

## *Paytner family*

# Out of the nest

When her son pushed her—gently—out his door, Laurie Paytner knew she and her husband had succeeded. “Aaron had been staying with us while his caregivers were away over Christmas. When we dropped him off, we were chatting with his caregivers, and I guess it went a little too long for his liking because he opened the door and kind of leaned on my shoulder and said, Bye!” Laurie says with a laugh. Instead of feeling rejected, Laurie was pleased. “It means setting all this up has been the right thing. It’s a really nice feeling. He has way more fun there.” “There” is Aaron’s own home.

Aaron is 25 years old. He’s developmentally delayed, has very little speech, and poor impulse control. Nevertheless, Laurie says, “It was kind of time for him to move out on his own and start living like any other 25 year old.” So Aaron’s parents bought a house for him a stone’s throw from his mom and dad’s place in Westbank, B.C. With Giving in Action’s help, the new place was renovated to work as a “family style” care home, including adding fencing to help protect Aaron from traffic. (His poor impulse control makes traffic a real concern.) Aaron now lives in the renovated home with two caregivers and a roommate, and Laurie says he is having a blast.

“When he lived with us, he didn’t have too much of a social life,” Laurie explains. “If you let him, he’d just be on the computer all the time. But his caregivers and roommate are all around his age, and they have a great social life. People are always dropping in.” “They have this thing called “Spaghetti Night in Canada”, where they supply the pasta and other people bring stuff to put on it,” Laurie laughs. “They also have games night, and they do scavenger hunts and chase each other around in the night with flashlights. People come over with guitars, and they have movie nights. He’s just really happy there. He’ll come home and have dinner with us and that’s not a problem ... but he always asks when he’s getting picked up and going back there.” “And that’s great,” Laurie concludes, beaming. “That’s exactly the way it should be.”