

NAME:
Victoria Aarhus

OCCUPATION:
Nursing Services

RESIDENCE:
Memorial Meadows
Apartments
Cedar Rapids, IA
66 Homes

AFFORDABILITY:
- Project-Based HUD Section
8 contract

*Last updated in 2019

VOICES OUT LOUD

Victoria
AARHUS



“I make less than \$1,000 a month. I don’t know anyone who could live off that. Especially in a decent place... my rent and utility...was half of my income. It doesn’t leave a lot of room for anything else.”

Victoria Aarhus has lived in Cedar Rapids, Iowa all her life. After school, she began to work in nursing services. She worked in group homes, with adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and she loved it. Sadly, the physical work of caring for others took a toll on her body, especially her back. After her back injury and five surgeries, she couldn’t lift people, she couldn’t make a bed anymore, and could no longer work. Victoria struggled through the transition – her work was how she defined who she was.

Now with no income, had trouble finding a stable home. Many landlords didn’t want to accept her Housing Choice Voucher, even if it meant guaranteed rent and despite the fact that it is also against federal law to discriminate against tenants who are voucher holders. Where she was currently living, she had water problems, a falling ceiling and cockroaches to name a few. The landlords did little to fix these problems, forcing Victoria to call the Leased Housing Office to ask them to advocate on her behalf.

Just after she stopped working and in the midst of her housing troubles, Victoria’s mother passed away, throwing Victoria into a deep, dark loneliness and depression. Her mother was the matriarch of the family, and coupled with her recent surgery, Victoria felt lost and alone without family. Through housing assistance, she moved in Memorial Meadows.

Now living at Memorial Meadows, Victoria shares she has found a new family of friends and a new community with lots of activities. With access to a community room, Victoria doesn’t have to be alone if she doesn’t want to. She shares that she fondly remembers gardening with her mother, and at Memorial Meadows, Victoria looks after the three gardens – one on the patio, and two on the front lawns. She has planted many new flowers and enjoys the therapy of being out in the garden all day.

[This] is home! And even though I don’t have any biological family anymore, I have my family here.