

Hi, my name is Linda Monahan. This is my brother Mike Langanki. Our ARC story begins in Wabasha, Minnesota. Back in the late 1950s, early 1960s resources for people like Mike and their families were quite limited. Our parents, along with two other Wabasha county couples started the Wabasha county chapter of the ARC.

One of my earliest memories of the Wabasha County ARC was handing out their informational pamphlets with my mom at the Wabasha County Fair. I recall the pamphlets having pictures of developmentally disabled people living in state hospitals. Back then, the main thrust of the ARC of Minnesota was to advocate for the developmentally disabled to move from institutions back into a community setting. Who would have thought 50 or so years later that I would be calling on the ARC of SE Minnesota to help me advocate for my brother, Mike, to move back into a community setting.

As I stated earlier Mike's story begins in Wabasha. Growing up on the west side, he is the second oldest of four children. Mike had a pretty typical childhood for back then. Like playing kickball with neighborhood kids in the alley, fishing for sunnies on the Mississippi River, listening to polkas on his boombox, and riding his bike all over the west side. Everyone knew Mike.

When my parents started aging they saw the need for Mike to move into a group home. He resided in that group home in Wabasha for 23 years. Until he, himself, started aging and got sick.

In May 2017, Mike had an infection surrounding his gallbladder and liver and it went septic. He ended up in the ER and Wabasha hospital for two days until they transferred him to St. Mary's hospital where he spent the next two weeks. Throughout this whole ordeal he underwent numerous tests and procedures, had a picc line put in for antibiotics, and lost 43 pounds.

Nearing his discharge from the hospital his group home said that they could not take him back until the antibiotics were finished and the picc line was removed. So he ended up in the healthcare center in Wabasha or as Mike would often say to me "Linda, I am living in a nursing home." The Wabasha healthcare center was fantastic. They worked with Mike on all his needs. Each time the Wabasha group home stated a goal for Mike to achieve to move back to his home, the healthcare center worked with him to achieve it! Then the group home would add another goal, then another. Until finally in mid August 2017 the healthcare center wanted to discharge Mike because all of his goals were met. Everyone was called together for the discharge meeting and the group home said "just keep him two more weeks." That very next day I got a phone call from program manager at the group home informing me that they were terminating Mike's services due to staffing reasons and if they could ever do anything for us in the future don't hesitate to call! So, Mike not only lost his home of 23 years but also his day programming at the DAC due to the county's cost of caring for him at a nursing home.

Not sure of what to do or where to turn I spoke with Mike's county appointed social worker. She was sympathetic to our feelings and mentioned that I could file an appeal/grievance with the

Department of Human Services and that I should call Beth Honecker, the SE MN ARC Advocate. Calling the ARC Advocate was by far the best advice I had ever received from Mike's social worker. Beth listen to Mike's story, answered all my questions and encouraged me to file the appeal/grievance with the DHS. She gave me the facts, both good and bad and she gave us hope. She was there for us when no one else was.

So, I wrote the letter of appeal/grievance. From giving me advice on what to include in the letter up to hearing that we lost the appeal with DHS, Beth, the ARC Advocate was there for us. She then referred me onto the ARC's Housing Coordinator, Donna Garratt, for a program called Moving Home Minnesota. Moving Home Minnesota helps the displaced developmentally disabled find appropriate housing in the community. Donna assessed Mike and began working with us in November 2017. She explained what the program was and how it works. Being that Mike had just turned 64 he had a one year window of opportunity to be assisted through this program. I gladly signed him on! As the ARC's Housing Coordinator, Donna did everything! She assisted us in every aspect of locating an appropriate group home for Mike to call his forever home. Donna searched in multiple counties, made the right contacts, helped with paperwork, and toured the group homes with me. Besides finding Mike his new home she helped find his day programming and a physical therapy program appropriate for his needs.

ARC of SE MN gave Mike a chance again. A chance to live in the least restrictive environment in a community setting which is Bear Creek Services in Rochester. A chance to have appropriate Day programming where he is with his peers which is ABC also in Rochester.

I hate to think of where Mike and I would be without the services and staff of ARC of SE MN. This organization has been our life line. Thank you ARC, Beth, and Donna, we are truly grateful for all you have done.