

CELEBRATING

Mississippians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

His Gulf Coast home makes Billy's 'Golden Years' the happiest ever



Billy T. enjoys a quiet, leisurely life at his childhood home in Ocean Springs. He spends his time watching TV, including following his favorite team, the New Orleans Saints, and going for walks in his neighborhood.

It's two days after the New Orleans Saints devastating last-minute loss to the Minnesota Vikings in the NFC Divisional Championship. As he leans back on his comfortable leather couch in his childhood home in Ocean Springs, like thousands of Saints fans, Billy T. is still disappointed his favorite team is not going to the Super Bowl.

"Did you watch the game?" Billy asks a visitor to the home located in a quiet cul-de-sac just a few minutes from Ocean Springs' downtown area and a few blocks from the beach. Billy is incredulous anyone would miss the chance to cheer for the Saints.

At the age of 64, Billy lives a quiet but happy life in the home he once shared with his parents, now deceased. Today, he's happy to be back in his hometown living with Karen, his live-in caregiver. He enjoys dining out at favorite restaurants and attending an occasional social outing. However, he's happiest sitting in the cozy living room, remote in hand, watching the Saints, favorite soap operas and other daily programs.

While he is contentedly living out his "golden years" right where he wants to be, Billy's life wasn't always so positive, says Mike Montgomery, his long-time conservator.

"Billy has endured some tragedies and major upheavals in his life that most of us have had not to go through," said Montgomery. "First his dad died, then Hurricane Katrina destroyed Singing River Industries here in Ocean Springs where he worked in the saw shop. After his mother died, a caregiver came to live with him, but he died a few years later here in the house. Billy was alone. He had no one to care for him or to live with him."

That's when Boswell Regional Center stepped in. Montgomery placed a call to BRC after receiving recommendations from DMH officials. Billy was admitted within 24 hours of Montgomery making the call for help. After assessment, it was determined he was a good fit for BRC's SUCCESS program.

The SUCCESS program aptly describes Billy's experience at BRC. He adapted well to living in a group home and attending sessions at Dream Makers, a community program offering socialization and activities for others near his age. Staff remember Billy as well-mannered and cooperative. However, the ultimate goal of both staff and Billy was to return him to his home.

And that's just what happened. After learning valuable skills, including how to live a more independent life, Billy was able to return to his beloved home. He's grateful for the lessons he was taught at Boswell. But, as he says in his own words: "I love my home."

