



Shadae

I care for my great niece with autism, intellectual disability, sensory processing, pseudo Bulba Affect (uncontrollable laughing), and partial seizures; whose parents died when she was age 3. I met Terry and Linda Ritter during my work with setting up The Arc of South Hampton Roads VA as President, and researching the long term transition planning to adulthood for Shadae. They introduced me to the microboard concept and for this I am eternally grateful!

I was retiring from the United States Navy as a Registered Nurse and Ordained Minister and started early to develop a circle of support for my beloved great niece, Shadae who is non vocal. I relocated from North Carolina back to Chesapeake, where I built my primary home. Upon moving I found out we had to return our North Carolina Medicaid Waiver and get on the Virginia list of Medicaid Waivers which took 8 long years to get. To our surprise we found out that on the United States list of best Medicaid services, it listed Virginia in year 2000 number 49 out of 50 for funding. We had some difficulty obtaining services through the Chesapeake Community Service Board initially and grew very fatigued with the struggle. I made a decision to place her in an extended care facility seven miles from my home and then transferred her to group homes that did not meet her needs for a life like ours. We searched for a setting that fostered self-determination, independence, choices, and a home-like environment with community-based services and support. During my midnight hours I searched on the internet

and found the program called “Money follows the Person” program and was able to get some improved services. While Shadae was in those services, I learned everything I could about microboards, received the required training and established her SRV Enterprises microboard.

Family and friends established and developed the corporation in 2010. Her home was found in Richmond and purchased under a Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) program called “SPARC”. Richmond was chosen due to the private school she was going to and the vast community based services we were able to find and use. Shadae moved into her own home February 26, 2012, graduated from VCU Faison Autism School August 2013 and has been busy ever since. As her guardian, having such difficulty with placement, I was given the Sponsored Residency Program through Jerolin Management Services in Chesterfield. In January 2015, Shadae was blessed to be selected to receive the Section 8 housing voucher.

She is now 24 years of age, full of joy and eager to learn and be independent. Some of her circle of support and services include:

- Senior ministry natural supports at a wonderful church home called Providence Park Baptist Church in Richmond. The church has learned all about her autism, communication methods, learning style and have totally embraced her. She attends Sunday School and worship services and all church activities.
- She is mentored by the Girl Scouts, sponsored by the church she attends, every Saturday morning from 0930 until 1130 AM.

- The Grace Baptist Church has also embraced her and provides free harp lessons every Friday evening.
- She is a member of the Jewish Community Center (JCC) using their swimming pool and gym.
- Shadae participated in the “1 Can Ride” program and learned to ride the tricycle last year and this year the 2 wheel bike.
- She attended the week long overnight Camp at Camp Baker facility this summer.
- Shadae attended for 4 years the I'm Determined Youth Summits
- She participated in the tennis camp and speech camp at the Hampton University Communication School for 5 weeks.
- She attended the Richmond city-wide formal prom for special needs that included a sit down dinner, dance, a professional photo shot and a visit from Miss Virginia, TV coverage, etc.
- Shadae is a member of The Friendship Circle of Virginia that continue to invite her to community based services with high school volunteers to help her enjoy the activities.
- She is able to live in her own home with a paid provider and natural family supports.
- Shadae attends 2 day support centers
 - Branches of Life (the only high school transition day center in Virginia, located in Chesterfield) for one hour Monday through Friday, for communication and socialization skills
 - VCU Faison transition life skill center for four hours using LogistiCare transportation services. She is currently-in the VCU Discovery program,

collaborating with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Programs (DARS) completing an employment assessment.

- We have submitted her application for Special Olympics in Richmond
- She belongs to the Richmond Autism Society.

She goes shopping, visits the library, post office, malls, recreational centers, eats out and loves to visit her family. She loves eating, swimming, music, dancing, puzzles, books, bike riding, traveling, and being around people.

Shadae uses her Dynavox, an expensive computerized communication device to make requests and an IPAD for recreational games with some supervision. She wanders at times so she wears the Project Lifesaver bracelet on her ankle. She is an eager young lady to learn how to play and function in this complicated world. She has plenty of supports and friends that I could have not produced alone! To God be all the glory for the wonderful things and people he has provided.

Juanita V. Coleman, Great Aunt / Legal Guardian