Our son was accepted into Chip and Dale Homes in 1996 at the age of 27. It was a heartbreaking decision to place him in a “home” after having cared for him ourselves for so many years. However, after a few months, we realized that this was the best decision we had ever made, and in fact regretted that we had not done it several years sooner.

Ian would certainly have been better off at Chip and Dale than he was at home with us in the last few years. We could no longer dare to take him out in public for fear that we would not be able to control his behaviour. We were scared that he would have a seizure and we could no longer pick him up and carry him as we did when he was a child. So his life at our home had become quite restricted; we did not realize how much until he moved to Chip and Dale.

What we had not realized was that our relationship with our son did not change in any way as a result of this change in his life. We are given free access to visit or to bring him home whenever we want. The staff are so accommodating to our needs and always willing to work around our schedules when they change. Our son is always delighted to see us when we pick him up for his weekly Sunday visits, but he is also anxious to be taken back to his new home at the end of the evening. The wonderful, caring staff provide him with a life that is full of activity and outings. They provide him with opportunities that we could only dream of providing.

Once our son was placed at Chip and Dale, our own lives took on new meaning. For the first time in 27 years we were able to go out without having to find a sitter for a difficult disabled child. We were able to invite friends over – a luxury we had not been able to do with our son at home. We could decorate our home with items that had been hidden for fear of breakage. We were no longer constantly on the alert wondering what our son was up to, or where he was. We had no idea how much stress our son was putting on our lives until that stress was removed.

We are proud to belong to an organization that is so well run and respected throughout the province. The Board of Directors is comprised primarily of family members of the residents, giving them the opportunity to ensure that their needs are met. As a member of this Board, I have always felt that my voice is being heard and that the needs of the residents are the first priority in decision-making. We consider ourselves blessed and fortunate to have found this wonderful organization for our son, with the knowledge that he will be well cared for for the rest of his life.

Barb and Dan Cameron