

Anonymous:

I'd been living in a rooming house with about fourteen other people, that I'd found through someone I met at an ex-psychiatric centre. (I lived alone before that, but I didn't like it.) Some of the other people in the rooming house were nice; some weren't. I got sick of the place because there were too many people; too many arguments: there was never any peace for more than a day or two.

Then Houselink [see page 11] had a vacant co-op – a unit in a townhouse. I've been living there for two years now. I like the privacy: I've got my own room. Two other people are living there. We have house meetings every two or three weeks. We're each supposed to be doing four hours' work a month in the community, but none of us do. I don't drink, but the other people do. But we get along alright.

One of the people who lives there is a good guy, but anti-social. He's an alcoholic; he drinks too much, and then smokes in his room. That could start a fire and burn up the whole place. I talked to a guy at work about it, and he said we should get rid of him. But we're going to give him a chance. He went to the Houselink drop-in today; he's starting to meet people a little bit more.

I gross about \$1,000 a month. The guy is on Family Benefits. He gets about \$400. He doesn't work; he just drinks. I think he gets money from his parents. The girl goes to school. Each of us pays \$200 a month. In other Houselink places, I think, your rent goes up if you're working. But not there. I get a monthly bus pass for five dollars, because I see a psychiatrist and I'm working. You have to work, or be in a program, to get that. I'm on medication. The girl's not. I don't think the guy is; he wouldn't be able to drink that much.

At the rooming house you pay about \$140 a month in rent, plus 70 to 90 dollars for food. This place costs a little more, but it's worth it. You can have your friends over. We got a TV for free. We saved some money and got some chairs and paintings to put on the wall - I think Houselink helped out with that. Buying a bed is up to us, though. I can't afford one; I sleep on a mattress on milk-cartons.