

Nicholas, 21, lives with autism and developmental language disorder.

Since graduating from school, he has been building his skills and embracing his local community in Yarrawonga, on the NSW-Victoria border.

In the space of a few years, the NDIS participant has gone from being a shy teenager, to now hosting a new year's eve party at the family home.

"We just couldn't be happier with how much progress he has made in such a short amount of time," mum Janita said.

Doctors diagnosed Nicholas with autism by the age of 3 after showing signs of delayed speech.

By the time he was in school, Nicholas could say about 50 words, but it was his coping mechanism which worried Janita the most.

"When things went bad, Nick would run off, he would disappear," she said.

"There was a lake across from the school and a short fence. He had to be supervised all the time."

Until the Crawfords accessed the NDIS through Local Area Coordinators Intereach, they struggled to afford speech therapy and other supports.

"Now Nick gets occupational therapy fortnightly and speech therapy once a week," Janita said.

"He also has two support workers and a mental health practitioner in place. As a result, his confidence is through the roof."

Nicholas likes to build his fitness, help with home renovations, socialise online and play computer games.

His main goals are to own a car, have a girlfriend and embrace independent living in a town where he is well known and loved.

"When he first went into shops, he would have a hoodie covering his face," Janita said. "He couldn't make eye contact."

Nicholas now walks around Yarrawonga with confidence, engaging with the community.

From swimming on Mondays and bowling on Fridays, Nicholas enjoys many activities, including building friendships at Providing All Living Supports, an NDIS provider.

The NDIS has changed not only Nicholas' outlook on life, but those of his immediate family.

"Before the NDIS, we would never ever have thought Nick could lead an independent life," Janita said.

"But now he has a goal that, by the time he's 30, he will be fully independent."

Before that, though, there is a party to organise.

"Nick's pretty keen on finding a girlfriend," Janita said. "That's the motivation behind the party.

"He's even gone nightclubbing recently. He's really put himself out there.

"None of this would be possible without the support services Nick receives.

"Without the NDIS, we would not be able to access or pay for them.

"It has absolutely changed his life."

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