



## When People Really Listen

A man named, Chris, who has limited verbal language and eyes that light up your heart, was visited by PAL's Quality of Life Initiative. Chris had expressed his interest in the fire department to his support team from Looking Upwards and they listened. His bedroom décor is **totally** fire department, including a painting of a fire engine by someone on his team. This team, led by Ellie DiSanto, thought it might be fun for Chris to bake cookies and take them to the local fire department. In time, the fire fighters enjoyed his visits, as did Chris and he now has a fire fighters helmet hanging in his room.

Suddenly, one day, Chris had to be taken by rescue to the hospital. So, who came with the rescue? Yup, the fire fighters..... and they knew Chris and **truly** cared. When Chris came home and later visited the fire fighters, they greeted him with a deeper sense of feeling; a **REAL** connection.

After the visit, I shared this story with someone who knows Chris. I was told that the fire fighters were invited to his annual plan and came! They came, the fire engine came, the rescue came..... the horns and whistles came. Just imagine how Chris felt. Just imagine how much his friendship with the fire fighters means to him. Just imagine how much his friendship with the fire fighters means to the fire fighters. Chris and the fire fighters would not have created this relationship on their own. His support team listened, took a chance and made it possible.



Chris and his friends in the Middletown, RI fire department