

Toledo Sister of Notre Dame engages in outreach



Here Sr. Mary Ruth Boes holds the specialized letter board for her client so he can spell words he is trying to say.



Sr. Mary Ruth's client uses adaptive headgear so he can use the computer in his apartment to send emails or play chess.

When noticing disabled persons many might wonder how dependent they are on others. Sr. Mary Ruth Boes, SND, has learned that such individuals want to live independently with some assistance and navigate life themselves as much as possible.

In her outreach ministry with Sunshine Communities, Inc. of Northwest Ohio, Sr. Mary Ruth assists disabled adults who live alone or with one or two other individuals. Sunshine's goal is to create community and to engage people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in rich relationships and meaningful life experiences. "Many of my clients have jobs and can live independently with supportive services. One needs help with physical needs, cleaning house, transportation and cooking, but he is very capable mentally. He communicates with others by spelling and using a specialized board. Adaptive headgear enables him to use his computer to email family and friends and to interact on Facebook."

"He's also great at playing Chess and Scrabble!" she explained. "He is involved with his church; and, has recently realized a dream of traveling to Washington, DC with the assistance of a church member and staff. According to



When Sr. Mary Ruth isn't assisting clients, she spends many hours a week helping to maintain the grounds at the Toledo Provincial Center.

Sr. Mary Ruth other clients may have different needs such as planning menus, grocery shopping, keeping budgets, paying bills or going out for appointments or for fun. "I ask if they need help. They allow me into their space and their need. Doing tasks together is more relational than doing everything for a person."

"Ten years ago when I began this ministry I questioned if I could do it. Over time I've realized that we all want to live the fullest, most enriching life possible and people with developmental disabilities are no different. "I am blessed in experiencing a much deeper awareness of 'gospel' and 'the poor'," she concluded.