

NEXUS CHAMPION

CHRIS WILLMON



“ But what I like the most is everything is laid out for me at the beginning of the day... ”

Chris Willmon was injured on the job when a heavy metal hose detached from the drilling rig he was assembling. In addition to shattering the upper end of his spine, Chris suffered a traumatic brain injury

“We thought he was going to be paralyzed, but he was not,” explained Russ Willmon, Chris’ father. **“Today, he can walk and participate in therapies. It’s really kind of a miracle.”**

Chris stayed at the trauma center of Plano Hospital and a Plano rehabilitation hospital for three months before he moved to Nexus Specialty Hospital. His father remembers, **“Everyone agreed Nexus was the best place for Chris.”**

Chris stayed with Nexus for about 12 months. After living at home briefly, he returned and has been living on-campus for the past five years. He’s lived in both Churchill and Windsor, and now calls Somerset home. The long-term therapeutic environment offers therapy, programming, and activities tailored to Chris’ needs and hobbies.

“I enjoy everything throughout the day,” said Chris. **“But what I like the most is everything is laid out for me at the beginning of the day, so I know what I’m doing from hour-to-hour and that helps me.”**

Chris’ stepmother, Linda Willmon, explained, **“The facility has special days for both holidays and different events, like spa day or crafting. They do really neat things and Chris enjoys these events and outings.”**

Russ shared that Chris especially enjoyed going to Camp Higher Ground this year, a weekend-long camp for adults with special needs that offers all kinds of activities, from horseback riding to swimming. He also explained Chris liked a recent group outing to Top Golf, about which Chris

remarked, **“I really liked that outing because I’m a golfer. I was able to practice hitting the ball.”**

Chris has also taken day trips to Astros games and long weekend vacations to Galveston. His father also explained that a major highlight for Chris is when his kids come to visit from El Paso or when his sister, aunt, and other family members stop by.

Brain injury rehabilitation is also very important to Chris. He works with therapists to improve his strength and cognitive function to reach his goal of more independence.

“He really seems happy in the different therapies,” said Russ. **“He keeps up with sports and takes the current events class where they read and share stories with each other. He’s also really good with his math and finance skills. His long- and short-term memory continue to get better, which are real positives for us.”**

Chris shared that right now his goals include **“practicing my walking, so I can do that a little bit more, and following instructions. I’m working on those skills.”**

Ultimately, Chris’ family hopes he will continue to progress so that he can have more independence. Even Chris looks forward to coming home one day, even if it is just part time or over long weekends. But for now, this humorous charmer is enjoying time on campus with his Nexus family.

