Little things go a long way to help paralyzed teen cope

By SUE BOCK
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If all goes according to plan, Barbara Turnbull should be living permanently back at her Mississauga home by Sept. 28, almost one year to the day after she was shot during a Becker's store hold-up.

At a press conference Tuesday, Turnbull said she has no definite long-term plans. However, she wants to continue her education. She completed her Grade 13 high school diploma two weeks ago.

"I want to do something . . . a little bit more than sitting in the house watching TV all day."

She also said she might consider counselling people who have become para- or quadriplegic in getting on with the rest of their lives. Turnbull was paralyzed from the shoulders down as a result of the shooting incident.

Asked if she ever thought about giving up during her ordeal, she answered, "No, I wasn't sure at one point what I was going to do for the rest of my life. I never wanted to

BARBARA TURNBULL

die or anything, I just was not sure how much I wanted to do."

Now, she said, she lives one day at a time setting "little goals" she can accomplish along the way.

"I'm feeling much better than I did, says six months ago. . . . You realize you have to start your life over again and you do."

"Of course there's the frustrating things that happen . . , like I'm reading and I drop the note stick and have to try and find someone to pick it up for me. Or if I have problems with my electric chair (powered by her own head movement) and I have to be pushed around for the day."

Turnbull said she's looking forward to spending time at home because she's ready to get out of a "hospital atmosphere" and regain her privacy.

When asked what she thought of the public calling her brave and courageous throughout her ordeal, Barbara said, "Anyone would be like that in that situation," adding, "everyone in this day and age has to have the courage to carry on."