

# Sean's Story

Climbing Mountains and overcoming obstacles at Moorpark Place.



Moorpark Place, North Ayrshire, Scotland  
Adult learning disabilities service

***“Sean was non-stop! The whole day lasted 10 hours in all and Sean loved every minute.”.....***

Around nine years ago, Sean, a resident who has autism, arrived at Moorpark Place, our learning disabilities residential service in Scotland. Sean had just lost his father and was on the verge of a breakdown. Sean had found life difficult at home and this led to him being in trouble with the police. Sean's mum supported Sean with as much love and compassion as she could, but it soon became clear that Sean would benefit from living elsewhere.

On arrival at Moorpark Place, Sean initially found it difficult to settle into his new home. This resulted in Sean displaying challenging behaviours and presenting as very distressed.

Due to Sean's autism, he wears headphones daily because of his sensory issues. This helps to drown out loud noises or distractions. Guy Busby, our senior support worker at the service, wanted to work on Sean's capabilities in busy places. Guy said:

“I knew that Sean had a lot to offer, and I thought if we could find a better way to communicate with Sean, perhaps things would improve. I suggested that Sean should be taken out to public places to see how he would get on.

“Sean improved immensely. We found that Sean loved going to HMV and just liked walking around, even when it was busy. We learnt a lot about Sean during those years and watched him develop into his own person. It was lovely to see.

“Even though Sean was displaying challenging behaviour, he also displayed kind and caring behaviour.

For example, if he thought you looked under the weather, he would bring you a glass of water or an apple. I knew that I would never give up in helping Sean to become the best he could possibly be, and to have the best life here at Moorpark.

Guy and his team recognised that Sean had plenty of energy and skills he could use for hobbies and activities, but first they needed to establish a plan to help Sean progress. Firstly, Guy worked with the GP and local nurses to carry out an assessment on Sean, which led to medication being introduced to reduce Sean's anxieties. Next, Guy worked towards putting robust support processes in place resulting in Sean's 2:1 support being reduced to 1:1. This was shown to improve Sean's mood, and slowly, Sean began to accept new staff members. Guy said:

“The very first time I started noticing big improvements with Sean was a day about six years ago. I tried many different things to reduce Sean's anxieties on a daily basis such as putting a white board up with the day's activities on and things we needed to do, but Sean wasn't keen on this.

***Walking has helped Sean in his everyday life as he is now much more confident in things such as helping with the weekly shop and interacting with members of the public.***

- Guy



“One morning Sean was looking a bit agitated and anxious about the day ahead so I asked him how he was and what he would like to do today. He said he wanted to go for a coastal drive, get some lunch, and pick up the latest Thomas the Tank Engine magazine. It sounds so simple now but from that day Sean’s behaviours and anxieties decreased and his life started to slowly change. He appeared much happier and content in himself and where he was living.”

The team followed Sean’s lead and soon recognised his love for the outdoors. It was clear Sean loved to walk, and he began his walking journey around the local area. Gradually, Sean started to take on bigger walking challenges. Sean and Guy started to go on walks together as Guy has experience of hill walking.

One day, Guy asked Sean if he would like to go hill walking and when Sean agreed, Guy packed some socks, equipment, and a packed lunch. Sean and Guy had a lovely time walking up a huge hill where they could see great views over the Clyde.

In August 2023, Sean and Guy decided to go even further on their walking adventures by tackling Ben Lomond, a mountain in Scotland. Sean and Guy set off for Ben Lomond, parked near the beach, had a look around, and took some pictures. They then had something to eat before beginning the ascent. Sean seemed particularly excited, and he was climbing and walking with ease, while enjoying the views on his way to the summit.

Sean was delighted when he arrived at the summit. He witnessed a cloud passing by them and was also fascinated by a helicopter they saw while at the top of the mountain.

Sean made the descent as easily as he made the climb and afterwards both Sean and Guy sat in the car at the beach, had something to eat, and spoke about their next adventure. Guy said:

“The climb to Ben Lomond is supposed to take around three to four hours, but we reached the top after two and a half hours because Sean was non-stop! The whole day lasted 10 hours in all and Sean loved every minute.”

“Our next adventure will be The Cobbler mountain which is a great walk and just as difficult as Ben Lomond. This will then prepare Sean for Ben Nevis which is the biggest mountain in the UK.

“Hill walking has been amazing for Sean. He has displayed some great interactions while walking such as helping me on difficult parts of the track, helping to get water bottles out of the bag, and socialising with fellow hill walkers. Walking has helped Sean in his everyday life as he is now much more confident in things such as helping with the weekly shop and interacting with members of the public. These are massive achievements for Sean.”

Preparing to walk up Ben Nevis will take some time and planning, but Sean is very excited. Guy has shown Sean pictures of the mountain and Sean said: “Great, Captain Guy.”



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