

## *Greg's story*

Sitting on his comfy new couch, bright-eyed, cheery and talkative Greg discusses his future plans in Columbia. For those who have known him for years, this is a pleasant surprise. Members of his circle of support, including Dave Keily, the Executive Director of The Charles Lea Center, comment he has done wonderfully well living in the community and they foresee a bright future for this young man.



Greg, originally from the Columbia area, lived in Spartanburg for three years before finally returning to Columbia in October 2007. While in Spartanburg, he resided in a community training home. This was far from his goal of owning his own home, and living by himself. Greg began looking at places in Columbia in 2006. His strong desire to be close to his family, and his self-determination, along with the help of some close friends, made it possible for him to find an apartment on the Harbison side of town. His first move was in a Columbiana Lakes apartment with his roommate, Joe. He got along well with his neighbors and loved being close to the mall and movie theater.

Greg has many interests ranging from Steven Seagal movies to billiards. He is very sociable and enjoys having movie nights with friends. Greg has a strong desire to try new and different things. After settling into his apartment, he decided he needed something more. He wanted a job. He began a job search in January 2008 and expressed a desire to work in food service. With the help of Susan Davis from the Supported Community Living Initiative and vocational rehabilitation, he set up multiple interviews with different restaurants. When he met Randy, the manager at Ruby Tuesday's located on Harbison, their personalities "clicked." Greg was pleased with the interview and thought this would be a good fit for him. Greg was offered a job and worked the daily lunch shift. He enjoyed his job and his co-workers. His everlasting energy and ambition thrilled his employers. With these wonderful attributes he will definitely not have a hard time finding future employment opportunities as his self-expectations rise.

Greg is very happy with his life at the moment. He enjoys living in Columbia. In October of 2008, he moved into an apartment by himself, which will get him closer to his ultimate goal of homeownership. He is on the South Carolina State Housing Authority's waiting list for a Housing Choice Voucher. He would like a two bedroom house, so he can have a game room and may even ask his girlfriend to move in with him. Greg eventually wants a house with a big yard. His strong motivation to succeed provides a solid base for him to stand on when making these large life decisions.