

Giuseppe's story

In 2000, at age 47, Giuseppe suffered a massive stroke and spent 5 years in various hospitals unable to move or speak, staring at the ceiling. The only communication he had was to blink his eyes to yes or no. Long term, whilst he has recovered some mobility, he is half paralysed (hemiplegia) and slowly walks with a walking frame, dragging his right leg behind. He has Aphasia, and communication is extremely difficult as people find it hard to understand him. He has difficulty swallowing and also has to observe a very strict diet to avoid anything that might raise his blood pressure and cholesterol.

However, determined not to be bound to a wheelchair he attended a gym to regain some mobility. He has a can do attitude which has empowered him to remain independent and as active as possible. He has done all he can to walk again and speak, and after many driving lessons over a period of 3 years he has been able to regain his driving licence to enable him to drive a mobility car.

He joined Rushey Green Time Bank in 2009, initially referred by his doctor for the be-friending scheme, and has become very involved in the time bank. He is one of the most dedicated co-producers, and despite his impediments does a lot of admin tasks for time credits - for the surgery and for the time bank.

He earns time credits by offering car lifts and he also accompanies time bank staff and members to meetings and co-production workshops where he shares with the audience how he is rebuilding his life by being active and not a passive recipient of care. He carefully listens to conversations and provides input for ideas and solutions, demonstrating that he is intellectually capable. He would also love to jump off an airplane to raise money for the time bank!

Giuseppe says that the *“The time bank feels like a family. What time banking does is important, it keeps me active and busy, and close to other people. It recognizes that despite my limitations I have time and skills. The time bank makes it possible for me to use them and it makes me feel useful and happy. I also get practical help from others and this makes a huge difference to my life”*