

Youth Transitional Services provides individualized, community based programming and in-school supports for students. Programming is structured around a student's educational goals with a focus on employment, continuing education, adult daily living skills, and social health and wellness.

This is Tristan's Story . . .

Tristan Aho came to ESNH's Residential & Educational Services several years ago as an angry teen who was prone to verbal outbursts and struggled to deal with a rough life as well as a variety of disabilities. Although the transition was rocky, Tristan continued to move forward with his education and also worked his way through the different residential options offered to him; going from a restricted residential situation, to a group home, and then, after three years, to more independent living where he is now responsible for doing his own cooking, cleaning, and laundry.

As he moved through school, Tristan also found he really enjoyed his classes that focused on vocational development and that placed him in the community in a variety of volunteer positions.

"As a volunteer, I feel like I'm doing something for the community and not for myself," said Tristan, who recently celebrated his 20th birthday. "I like the independence and feel like more of an adult. When I work hard, I don't worry about my disabilities. It helps a lot to think about other things."

Another factor that has hugely impacted Tristan's life is connecting to ESNH's Youth Transitional Services (YTS). As part of this program, Tristan is teamed up with Youth Support Specialist Angela Adorno, who has helped him to identify and pursue his passions in life. While living and going to school at Easterseals, Tristan discovered his love of the guitar. With encouragement from his school's music teacher and Angela, Tristan has found peace and purpose through music.

"When I play the guitar, I'm not thinking about the stress of life," said Tristan. "I can do whatever I want with the next note that I play and that makes me feel great."

Angela has helped Tristan run with that great feeling by helping him to secure a volunteer position at the Manchester Community Music School where he works in their instrument library refurbishing donated guitars and taking care of the guitars they use for music therapy. This volunteer gig has also led to a paid position as a janitor at the school and an invitation to join their folk string orchestra.

"I knew Tristan needed a straight path to follow in his life after taking so many detours," said Angela, who focuses on setting up expectations for Tristan that he can achieve. "So, we put steps in place to find volunteer positions that involved music. They love him at the music school and he has quickly become part of the team. "

In addition to this rewarding volunteer and employment opportunity, Tristan also volunteers at the Families in Transition OutFITters Thrift Store that provides household items to families facing hardship.

Tristan has come a long way since first coming to Easterseals. Through YTS, this smiling young man with a great sense of humor is also learning to cook, enjoys going to the gym, and is focused on finding another part-time job that will allow him to become even more self-sufficient. Plus, he loves having some extra money to take out his young nephew. He would like to get his driver's license and, once he turns 21, move onto an even more independent living situation.

"Before I met Angela, I felt like I was running in the same spot and was never able to reach my goals," said Tristan. "Now everything is falling into place and I'm rocketing forward."

