

EMPOWER

CREATING POSSIBILITIES, **CHANGING LIVES.**

SUMMER | 2025



What's Inside:

- ▶ Mark's Story
- ▶ Braylon's Story
- ▶ Upcoming Events
- ▶ Volunteer Opportunities

Mark's *Story*



Mark is an outgoing and driven 55-year-old who has been a part of the Turnstone community for the past three years.

Diagnosed with Relapsing Remitting multiple sclerosis (MS) at age 27, Mark kept his diagnosis private until symptoms worsened in 2008. Since his initial diagnosis, the Relapsing Remitting multiple sclerosis progressed into Primary Progressive multiple sclerosis. By 2016, after losing his job and facing further health challenges, he found himself in a deep depression and disconnected from the life he once knew. He had lost sight of his purpose and began withdrawing from activities he once loved. It was a challenging time marked by grief and uncertainty about the future.

"I had worked at my job for 22 years, so I thought I was going to be there for life, but God had different plans for me," Mark said. That's when he finally discovered Turnstone.

Mark remembers seeing the large building that first day and feeling overwhelmed, but that didn't last long. He was moved by the "humble spirit" of the staff he encountered, and it immediately made him feel at home. After completing his 3 free sessions with our Fitness Specialists, Mark was off and running.

"From the moment I walked through the doors, I felt welcomed. It didn't take long to realize this wasn't just a facility-- it was a community," said Mark. "[Turnstone] was a place where people truly care, where you're seen, and where you're supported in every way."

For Mark, one of the most important things that Turnstone restored was his hope. Mark was very aware that with his diagnosis, he would experience physical decline and changes in his body; however, he wasn't prepared for the mental decline.

"I didn't expect how much it would affect how I viewed myself, my future, or my place in the world. Turnstone helped me break through the barriers I had created in my own mind." At Turnstone, Mark discovered the space to breathe, grow, and believe in himself again.

"I had given up on life... and combining that with a bad diet, I had become unhealthy so it's really exciting to see myself get back to being healthy," said Mark. Beyond his physical progress, he finally feels like himself again.

Now, Mark is more himself than ever before. He maintains his authentic sense of humor, positive mindset, and lively demeanor. He loves interacting with the Turnstone staff and has grown to be friends with several of them. They have conversations that go beyond just small talk, and he feels very

motivated by his Turnstone family. He is taking steps toward finding his purpose and says that he knows something big is coming. He recently secured reliable transportation, which will help him during his next step: finding employment.

"Before MS, I spent time coaching kids in sports, and that experience still means a lot to me. It's given me a deep sense of empathy—especially for kids with challenges of their own. I try to carry that same spirit with me at Turnstone," said Mark.

With his confidence rebuilt, Mark looks forward to seeing what the next chapter in his life has in store for him. No longer does he wait around or hide from his future, but instead, he dreams about it and has high hopes. He sets goals and feels confident in his ability to accomplish them.

"I know it won't be easy, but I also know I am not alone, and I am ready for whatever comes next," said Mark. "Turnstone has changed my life in more ways than I can count. It gave me a place to reconnect-- not just with others, but with myself."

Mark also met some members who have encouraged him to try out some new activities outside of the Fitness Center. His friend, Tom Hunter, introduced him to adaptive sports at Turnstone, like boccia and wheelchair basketball. He is also exploring different volunteer opportunities so he can re-engage with sports again.

"If I could share one piece of advice with new members, it's this: don't be afraid to show up," said Mark. "You belong here. Everyone at Turnstone wants to see you succeed—whether that's physically, socially, emotionally, or all of the above. You'll find strength here. You'll find people who understand. And most of all, you'll find a place that lifts you up." 🌟



EMPOWERING BRAYLON

**Eight-year-old
Braylon, 8, was
introduced to
Turnstone when he
was just a year old.**

Born with Angelman Syndrome, a rare neurogenetic disorder, Braylon was not meeting milestones that are key to early development. At one year old, he could not hold his head up. These delays prompted a referral to Turnstone for therapy services.

New to Fort Wayne at the time, Braylon's mom, Marie, recalled her initial feelings of overwhelm. "I didn't know anything about Turnstone, and I didn't anticipate the building's size, but the therapy team welcomed us immediately," she reflects. "Their support eased the anxiety of navigating a new environment." Braylon began with physical and occupational therapy, later adding speech therapy. Today, he continues all three therapies alongside therapy intensive services and will start Aquatic therapy for a second time in the near future.

"It's overwhelming needing services for your disabled child, so having everything under one roof at Turnstone has been a blessing," Marie emphasizes. "It relieves the stress of running to multiple places."

In the seven years that Braylon has been at Turnstone, his personality has blossomed under the care of Turnstone's therapists. "All of the therapists love Braylon," Marie beams. "It's like coming to visit friends or family." And for Braylon, it truly feels like home.



His face lights up when he sees his therapists. He greets them with wide grins, open arms, and pure joy. It is apparent that he and his mom are grateful that he is surrounded by people who are deeply invested in his growth and truly care about him.

"You can tell we really love this place because we have been here for a while," said Marie. "Everyone here has been fantastic. They never say 'I don't know what else to do with him'. They always continue to look further, and it's nice to have somebody who digs instead of just giving up."

Despite Braylon's challenges in verbal communication, his personality shines through in alternative ways. He is learning to share his joy and express himself using an augmentative alternative communication (AAC) device during speech therapy sessions.



Looking for new ways to challenge Braylon, Marie sought out intensive therapy services, but options within driving distance were limited. Luckily, at Turnstone, Braylon was able to get intensive services, and he recently graduated from his first Therapy Intensive session.

Before Therapy Intensives, Braylon accomplished crawling and bearing weight on his knees. However, by the end of his therapy intensives, Braylon had taken his first independent steps—one of his biggest milestones to date.

Braylon's first independent steps were a moment of pure joy. "I screamed across the gym, I was so excited. I was too stunned to speak because I thought, 'Did that really just happen?' My son just took steps!" recalled Braylon's mom. Witnessing this milestone was more than she had ever imagined.

To continue his progress, Braylon will soon be doing Aquatic Therapy for a second time-- something he is really looking forward to as a lover of all things water. Marie is excited to see what milestones he will reach and what skills he will master during this session of Aquatic therapy.

As Braylon continues to reach new milestones and grow in his independence, it's because of generous donors like you that he has access to the life-changing services that support his journey. Families, clients, and staff alike are deeply grateful for your support—because when you give, you help make possibilities a reality. 🌟

"It's overwhelming needing services for your disabled child, so having everything under one roof at Turnstone has been a blessing."

- **Marie**, Braylon's Mom

Thank you for your *Investment* in Possibilities

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IN HONOR OF:

Ruby Capps
Kevin Hughes
Vicki Leininger
Nancy & Carl Louraine
Mike & Becky Mushett
Sarah Sims
Todd Simpson
Molly Slater

IN MEMORY OF:

Dennis Blume
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Lynn Douple
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Wilma McDonnell
Rick Ramsey
Rick Sowers
Thomas B White
Thomas J Watson, Sr.
Linda, Timothy, and
Benjamin Wysong
Matthew Woodrum
Virgil Shane



Upcoming Events

mark your calendars!

25th Annual Board of Directors' Gala
| **September 4, 2025**

The sparkles and suits get brought out for Turnstone's signature fundraising event hosted by our Board of Directors. The evening features a dinner and unique live and silent auctions. A special 'Mission Moment' is shared by a Turnstone client, which always proves to be the highlight of this extraordinary evening.

49th Casino Night
| **February 27, 2026**

Fort Wayne's favorite fundraiser is an evening full of local food, drinks, and games—test your skills at blackjack, bingo, wheelchair basketball, a bottle ring toss, and MORE. Plus, you could bring home something new from our basket raffles and silent auction. This event operates under Indiana Gaming License #002703.

2025 World ParaVolley Sitting Volleyball World Cup
| **October 12-18, 2025**

Turnstone Center, in partnership with World Para-Volley (WPV), Visit Fort Wayne, and the City of Fort Wayne, will host the 2025 WPV Sitting Volleyball World Cup. This prestigious international event will bring nearly 500 athletes, officials, and delegates from over 20 countries to northeast Indiana. It will mark the first time the Sitting Volleyball World Cup is hosted in the United States. Featuring both men's and women's divisions, up to 16 national teams for each division will compete at Turnstone's state-of-the-art Plassman Athletic Center. This World Cup will be a key pathway for international teams preparing for the 2028 Paralympic Games.

Scan the QR code to stay connected with Turnstone and get the latest updates on events, volunteer opportunities, and more!



*All event dates and times subject to change. For the most up-to-date information about tournaments and volunteer opportunities, visit us at Turnstone.org
*Contact us at 260.483.2100 or rena@turnstone.org to learn more about sponsorship opportunities including event sponsorships.

A NOTE FROM THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mike Mushett

Progress is not always loud or fast, but it is often life-changing. Sometimes it looks like a child taking their first steps. Other times, it's an adult rediscovering a sense of purpose. At Turnstone, we are honored to witness these quiet triumphs every day, and they remind us that progress is possible at any age and in any stage of life.

In this issue of EMPOWER, you'll meet two remarkable individuals whose journeys reflect that truth. Eight-year-old Braylon has been part of the Turnstone family for most of his life. His recent participation in Turnstone's Therapy Intensives helped him take his first independent steps—an unforgettable milestone made possible through determination, expert care, and your support.

You will also meet Mark, who came to Turnstone after living with multiple sclerosis for decades. He was searching for more than physical fitness—he was looking for hope. Mark's experience at Turnstone helped him rebuild not just strength, but confidence and connection. Today, he's not only dreaming about the future—he's reaching for it.

Braylon and Mark remind us that progress can take many forms and that the path forward often begins with the courage to show up. Thanks to your continued support, Turnstone remains a place where people of all ages can discover what's possible and take their next steps, whatever those may be.

— Mike



Turnstone





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FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46805



25th Annual Board of Directors'

GALA

September 4, 2025
Plassman Athletic Center

*Scan the QR code
to reserve your seat!*

