

Ronnie and Linda

Ronnie Pratt 65, is a former resident of the Brandon Training School. He went to Brandon when he was 5. Lynda Merrill, her mother, and her sister-in-law had all worked at Brandon. When Lynda first began working there she earned \$1.47 an hour and had been given no training.



When Ron was in Brandon, he wore a helmet and boxing gloves because he had a habit of hitting himself when frustrated. Lynda credited a man by the name of John Renner who worked at Brandon with taking the time to get him out of the helmet and gloves. Like so many patients at Brandon Ronnie had his teeth removed because he had bitten people. He spent a lot of his childhood in restraints.

Today, he is part of Lynda's large extended family. Ron and Lynda clearly share a remarkably strong bond.

Besides the paid caregivers, Lynda, Lisa, Eileen, and Stacy, they rely on unpaid family volunteers. Ronnie allows each member of the family to provide him with specific care that the others aren't allowed to do. He allows Eileen to give him coffee and take him on car rides and into the mall where she can even get him to try out hats with out protest.

Stacy gives him coke and makes sure his pillows, which he uses for comfort, are there. Lisa is the 'spa' person, giving him haircuts and cutting his nails. Lynda of course, can do anything. Apparently, during shift changes, Ron will ignore the new person coming in until the other one has left. Then he greets the new person.



Ronnie loves Christmas. Last year he and Lynda went out and got the kids McDonalds' gift certificates. She said he was so happy watching the kids expressions when they got them. Ron is a loved and contributing member of the family. Lynda has already paid for a plot for him in the family cemetery.