

Real Stories aren't just about how Family Continuity changes the lives of its families,.....Our work almost always changes us as well, as you will see in this recent letter from one of our staff...

March 22, 2010

I have had the pleasure of providing In-Home therapy to Bobby J. and his family for the past year. Bobby lives at home with his mother, Janet, who is a single parent. In addition to caring for Bobby, Janet is challenged with her own serious medical problems. This has never stopped her from being a steadfast, tireless advocate for her son since his birth. From birth, Bobby has had a very difficult life. He was born prematurely, in the sixth month of pregnancy, and spent the first four months of his life in the ICU. Included in numerous complications of his premature birth, he was born with detached retinas and had to have eye surgery as a newborn. He has also experienced significant developmental delays and has been diagnosed with mild mental retardation. He needs substantial support in order to manage academic tasks and has difficulty functioning in a mainstream classroom.

Bobby also has significant social impairments as a result of his inability to interact appropriately and form relationships with peers or adults, leaving him well behind his peers in his emotional development. Consequently, Bobby has often been bullied by peers, abused and exploited by others, as well as having been exposed to severe domestic violence as a child. He struggles with symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Despite all of the above, Bobby is a very friendly, kind young man. He has a great sense of humor and an incredibly positive outlook on life. He loves and cares deeply for his family members and is truly a joy to be around. Bobby has two older siblings who are both musically gifted. He is very proud of them and strives to achieve the same level of proficiency they both enjoy. He is passionate and quite skilled in writing and recording his own music. He spends endless amount of hours teaching himself how to record and mix music on the computer. It appears, like his siblings, Bobby is naturally gifted in the area of music, which is significant because it is one area of his life where he can achieve success and feel good about himself. Music is an excellent way for Bobby to express his feelings, which at times might be difficult for him to verbalize. His mother has shared Bobby's lyrics with me, providing an otherwise, untold story.

Like most adolescents, Bobby longs to have friends to spend time with after school and on the weekends. Music is an area where he is finally able to connect with his peers. They admire his recording skills.

An inadequate computer and software have limited Bobby's music recording and mixing ability. He has had the opportunity to experiment with other people's Mac Book computers using Garage Band, which is a superior software program, used to record and mix music. Although owning a Mac Book has been a dream of Bobby's for quite some time, his family struggles financially and has not had the means to purchase a Mac Book computer. What a difference it would make in the quality of his life if he were able to make music the way he desires. Nothing makes him happier and gives him a greater sense of self-worth.

On Bobby's behalf, I ask that you give every consideration to providing him with a Mac Book and therefore enabling this exceptional young man in his pursuit of musical creation and self expression. Furthermore, your gift will provide an opportunity for Bobby to maximize his potential and bring joy to a life that has been rife with struggle.

Sincerely,

Bonnie L. M.S., LMHC

Like many Family Continuity staff, Bonnie's commitment doesn't end when the therapy session is over. Becoming involved in the lives of others brings with it an opportunity to help in many unexpected ways that offer even greater rewards to the family and to the staff person.

PS, Bonnie's letter helped Bobby get the MacBook, and he's writing his music today.