



On Thanksgiving night, 2001, Jorge Ruiz was roaring down a Las Vegas freeway in his roommate's car.

He doesn't remember the head-on collision, but with no seatbelts in the car, his body flew through a window. He was in a coma for months and woke up in a hospital not knowing where he was or how he got there.

Physical healing happened over time, but the traumatic brain injury was devastating. He couldn't walk or talk. He had memory loss. It was like starting over.

Through the Nevada Community Enrichment Program (NCEP) affiliated with ASI and another program in California, he received rehabilitation services and made amazing progress. His mother was present, crying, when he took his first steps.

But after his discharge there weren't supportive living options available. Reluctantly, he moved in with his parents, but he wanted his freedom. He wanted to take care of himself.

One day he got a call. After three years, his name had come up on a waiting list for an apartment at ASI's Ray Rawson Villa.

He remembers the joy of receiving the news that there was an affordable, accessible apartment available. He asked

for the building's location and walked right over to see it for himself. "I was so tired of being a burden to my father," he remembers.

Now, three years later, he says he thinks of his apartment as "my spot."

"I am so comfortable living here," he says, "because I'm independent. I handle my business. I have my bike here. I cook here. I watch TV here. I get visitors." Every day he rides his mountain bike to the gym for a workout.

Jorge is also studying criminal justice at College of Southern Nevada, taking one class per semester. Because of his memory loss, it's a long process but he is determined. He's also improving his speaking skills by conversing with others. "I try to socialize with everybody—in the gym, stores, and school." It's his speech therapy.

At the center of his recovery is the reliability of having an accessible, affordable apartment. He makes his own decisions and goes where he wants to go. "I enjoy doing everything that everyone else is doing."

Accessible Space, Inc.

2550 University Avenue West, Suite 330 North, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114
651-645-7271 / 1-800-466-7722 / fax 651-645-0541 accessiblespace.org

