



A Home OF MY Own

By Michael Basso

For many, owning a successful business is the culmination of a lifelong dream. People start businesses for many reasons — out of necessity, as a hobby, or as a retirement option. Paul and Mary Ann Egan started “A Home of My Own” not for any of the typical reasons someone might start a business. They started their business so that the future for their son, Ryan, is assured when they are no longer around. That is their dream.

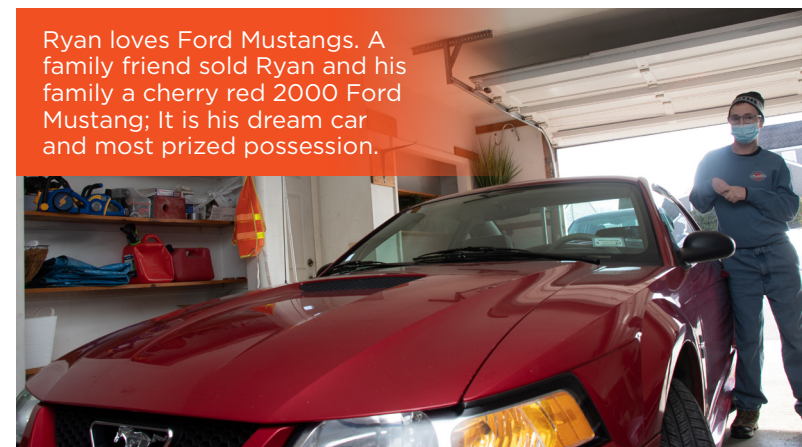
A Home of My Own is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating self-sustaining homes for adults with developmental disabilities, giving them the opportunity to thrive on their own terms. The driving force behind all the decisions made for the business is that everything has to work when Paul and Mary Ann are not there. Paul jokingly compares the house operations to “the Prime Directive” for Starfleet, as in the science fiction show Star Trek. “You can’t mess with the natural order of other civilizations,” Paul said, continuing the Star Trek metaphor. In addition to their team of service providers, they have an added layer of accountability (nonprofit status, board of directors) that is working to ensure not only Ryan, but other participants as well, can be taken care of after their natural supports are gone.



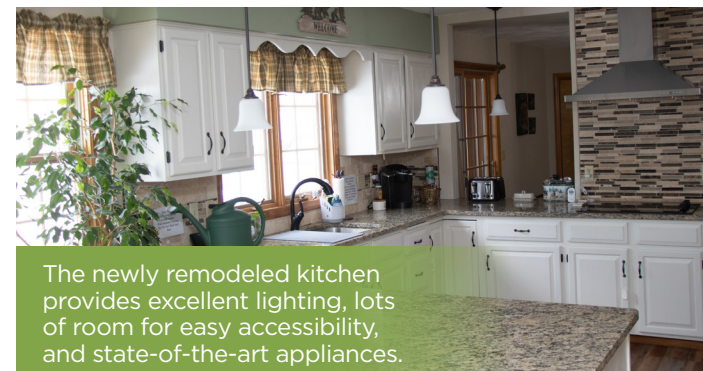
Paul and Mary Ann Egan sitting in the “global headquarters” of “A Home of My Own.”



Ryan with his dad, Paul Egan.



Ryan loves Ford Mustangs. A family friend sold Ryan and his family a cherry red 2000 Ford Mustang; It is his dream car and most prized possession.



The newly remodeled kitchen provides excellent lighting, lots of room for easy accessibility, and state-of-the-art appliances.



Residents of “A Home Of My Own” decorate their rooms with their favorite things.



Paul and Mary Ann Egan enjoy a relaxing moment in their “Home of My Own.”

Ryan Egan is 29 years old and has cerebral palsy. Ryan is an affable young man that knows more about cars than a mechanic (we would wager) and loves to tell you about them. Besides cars, Ryan loves animals, especially his dog, Maggie. He also likes to bake and pick flowers to bring to friends, but not always in that order. Ryan lives at his “Home of My Own” house Sunday evening through Friday. He likes to go for walks in the park with staff and loves to visit fire or police stations. Paul says Ryan’s goals are to “be safe and secure and to have opportunities to interact with as many other people as possible.”

When not running “A Home of My Own,” Paul and Mary Ann Egan are local professionals; Mary Ann owns a flower boutique, and Paul worked at IBM for 34 years as an engineer and IT architect. They already had the entrepreneurial spirit when contemplating their concerns about Ryan’s future. With the help of Self-Directed Services provided by Springbrook, they devised a plan to set up Ryan for the rest of his life.

Ryan and the other two residents use SDS budgets to help pay for rent and ISS Transition Funds to furnish the home. Paul and Maryann use every dollar to make a beautiful, dignified home for the residents.

Michael Mihalko, Springbrook Assistant Director of Community Services for Compliance & Training, has worked closely with Paul, Mary Ann, and Ryan. Michael said, “A Home of My Own is a truly unique living opportunity where participants pull their services together to maintain their home, share staff, and build relationships. Their success comes from bringing multiple facets to the table such as the Fiscal Intermediary, Housing Navigation, Support Brokers, OPWDD, and great DSPs who have made this sustainable opportunity a reality.”

Self-Directed Services ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have the flexibility to choose the supports that are right for them, and this includes working with businesses like “A Home of My Own” to facilitate this. Everyone has a dream, and everyone deserves a home of their own.

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