



SUCCESS STORY ADVANCING PARTNERS & COMMUNITIES

PEER GROUP TRAINING CHANGES A PARTICIPANT’S OUTLOOK FOREVER

MOTIVATION ROMANIA FOUNDATION PROVIDES WHEELCHAIRS AND PEER SUPPORT FOR THE DISABLED

BACKGROUND

At 9 years old, Lulia was involved in a terrible accident that put her in a wheelchair. Despite family support, she wasn't able to get better. Lulia chose to do home schooling and only went out when she had to go to the nearest hospital for physical therapy. She tried to isolate herself from the outside world.

INTERVENTION

A close friend of Lulia, a wheelchair user himself and a beneficiary of Motivation Romania Foundation (MRF) services, decided to meet with her to help her make a change. He convinced her to participate in a MRF-run Peer Group Training (PGT).

MRF replaced Lulia's heavy orthopedic wheelchair with a more appropriate active wheelchair which allowed her much more mobility. During the two-week training, Lulia struggled to learn how to use her new wheelchair; but she was determined.



Lulia in her wheelchair

She learned transfers, balancing on rear wheels, going down stairs and over thresholds. Slowly but confidently, she and the other participants learned to do simple housekeeping tasks themselves. Lulia described one of her successes:



“One day I felt like eating cookies. My sister encouraged me to go shopping for ingredients by myself and then she offered to bake the cookies with me. I went out shopping: it was the first time I went out unattended and I made it! My sister and I decided to go to Bran (a touristic site in the mountains) to celebrate this success.”

parents and friends are very proud of how self-sufficient she is becoming.

OUTCOMES

Lulia looks back at her PGT experience fondly, remembering the comradery she had with her friends and practitioners. “She is eager to share her successes and calls us often,” said one PGT trainer. In one of the calls, Lulia described how the training helped her when she stopped on the way to go to the restroom:

“I climbed that ramp back and forth balancing my wheelchair on its rear wheels as I had learned. I made it easily. Two old ladies who stared at me waiting for me to fall were like, wow! My parents support me fully and they are happy that I am so much more autonomous now. Prior to the PGT, one of them had to be near me all the time, for my own safety, even for an ordinary transfer.”

“I have learned a lot at Motivation but perhaps the most important thing was the fact that I have learned to feel more comfortable with my disability. Before Motivation, I avoided posting pictures on Facebook with me in my wheelchair but now I don’t have a problem with that.”

The life experience, the positive vision, and the energy of the MRF trainers, helped Lulia become a more optimistic person. Because of MRF and PGT Lulia has more confidence in herself, and is more motivated and independent. She is able to take care of herself with minimal help from her parents. Her