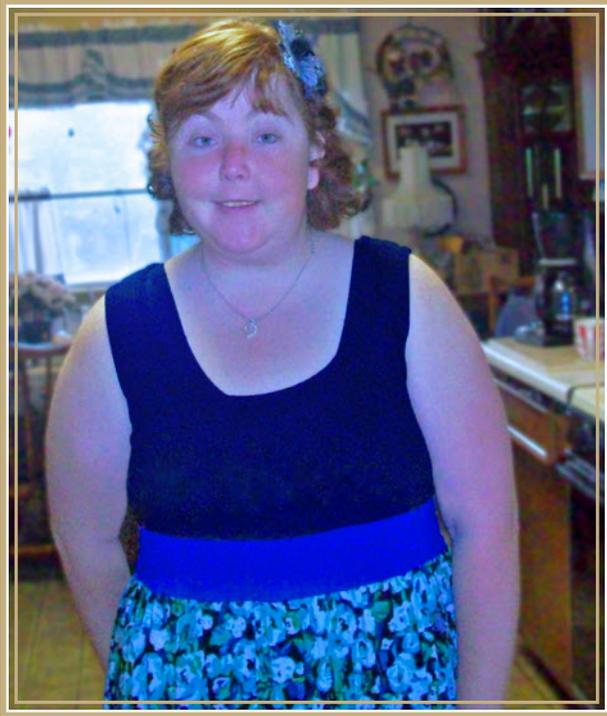


Meet Kathy Coons

by Helen Coons



Kathy

Kathy graduated in 2004. She has been in special-ed until she was 21. She can read at about the 3rd grade level. She knows how to get around on the bus really well.

Kathy wanted to be independent and live on her own. She has an apartment not too far from home. A caregiver (paid for by the government) comes over and helps her with shopping, doctor appointments, and sometimes helps her with housework. She doesn't like me to help.

Kathy works at a shop for special-education adults from 8:30 to 1:45 on Monday, Thursday and Friday. She takes the bus to work and uses her cell phone to wake herself up.

She makes about \$100 a week, gets social security and a little bit of money from SRC, which is government funded help. Her caregiver pays the bills with Kathy's help.

Kathy is 5'2" and 190 lbs. Because she was living alone for a while without help (she doesn't like to cook, use the stove or knives), she ate junk and gained weight. She now has diabetes. But she is starting to lose weight. She is using the microwave now.

Kathy comes home on the weekend for home-cooked meals and goes to church with me. Wednesday after work she takes the bus and goes bowling. Thursday after work she takes the bus and goes to arts and crafts at the YMCA.

Her phone keeps me in touch with her and her with her friends. She loves to talk and text. It helps her spelling and reading.

Kathy has a boyfriend. Nothing serious. Only a peck on the lips. She had a tubal ligation when she was 19. Her boyfriend at the time did not want any brats around the house. So she O.K.'d for the operation to be done. She is her own guardian.

Even though she cannot read, she understands everything and prints her own name kind of legible. Kathy has a computer at home. But, no Internet. She loves to play games and listen to music. During the summer she plays softball for Special Olympics.

Kathy doesn't have any real health issues to stop her from doing anything. I get scared someone will take advantage of her. She is very trusting. She has a lot of friends. Her boyfriends are all special adults also.