

# The Past Comes Full Circle



*Richard at an Easterseals fundraising event in Barre, VT.*

Richard's life came full circle recently in Barre. Watching an Easterseals Vermont fundraising event that saw 30 supporters rappel down North Barre Manor (where Richard lives), he remembered the role Easterseals played in his early life.

Born three months premature in 1955, Richard's chances for survival were slim. His parents were told he might not make it. His mother knew better. Though they didn't have much, his parents saw that Richard got the services and supports he needed. It took 11 years, but Richard walked on his own. He credits much of that to his physical therapist, Lee Benger.

"He pushed me hard," Richard recalls. "He taught me don't ever think you can't. Find a way so you can." That encouragement served Richard well.

Through his time with Easterseals and the Vermont Achievement Center, Richard walked on his own for several years, attended college, and had a career as a lower elementary school and special education teacher.

"Without Easterseals, I wouldn't have had the life I had," Richard says. "The support I received from Easterseals and my faith got me through some tough times."