



DANIEL BLACK

DANIEL, EARLY 50'S, HAS BEEN LIVING IN A NURSING HOME FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS.

Daniel's smile is infectious. Although the hand Daniel's been dealt doesn't always warrant a smile, he lives by the conviction that optimism will see him through.

Daniel shared 28 happy years with his wife and their four cats, up until declining health necessitated a lengthy period of hospitalisation. Daniel has lived with disability his whole life; he was born with Cerebral Palsy (CP) a complex condition affecting his muscle functions in multiple ways. Daniel and his ex-wife still share a relationship of mutual care and respect, but their marriage has now come to an end. At the point of discharge from hospital, with no suitable alternatives available, Daniel found himself living prematurely in a nursing home.

Up until the age of seven, Daniel lived with his mother and brother, and his Aunty Poppy in an inner Melbourne suburb, sharing the home with five other families. At seven, and unaccompanied, Daniel travelled to his mother's home country, in the hope of receiving better treatment. Being separated from his family in a foreign country was challenging for Daniel, but he does remember parts of it fondly, particularly the 'care packages' containing Spiderman comics his mother sent him. Spiderman has always been Daniel's favourite superhero. "He is everything I'm not," Daniel says.

Daniel returned to Australia at the age of 12 and set about relearning English, and integrating back into his community. A passionate person, Daniel filled his time with hobbies, friends and family.

An avid Tigers supporter, Daniel would take himself off to watch the footy from the age of thirteen. Chess was something else Daniel began at a young age, eventually progressing to tournament level. Martial Arts also featured prominently, Bruce Lee playing an integral role in shaping the man Daniel has become. Daniel has always had a passion for movies too, he believes he does his 'travelling' of the world through movies and documentaries.

Despite their humble life, Daniel's mother ensured Daniel's childhood was rich. When Daniel speaks about his mother his face lights up, in his words she is an amazing woman,

*"Four foot nothing but if you could measure
someone's spirit she'd be 13 foot in the air."*

Daniel shifted gear from student to employee at sixteen. A logical and adaptable man, among his many jobs Daniel has been editor of a school newsletter, a film reviewer, managed offices and worked in a printing factory. Many more jobs were offered to him in his later teenage years however accessibility and transport funding issues proved prohibitive.

Daniel has been in the nursing home now for two and a half years, it clearly isn't an appropriate place for Daniel to live. Daniel is wordly, sensitive, an ideas man. He thrives on social interactions, sharing his eclectic collection of life experiences and being an active part of his community. It doesn't make sense that a man with so much to offer is spending the majority of his days confined to his bedroom.

The nursing home doesn't afford the opportunities for Daniel to fulfil the life he wants to lead. Daniel would like to be working, it doesn't matter in what field; he just wants to be helping people. By virtue of his friendly and respectful nature, Daniel has made a lot of friends in the nursing home, but the pain of friends passing away has seen Daniel resolve to not get attached to other residents anymore. He yearns for genuine engagement with people; intellectual stimulation being what he misses most.