

Facilitating Safe & Dignified Transfers for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

By Todd Boyles

Martha Lloyd Community Services (MLCS), located in Troy, Pennsylvania, has been providing programs and services for individuals with intellectual disabilities since 1928. There are a variety of services and settings offered including residential group homes, the swimming pool and fitness center, senior center, vocational work center, and health services. Ensuring the safety and dignity of those participating in these programs is a significant challenge. MLCS is always looking for new, cutting-edge equipment that will improve the safety and quality of life of patients and staff.



The LiftVest, a garment transfer device manufactured and distributed by LiftVest USA (www.liftvest.com), has literally changed the way people progress from area to area at Martha Lloyd Community Services. Martha Lloyd was introduced to the LiftVest in 2004. This product has helped maximize individual participation in each area without being intrusive and cumbersome to the person wearing it and, at the same time, reducing the chance of back injury to the staff.

MLCS provides services to over 140 individuals on a daily basis. Many of these persons have some form of seizure disorder but due to the LiftVest are able to safely transition to different locations. The LiftVest enables direct support professionals to escort individuals while allowing them to ambulate as independently as possible. The LiftVest wearers are able to gain confidence, an increased sense of independence and dignity. Instead of using a wheelchair, for example, those who are scheduled to move from the library to the pool are able to have staff walk with them, using the LiftVest to provide stability and support.

Individuals with more severe physical disabilities are another group who have benefited by using the LiftVest here at MLCS. Some of these people have very limited mobility and may even be confined to a wheelchair. In the Orchard View Senior Center, the LiftVest eliminates the need for gait belts and allows direct support professionals to avoid injury to themselves and their clients while routinely transferring and safely repositioning individuals throughout the day.

The fitness area has also greatly benefited from the LiftVest. When individuals work on balance, sensory, vestibular, and fitness equipment, the staff is able to provide stability and support to each person by using the LiftVest as they work through their exercise or sensory integration program.

One of the long-standing values at Martha Lloyd Community Services is to treat people with dignity, respect, and understanding. Individuals are encouraged to become as independent in their daily lives as possible. The LiftVest is a major part of meeting the goal to lead a productive fulfilling life.

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