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**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH  
CORI MITCHELL  
JANUARY 17, 2013  
INTERVIEWER: JANE HARLAN-SIMMONS  
VIDEOGRAPHER: PEGGY HOLTZ  
RECORD ID: 010-DO**

**CM:** CORI MITCHELL  
**JHS:** JANE HARLAN-SIMMONS  
**PH:** PEGGY HOLTZ

[00:00:10]

**CM:** My name is Cori Mitchell and I was born in Sterling, Colorado, which is northeast of Nebraska in the plains. And I went all through school there and the day after my graduation from high school I drove from Colorado to Bloomington. My dad liked Bobby Knight at the time, so. And my sister was going to IU. So we came and lived out here and we've been living down here ever since. And I'm lucky to be working at the movie theater. I started at the Von Lee [movie theater] and was kind of moved over to Showplace 11.

**JHS:** And how long have you worked at Showplace 11?

**CM:** Well, about 13 years.

**JHS:** That's a really long time.

**CM:** It is. You see a lot of difference faces come and go.

[00:01:15]

**JHS:** Yeah. Yeah. So tell us, you know, about what you do there and what that's like working there.

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[00:01:22]

**CM:** It's absolutely wonderful because I work part-time, which is just Friday and Saturday nights when they are-- they expect the most people. And it gives me an opportunity to see faces that I don't normally see and I've met a few of the movie regulars that go. And I practice-- I train my memory by trying to remember what theatre what show is in and who I've seen. And then I get the benefits of free movies. So it's a good all-around job.

**JHS:** And tell us about, like, your co-workers. Do you know other people? You must after so many years there have some people you know?

**CM:** Yeah, I kind of know a few but they're all young kids usually and they come and go because they're just in there for, like, a semester or maybe a year to earn money for their future. So I do better not to get closer to any of them because I don't see them much. They're all pretty friendly. You know how worker-- fellow employees are. They're nice. I've gone to a movie with a couple of them sometimes because when you work there you get free movies as a benefit. So I invited a few of them to go. And we share that kind of bond at the movies and it's really nice.

[00:03:17]

**JHS:** That's great. Yeah, I know when I talked with you yesterday and asked about what you wanted to talk about, you-- one of the things you mentioned was your love for movies. Maybe you could talk a little bit more--

**CM:** I just love movies because-- well, see when I'm at home and I don't really know what I want to do and I want to exercise I'll put a movie in my DVD player and I'll get on my NordicTrack and I watch a movie and exercise and it just revitalizes me and I feel good the rest of the day and plus the added benefit is I sleep better that night. And it's just good. It's good for you.

**JHS:** Combination of movies and exercise.

**CM:** Right. Yeah.

**JHS:** What about the management there? How are they and have they-- have you asked them for any accommodations or have they made any accommodations for you?

[00:04:22]

**CM:** Actually, they have given me one accommodation I just love. They first initiated a chair for me to sit down in. I kind of thought that was a waste of time really at first, but now I'm finding I love it. It's necessary. They-- they're so easy to want to help and get the chair for me and they very committing in that way. And they always-- another way they've accommodated me, because see I have memory problems a little. And like for instance, I forget, like, what time my break is. And they'll write down the break time on movie schedule and I can put it in my-- I forget what that's called. Where I sit down at my post. And then I just look out and pick out the right movie to go to and it works out really well.

[00:05:38]

**JHS:** That's great. Well, they must really value you as a employee considering how long you've been there.

**CM:** Right. And, you know, I have to say one thing that really makes you feel good, is customers have come up to me. I'll see them, like, in say Kroger. They come up to me and they'll talk to me like they've known me for years. And then I'll be at work and I'll see people that, oh, you work at the movie theatre. You know, and that makes you feel kind of good. I like it.

**JHS:** Because people know you?

**CM:** Mm-hmm.

**JHS:** So you've never had any problems with discrimination or anything like that with either the customers or your employers then?

**CM:** No, I've-- no. I think if I were a more loud-- a more person that complains a lot [inaudible] being discriminated against. But I just kind of go with the flow and it seems to work out.

[00:06:51]

**JHS:** You have such a positive attitude that, you know, it's just--

**CM:** Well, thank you.

**JHS:** Have we missed anything else about your job that you want to talk about? We can always go back later.

**CM:** I like to listen. We get paid every other week. And because I have a memory difficulty, that cause problems because I keep track of my money situation with my computer on a thing called Quicken. What they have done, which is a help-- tremendous help, is I've talked to my bank and we've organized a direct deposit to where it just automatically goes on my statement and that is such a help. You know, because then I don't have to remember, record, or make sure I ask if my pay stub and, you know, that's-- really helpful.

**JHS:** I'm just going to get this out of your way.

**CM:** Thank you. I [inaudible].

**JHS:** [Inaudible] When you say, they have done that for you—

**PH:** That's fine. Sorry.

**JHS:** Yeah, don't worry about it but you might get tangled. When you say they have done that, who is they?

[00:08:21]

**CM:** Well, I would say my management at Showplace. They've -- somehow we've talked with my bank and got that organized and that is such a help. Maybe my parents and I have done that. I'm not sure, but it

just works so well to have that automatically whereas I don't need to try and remember to carry around my paystubs and you know.

[00:08:56]

**JHS:** Right, right.

**CM:** You don't realize little things like that really help.

**JHS:** Wonderful. Okay. You mentioned your fitness. Let's talk a little bit more about that if you wanted to mention how important that is for people with head injuries. So we could talk a little bit more about the cycling class or the NordicTrack, the things you're doing.

**CM:** Okay, one thing, first, it's amazing. If for some reason I don't do my NordicTrack all the time or I'm not in my cycling class at the YMCA, my speech and just my overall performance really notices. Because, like, for example, I have a kind of damaged diaphragm. So therefore I need to really walk and take care of my breathing. So therefore I always bicycle and do the Nordic and because I have to keep my lungs and diaphragm exercised because it really, really affects my speech. And, you know, you can think about it, my job, if my speech wasn't really good, my job would really suffer and I really enjoy talking to people.

[00:10:39]

And if I cannot be understood, what's the use, you know? So I need to continue that and I just keep that in mind when I don't feel like going and getting on a pair of shorts. You know, I just-- just think about if I didn't do that. And plus, you know, I have to thank my family and my brother-in-law for that because they're very much into bicycling, exercising themselves. So being raised in that environment, I kind of got that way, I think. So, but yes, I love to-- I love the feeling. I sleep so much better and I just bicycle on my thing watching a movie and I think of, like, now what should I do for breakfast tomorrow. You know, and I think of all those important things. [Laughing] What should I get at the store tonight, you know? It's just really beneficial.

**JHS:** You mentioned, talking about your family, sometimes that you've gone to Colorado maybe for bicycle trips?

**CM:** Yes, I go to Colorado often because see that is where I was born and raised. I have two best friends from high school out in Colorado that I've visited I think three or four times. But yes, last summer I went to Colorado to visit these friends. And then later my parents came out there and we all joined a bicycle group for a couple weeks. So I was in Colorado a good three weeks. I got my exercise in, my visiting with my friends. It was a real good Colorado trip.

[00:12:44]

**JHS:** That is great.

[00:12:46]

**CM:** It's very nice. One of those things, you don't want it to be in the past but it is. You just do it again you hope.

**JHS:** In the past?

**CM:** Yeah, because, you know, it's over. I wanted to do it, you know.

**JHS:** Do you think you'll do that again?

**CM:** Maybe. There's about a 40 percent chance because see, you have to get all a lot of things just right, you know, to make it work.

**JHS:** All the stars have to align.

**CM:** Right, right. Yeah.

[00:13:21]

**JHS:** Did you mention that you also go to the Y for exercise?

**CM:** Yes, there again I have to thank my parents because as you get older, I guess it's really-- they have much more important to constantly bear weight and do the kinds of things that weight lifting can do for you. So they've-- we weight lift as a family twice a week, usually a Tuesday and a Thursday. We've all taken classes down there and learned which machines do what and how to do it. And so I go down there a couple days a week and it takes me about an hour to do my machines. I do like 12 reps of twice each machine. And I just feel so much better when I do that.

And it's good to do that and incorporate that with the cycling. And then that way you get the aerobic health and the weight training. And so yeah, I'm a big YMCA person.

**JHS:** That's excellent. Do you know other people there that you see when you're exercising there?

**CM:** A lot. In fact, the YMCA is my social place because they've seen me around there forever. And, you know, you see the same people that go there, the weights. And if you walk around with the best smile, that makes them feel good. And you're there for a purpose to do something that's kind of painful, but yet if you see other people with a smile it makes your work easier. And plus, I just love going down there because I see a lot of my people I know down there. And I'll see people I've met at the movies down there. And, you know, I may be in [inaudible] the next day and I'll see somebody that I saw yesterday at the Y, you know.

[00:15:40]

**JHS:** You know a lot of people don't you?

[00:15:42]

**CM:** It's amazing. I know more people than I know I know because people know me from the movie theatre and then I'll see them at the Y, you know, it's weird. It's kind of nice.

**JHS:** It's a very friendly place.

**CM:** Yes, it is. And I'm that kind of person that loves seeing how many people I know, you know, and seeing if I can remember. It's a really good fit, good thing.

**JHS:** For people that don't know someone with a head injury or what is involved with head injury, can you tell us how the disability affects you and how long that you've been dealing with those-- those things in your life?

**CM:** It's really-- it's kind of not really a pleasant thing to be talking about. You know, you see me and you talk about, like, which movies to go to and, you know, I see them all cheerful on the outside. But down, I can't remember things. Like I won't remember, like, if I saw so-in-so at the movie theatre or at the YMCA. You know, they don't realize little things like that. It doesn't really matter, I guess. But it's just the fact that I don't remember things, you know, that people assume I do remember. That's probably the most. And I'm -- change the subject, but I went up to Indianapolis for some rehab health and my worst problem is my memory.

[00:17:33]

And see that really shines when I can't remember if it was at the YMCA I said something or was it dealing with movies or, you know, it's hard.

**JHS:** Do you find that people are accepting of that and understand that or is it hard for them because it's kind of an invisible?

**CM:** It is invisible. Anyway, even though it is invisible I am lucky because I'm physically not right. So therefore my invisible disease, my memory is more obvious because-- am I making sense?

**JHS:** You have physical--

**CM:** Right. They're more able to understand I might have some intellectual thing. But it is hard when they don't see that because people, you know, you have to just yeah, yeah, yeah-- go with it, you know, even though you might not truly remember. You have to do a lot of talking and [inaudible], you know.

**JHS:** Kind of-- that puts the burden on you to sort of smooth things over?

**CM:** Right, it really does. Mm-hmm.

[00:18:57]

**JHS:** What is helpful to you in terms of people making it easier for you to deal with your memory limitations?

[00:19:09]

**CM:** Well, like we mentioned earlier about my physical problems, not necessarily my memory. But at my workplace the way they make sure they got the mat for me and the chair and they've, you know, having people that accommodate me. That's really helpful. And I don't-- could you repeat the question?

**JHS:** What's helpful to you for-- to make it easier for you? What can people-- what do people do in relating to you that makes it easier for you with your memory problems?

**CM:** One thing that does make it easier that I don't really like it too much when people do it, but it is helpful kind of, is when people talk slow and also full of information. And I don't have to remember what they said two minutes ago, you know. And it help that people talk about things that I'm familiar with and that I can interject opinions about. That really helps if I take part in the conversation. That's probably all I can say [inaudible].

**JHS:** That's great. Thank you. Well, okay. We did exercise. Tell us about support groups that you belong to and, you know, one group or more? I don't know how many groups you belong to.

[00:20:58]

**CM:** Well, I've belonged to several support groups in my life years so far. It started out with one group that seemed very beneficial, quite a long while ago. It was a head injury support group. That met like once a month or so where you go and you talk about your problems or whatever. You hear other people sides. We do gather with the IU speech and hearing group. That meets once a month at IU.

And that is a kind of group where they're very-- they-- they're very interesting and they put work at trying to make it worth going. It's fun. You learn something. And support groups are nice because it gives you a chance to be around other people with the same difficulties. You find out what works for them and you try and copy that for yourself. Because my memory is kind of weak, I sometimes-- I don't remember as well what it is I want to try. It makes it doubling challenging. And then also a few years ago I dated a guy that was the leader of a support group I'm in Indianapolis.

The guy was-- his support group tried to-- or my support group tried to do things with his support group. People all mean well, but it's hard to make things work, you know.

**JHS:** Tell me more about that.

**CM:** It's really hard because brain injury, as you well know, has memory as the main problem. And therefore I forget, like, when the meetings are, what the subject matter is going to be, what all needs to be done to get ready for it. I don't-- it's just hard to remember things like that.

[00:23:31]

**JHS:** So do you feel like sometimes that the groups, that even though they're a support group for that purpose they don't help sufficiently with giving you the information in a way you need it?

[00:23:44]

**CM:** Well, the one at IU does something that's wonderful. They send out a little note card in the mail that comes like a week or so in advance. And then every time I get it I put it up on my refrigerator. And that kind of thing always helps because then I—right in my book to make transportation for that meeting. And that kind of thing helps, you know, the reminder things.

**JHS:** Well, you mentioned dating somebody who led a support group. Have you had any friendships that have come out of the groups that you've been--

**CM:** Yeah, one in particular. I dated him at first. We both have-- after dating about a year or so and we are the best friends now. We have been friends for over ten years and it's just a really nice thing. I had, like, I turn guys into friends quite well. I-- and-- yeah, I-- I-- and, you know, there's that difference between acquaintances and friendships. I have several acquaintances in the head injury group at IU, but I don't know if I classify that as friendships. I could always use more friendships.

**JHS:** Okay. Have you seen any changes over the years in terms of what's recommended for rehabilitation and for, you know, the best things to help your-- keep your health and maintain your disabilities? That's a terrible way to phrase that question-- in terms of what say doctors, support groups and others are telling you, you know, is the best thing for you to be doing? Have you seen changes in that over the time that you've--

[00:26:21]

**CM:** Not really, no. But one thing I have seen is a change in human's view or thought of people with a disability. It seems like at first-- when I first had a disability people would really look down upon someone that couldn't do as much. It's gotten a lot better as far as just accepting and there's more-- well, there's more things you can do. As far as employment even, they are finding ways that disability people can work or contribute. So in that way it's good. I think that's about all.

**JHS:** Yeah, that's great too. And, you know, since we're doing a history project, when you talk about how things have changed, you know, there was a time when people were less accepting. What-- what era are we talking about years-wise?

**CM:** Well I just would say in the last probably seven years it's gotten better. In the last three or four years it seems to have really gotten better. It's moving in the right direction. See, when I first had my injury, which was like before 2000, I don't think it was all that good. But now, like, there are options for people that are blind. There are ways to do things if you don't hear as good. You know, it's a lot more disabled friendly. It's just-- maybe I don't know why I've been noticing that more, but I have kind of. I hope it's that way. [Laugh]

[00:28:35]

**JHS:** That's really interesting. You know, you're talking about a fairly short period of time in which you've noticed--



[00:28:40]

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** A difference.

**CM:** Maybe it's because I'm looking out more for that, but it just seems better.

**JHS:** Glad to hear that. You've been active in disability advocacy. Tell us about your involvement with some of these groups, for example, the counsel for community accessibility [inaudible].

**CM:** That I haven't been too involved with. I've gone a little to social network. But like, well, like-- I was involved with [inaudible]. Remember, you were in there weren't you?

**JHS:** Yeah. And maybe, you know, since people won't hear me in this video, if you can, you know, mention some of these names, that would be Citizen Advocacy of South Central Indiana, [Inaudible].

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** Maybe you could just tell us how you were involved and name that group. That would help.

[00:29:53]

**CM:** Okay. Well for a while I was involved in Citizen Advocacy of South Central Indiana and I met a few good people in there. People in the disabled arena are always there to want to be able to help. And that's really nice. I met, like, Jo Gilbertson and Suzie Rimstidt. I became closer with her. And I've cannot remember-- oh, Cleo Stroguiludis or something. I'm not sure who else. Was Dixie Patterson in there?

**JHS:** I think so.

**CM:** There were quite few really nice people. I wish I would have spent more time with some of that.

**JHS:** And what was your goal there?

**CM:** I was just a member to go and just be a part of the group and I guess we were trying to give the place-- the area more disabled friendly. I couldn't really do much there. I wasn't too involved because I-- all my thinking gets taken by my work, my [inaudible] grocery shopping, trying to get everything done, and it's hard for me to spend time doing other activities.

**JHS:** Well, you were on the board there, you know, and I was on the board as well during some of that time so I remember when you did, you did contribute quite a bit. You know, sometimes just being at meetings and sharing your points of view, you know, is really valuable.

[00:31:58]

**CM:** It is, yeah.

[00:32:01]

**JHS:** But I can just fill that in since I have [inaudible] [Laughter]. So other than, let's see—CASCI [Citizen Advocacy of South-Central Indiana]. You mentioned you've been involved in Partners in Policy Making. And again, if you can mention that-- that-- the name of that program and tell us a little bit about it.

**CM:** Right. For a short time I was in Partners in Policymaking, which was an advocacy group that would meet up in Indianapolis. I wasn't really with it enough upstairs to really contribute, but I did go to the meetings and I tried to listen and learn. It's a good group of people trying to do their best. And-- but I just-- it was in '96, I think, that I was involved with that. I met one gal. Her name was Ronnie something. I don't remember too much with that group.

**JHS:** What were they-- what was the purpose of the organization or the group?

**CM:** Just trying to make people with a disability like a person, like everybody else. Like, not to treat them differently and-- and that they had say and a belief and a right just like everybody else. You know, I strongly believe in that too but I wasn't really into that yet at that time in my life.

**JHS:** From what little I know about that group, it seems like they helped to-- people have the skills to advocate for themselves. And did you feel like you learned some things there about how to stand up for yourself or other people with disabilities?

[00:34:13]

**CM:** In a way it kind of got me thinking that maybe I wasn't all that different because maybe I could do some of the things. But I was-- I was just too injured to really contribute to that group yet, too early on. It's a good group though.

**PH:** I was just wondering, you said it was too soon. When was your injury and then compared to when you were at Partners? How much time had gone?

**CM:** Well actually, 15 years or so. But I guess mentally I was just really slow in trying to get myself wanting to reach out and help and try and-- it was just, I don't know. Maybe it wasn't too soon but it just felt too soon.

**JHS:** That's great. Okay, we've got the advocacy part unless I missed anything that you could think of that-- other things you've done as far as advocacy goes with the CCA here in Bloomington or anything like that?

**CM:** No, but I would have to go back and say how important it is to exercise for your breathing. That's important. [Laughing]

[00:35:47]

**JHS:** That's important.

[00:35:48]

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** And, you know, it reminds me when we were walking in here, you know, you passed by David Mank's office.

**CM:** Oh, yeah.

**JHS:** Said hello to him. Tell us how you know David Mank from the Institute.

**CM:** I believe he's head of the IIDC. And we've had several meetings in this very same room and he's spoken a few times. And I've just always kind of known him, I think. So it's kind of a weird thing, they way you have people that you just know.

**JHS:** You've seen him at different conference probably.

**CM:** Mm-hmm.

**JHS:** So I'm guessing, and I should know this since I'm on staff at the Institute, that you're-- that you've been part of the consumer advisory board.

[00:36:37]

**CM:** Yeah. Yeah, I've gone to a couple of those.

**JHS:** Okay. Can you just say that for us, that you've-- you've been part of the consumer advisory board for the Institute?

**CM:** Now I get all these meetings and the groups mixed up. Now I've been to a couple consumer advisory board meetings, I believe. Is that the CCA?

**JHS:** The Counsel for Community Accesibility--

**CM:** It's something different.

**JHS:** The city of Bloomington.

**CM:** Yeah, I've done that also.

**JHS:** Yeah, I bet you've done quite a bit.

**CM:** [Laughing] Yeah.

[00:37:17]

**JHS:** And you also said that you've know Sharon Ely or Sharon Hauss.

[00:37:21]

**CM:** Oh, I've known her for years. In fact, when I first moved to Bloomington she was the one that got me all started with my computer. She helped me in that area, I think. It's been a while but I think she helped the word dictation. I've been-- because she'd been around with Michael she was real familiar with what I could do. And that-- it was nice. She was very forgiving and understood me and I always kind of, have been kind of a friend of hers, sort of. I haven't interacted too much with her of late. But she got-- she helped me get started, I think, with my computer.

**JHS:** Yeah, and tell us more about how you use computers and, you know, you mentioned a dictation program or any of those things that you use that are helpful for you.

**JHS:** With my computer I have-- it's called a to-do list. And I get up every morning, first thing I do in the morning is I get on there and I type out things I want to get done for the day and it has a certain time thing where you just fill in the blanks. And I use my word dictation and I say what those activities are so I make sure I get those done. And then I'll leave that and I'll do, say task number one. And then when that's done I'll go back and look and I'll, oh, yeah, and do number two or whatever. It's just very helpful. And then I'll have on there as task number four, look at email. And I'll just stay in there and do my email.

[00:39:25]

**JHS:** Do you use mostly voice or do you use the keyboard to type or?

**CM:** I do a little bit of both, probably mainly the voice because—when I want to write an email, which can be very tedious if I were to try to manually type it out. I need that word dictation. I'll put that on and hook it up and get it all ready and I'll just write my paragraph or whatever and then go to task number six on my to-do list. It's very helpful.

**JHS:** Have you found that that dictation kind of program is working better for you now than it used to or have those improved for you?

**CM:** Very much. For a while it worked really good. And then something happened and then I had to get it reprogrammed or something and then it didn't work very well. And then that was just for a brief time. And now I got it working again and now it's starting to really recognize my voice and it's working really effectively now and I'm-- it's great.

**JHS:** They've gotten better at--

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** Understand voices.

[00:40:51]

**CM:** Right.

[00:40:53]

**JHS:** Yeah.

**CM:** I still find that I do better at-- see, I'm a night person. So I do a lot better with the computer understanding my speech if it's at night. So I don't know if that will ever change, whether the computer has a hard time understanding me right in the morning. But then usually by evening it's great. [Laugh].

**JHS:** Computer gets smarter as the day goes by.

**CM:** Maybe that's it.

**PH:** Your computer's just waking up, too.

**CM:** Right.

**JHS:** Tell us about your family. You know, you've mentioned how they've been involved with your exercise and obviously they've been important, like, who-- who is here in Bloomington and how much do you see them? Talk to me a little about that.

[00:41:45]

**CM:** Okay. Well, because of this accident, I've become so close with my parents because they support everything I do and they have me come over there every Sunday. My dad and I share a love for football and basketball games and movies. They're very understanding of things that I cannot do as well. And if-- you know how parents are. They know their daughter or their son more than anyone else. So I wonder if I can do a certain task, I'll ask them. They'll know. So yeah, they are a big part of my life. And I probably talk to them on the phone at least once a day probably. And we spend our Sundays together and every Thursday.

Today was no exception. We go to the Bakehouse here in town. Like my mother and I have five cups of coffee or whatever. And, you know, they're people in there that we know and this-- my parents are huge helps.

**CM:** You mentioned, I think, a sister. Do you have siblings?

**CM:** Yes, I do have one sister. And she's in Chicago. She's married and she has three kids. And we see her quite often. I can email her anytime. I-- we get along pretty good. She's only a year and a half older than I am, so. And back when we were younger in high school and junior high, we were one year apart. So we're really close. We know each other quite well.

**JHS:** I guess so.

[00:43:58]

**CM:** So.

[00:43:58]

**JHS:** So you had a car accident is what I understand. And now, did that happen before you moved to Bloomington or--

**CM:** Yeah. See, I went to high school in Colorado where it's snowy and icy. And when I was a senior I was driving and had that car accident. And then I needed, I think, one class to graduate high school so I went back, got my degree, graduated the next year, '89 I believe. Then we moved here to Indiana so.

**JHS:** And you mentioned that you sister was going to school here. I was just wondering, you know, why your parents chose to move here to Bloomington.

**CM:** Well, it was kind of a two part decision. At the time, my sister was going to DePauw in Greencastle. Well, she transferred to IU when we moved to Bloomington. And then where I lived at in Colorado, they didn't have the services or the help and I have this head injury and we needed-- wanted to find a place where there was something I could do or that would be easier or disable friendly or whatever. So we-- that was two reasons to move out here. The-- my sister and me. And you know, what do parents have but their children to look to? So we came out here. My sister then transferred to IU and we-- we had the services here and I went to a program with Glenn Doman, which was head -- located in Philadelphia.

[00:46:08]

And then we just-- I've been here ever since. I've been working with the movies since '95. I love it.

**JHS:** That must have been a really big transition for you two. I mean, first of all, just transitioning to having disabilities when you didn't before and then moving all the way across the country to a new place.

**CM:** Right.

**JHS:** What was that like?

**CM:** Well, if you don't know brain injury like I do, well you probably don't, like I do. You don't really know what's going on as much. So in a way I'm lucky I didn't really know what was going on. So the move was quite-- was okay with me. So I moved out here and then my parents-- I would have to say I have to thank them because they kept telling me that I had a chance for a fresh start out in this new place. So you know, that thought kind of sounded really good to me, you know. So we came out here and we were near my sister and near Bobby Knight for my dad, and you know, my mom worked in for United Airlines, which was located here in Bloomington. So everything was working out for everybody. And, you know, I didn't really have a chance to think of what I was missing or, you know, I just kind of went with the flow.

[00:47:49]

**JHS:** Well, because we're focusing on Indiana, I'm kind of intrigued that your family felt that here in Indiana, and maybe specifically Bloomington that you-- that things would be-- you'd have better services. Did it have to do with medical care as well, that they felt the medical care was better here or?

[00:48:10]

**CM:** Well, like, okay, for example, BTaccess isn't medical care, but BTaccess has-- it gives me a way to get places on my own. See, where I lived in Colorado it was out in the middle of nowhere, in the plains. There weren't any services, ways to get anywhere. We were out in a small town of 15,000 out in the plains, the desolation. And coming here to Bloomington, they had the BTaccess, the IDC, the all these service things, and they had C and R up in Indianapolis that I went to. And there was a lot to be offered here.

**JHS:** Can you tell us what C and R stands for?

**CM:** It's a center for neurological rehabilitation. That's a specific brain kind of thing [inaudible] life. It's was a good program.

**JHS:** Do you know if that's affiliated with Indiana University or?

**CM:** I don't think it is.

**JHS:** This is wonderful. You've been talking so much. I'm wondering if you need a drink of water or take a break or anything?

[00:49:49]

**CM:** Oh, no. I'm one of those talk people.

**JHS:** You're just a professional at this.

**CM:** [Laughing] Well, I don't know if I'd go that far but thank you.

**JHS:** Okay. Tell us about your living situation, you know, your housing and your-- your neighborhood or whatever you want to call the area where you live?

[00:50:13]

**CM:** Okay. I started out living in my own home with my parents. That was all I could do. And then I went to C and R and they taught me how to live independently. So I moved to an apartment on Miller Drive, which was right near the YMCA, so that would help my breathing and I would be able to go there and work out. But slowly I moved from there and decided I needed to be near Kroger, Jackson Creek. So I moved over to this south side of town. I've been there now for a while, which gives me more reason to enjoy BTaccess, to go to the Y. And now, could you repeat that question?

[00:51:13]

**JHS:** Sure. Yeah, just was asking about your living situation, your housing, which is exactly what you've been talking about. So do you live on your own or?

[00:51:24]

**CM:** Right, okay. First of all, tell you about it-- it's so nice because since I cannot work full time, my funds are limited. So I'm on this housing called Section 8. It's a government funded thing where I pay much less amount than is required most people. That's so nice to save me. So I've just been renting an apartment and been paying the rent that I owe and it's great. And I-- I'm all set because I have BTaccess knows where I live. So I'm all-- I have a job. Everything is just right.

**JHS:** How do you get to work from your home?

**CM:** Well, when it's nice and it's light outside in summer, I'll walk. I have a walker. I think vocational rehabilitation bought it for me. I'm not sure. And also that service BTaccess that I was telling you about, they also know where I live and they come and they're very good at getting me to work on time. And they'll drive me to work and they don't mind taking my walker and putting it in the van and it works out really good.

**JHS:** What about transportation to the grocery store? You said you wanted to be right near Kroger so?

[00:53:02]

**CM:** See, yeah. That was the deal. Because I'm right near Kroger it's so nice because see, I have a little walker that has a basket in front. So I just-- I simply walk to Kroger. Use my grocery list and because my basket is kind of small I don't spend too much money. And I just walk down doing my grocery shopping twice a week, which since I can't spend too much I do have to spend excess time menu planning and doing all that, which is fine with my computer and I have that done-- so my mom's got me organized and all that [inaudible] so I can do all that and I do my grocery shopping twice a week and I just walk down to Kroger and it works out really well. It takes me about-- I'd say 40-- 40 minutes.

**JHS:** To walk there, shop and come back?

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** Wow. You're fast. [Laughing]

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** I can never get out Kroger and back. That's a lot of walking to get through that store. What about your neighbors? Do you know people right around where you-- your apartment is?

[00:54:29]

**CM:** I have this one neighbor. In fact, she and I went to the movies the other-- last night. Her name is Terry. She's extremely friendly. She's one of the very few people that are extremely accepting. She's probably the only neighbor I really talk with. Most people nowadays are into their own lives and trying to make their own ends meet. So, but yeah, she's probably a good neighbor, good friend. We went to the movies. It was fun.



[00:55:12]

**JHS:** Well, that's great.

**CM:** Mm-hmm.

**CM:** So if you had an emergency, you know, and you were home, are there-- is there somebody in the area that you could, you know, bang on their door or like, you know--

**CM:** Oh.

**JHS:** [Inaudible] up? Are there other people around there that would help?

**CM:** Mm-hmm. Definitely. I could bang on my neighbor that I told you about her door or I could-- I'm not real good friends, the guy right next to me but he's home more than that neighbor of mine. I could bang on his door. Like, I know my parent's phone number by heart and I have a cell phone so I could call them. I'm not too concerned in that area, pretty-- taken care of pretty well.

**JHS:** That's great. That's great. It just sounds like you've worked really hard to set everything up so that it works for you.

**CM:** Yes, it's amazing.

[00:56:11]

**PH:** I was-- you work at night. Does BTaccess run that late? I was just wondering how you get home from the theater.

**CM:** Well, see BTaccess, they stop running at, like 7:30 sometimes. So what I do is I'll ask one of the workers that I work with to drop me off because it's right near and they don't seem to mind one bit. They just-- they are people that get off at the same time as I do that live in relatively in the area and they just take me home, no big deal so. But you know, a problem just happened-- when their car is really small and I have my walker with me. That's a dilemma. Now what are we gonna do?

**JHS:** Right. Right. Well, we have about ten minutes here so I want to make sure to ask you about your art. Can you tell us about that?

[00:57:14]

**CM:** See I just had my instructor, Patricia Coleman, come yesterday and I did the most beautiful painting because see, I had done a lot of work on it because she comes every other Wednesday. She was unable to come last Wednesday so I took it upon myself to do it myself. It looks really nice. I-- it's a beautiful painting and there were hills and mountains and I made them just right, you know. It's going really well though-- the artwork. It's more-- I'm finding more an enjoyment for myself. I don't think I'll ever really sell anymore of my work again. I have sold I think one piece to some people that I met in my head injury group.

[00:58:17]

They came over one night and bought some. But artwork, I really have been enjoying that.

**JHS:** Tell us about how you got started painting.

**CM:** Well, back in junior high in Colorado I did painting quite often. I was artist of the year in junior high and then I moved here to Bloomington and I came back to art and did a little. And then I somehow got to where I knew this one gal that would come to my home every other week and help me out. And I've kind of just been doing it ever since. And now I've been to various art groups, you know, like the one we were in, Artswork [ArtsWORK Indiana], I think. And I've done-- I do a little whenever I have free time.

**JHS:** How have you found being in a group related to art be helpful? What's that been like?

**CM:** It's kind of nice. I enjoy hearing how other people do their artwork and it's-- when you see somebody else, it's really interesting, what they're doing. It kind of is contagious and you feel-- it makes you feel like maybe, hey, you know, it's kind of a good thing and I like that.

**JHS:** I want to see that new painting that you're talking about.

**PH:** It would be nice to have a couple pictures of your paintings if we could get some because we could show them with your video.

[01:00:11]

**JHS:** That's true.

**CM:** You know, to be honest with you, today I thought-- I was seeing about how it was coming in for this interview today. I was thinking, I should bring this piece. And then I-- nah, I'll wait until they ask. I was going to bring in my newest piece with the mountains and everything.

**JHS:** I wish you had and I wish I had thought to ask you. That would have made a lot of sense, but maybe we can figure out a way to get a, you know, kind of nice photograph of some of your work.

**CM:** That would be fun.

**JHS:** Yeah. Yeah, that's be-- I think that would be a great addition to your interview. Any other things about your art? How did you meet your teacher?

**CM:** One of my former teachers-- I knew at Pygmalion's and they got me down there and then somehow word of mouth, they contacted her for me or something and somehow I ended up having her help me out. I'm not really-- it had something to do with Pygmalion's.

[01:01:28]

**JHS:** And for people that are seeing this and might not know what [inaudible] is, can you tell me?

[01:01:32]

**CM:** Oh, right. Pygmalion's is the art store that's located on Grant Street and it's right across the street from the library. I often [inaudible] the library going down to the art store and oh, I think I'll pick up some white paint. You know, it's very well located.

**JHS:** You can drop a lot of money there. Well, just to kind of wrap things up, have you seen changes over the time that you've had your disabilities in the way that services are provided to people with disabilities or, you know, changes in policies that have come from government? You know, like new laws or government policies? Have things been changing that you've seen?

**CM:** I wish I would have take the time to pay more attention to that. But like I mentioned earlier, it does seem like if, like, places there are more disabled things that-- there are more disable friendly. I-- it's just-- it seems like-- it just seems better.

**JHS:** In terms of services as well?

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** And medical care?

[01:03:00]

**CM:** Yeah. And places where they can go or they can-- like the YMCA for example, they allow the disabled. They have classes the disabled people can do.

**PH:** I had one question for you. You've had your job for a long time. How did you get that job? Who helped you find a job and?

**CM:** I came to Bloomington from Colorado, knew nobody. So I got connected with a vocational rehabilitation and they assigned me this fellow guy named Mark something. He's moved somewhere, but-- and he helped me find a job to where I worked at the Von Lee. And the management at the Von Lee really liked what I was doing so they told Showplace 11 about me and then I was moved over to there. I was doing both jobs. And then the Von Lee closed its doors and I was still working over at Showplace 11. So, but all goes back to good Mark.

**JHS:** To VR.

**CM:** Yeah.

**JHS:** You still getting any services from VR?

**CM:** Not really, no.

[01:04:35]

**JHS:** That was a success, I guess.

[01:04:37]

**CM:** Yeah. They-- as I remember back, they bought me a chair for-- to work, at the Von Lee. They bought something for my computer, I think. I'm not sure.

**JHS:** Well, what about the future? You have any plans or any thoughts about what that holds for you?

**CM:** Actually, I should and I'm a big planning kind of person, but I don't really. I strongly feel that family is really important. I want to keep in touch with that. I hope to get married sometime. I don't know about, as far as jobs, I may want to continue my life with the movies. I don't know. That's really kind of a scary thought that's kind of up in the air. Just, I don't know what's going to happen. I hope it'll be good.

**JHS:** Me too. Is there anything else that you want to talk about before we wrap up?

**CM:** No, I don't think. I'll probably think of something later this evening. [Laughing]

**JHS:** Do you have any other questions?

[01:06:08]

**PH:** Unless you have a story or something you want to tell about. I don't know-- being around places or a story of when you were in rehab or in finding your apartment?

**CM:** As you all know, my memory seems to be kind of a problem. The best thing in the world is my memory book that I can write things in there and I've transferred those onto my computer. I do so well having things written down. And now I can just make my own little-- organize my days and, you know. I think that's necessary to have or else I don't know what everyday would be. It's-- because, you know, part of my brain that got injured was organization. So I need that, you know.

**JHS:** You've done a great job of making those things work for you and really sticking with it.

[01:07:15]

**CM:** Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]