

PETE'S STORY ~

We are the parents of Pete, a 12 year old boy who is diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome as well as some other learning disabilities. This has proven to be a real challenge for both Pete and us as parents, as we believe it is for many families. One of the most difficult aspects that we have faced throughout this long process has been in knowing about and accessing services. In most cases, services for children like Pete exist, but navigating through the roadblocks to gain access to these services can be very difficult, especially alone.

This is why we write this letter today, to express our sincere gratitude to the groups at CASSP (Child and Adolescent Service System Program) that have made our navigation to services easier. We, as a family, belong to the Friday Night Support group. This group alone has helped us in so many ways. We have often left this group on Friday nights with information, phone numbers and web site addresses that we have used to gain more information on the condition that our son suffers from on a day to day basis. This group often has speakers that provide information and sometimes just offers respite on a Friday night that is a welcoming relief.

People make the difference. Beyond the services, one of the best things that CASSP has provided to our family over the years has been its mentor program. When we say mentor, we plainly mean Derrick. This relationship has proved to be a huge success. Derrick gives Pete the courage he needs to tackle every issues.

Recently, the service that we have mostly appreciated, and there have been many throughout the years that we have been involved with CASSP, is the "Express Yourself" program. We could not say enough on how we believe this program has benefited Pete. Over the past year, Pete has grown from relying on Derrick to get through the practice sessions, to finally having the confidence to go it alone. The night of the show was one of the proudest moments in our son's life. He stood on stage with over 3000 guests in the audience and performed like a star. He would have never accomplished this amazing task without the assistance of his mentor Derrick and the CASSP program.

Many thanks to CASSP and to everyone at Family Continuity, for your help these past years. We look forward to many more.

Bill, Donna, Jack, and most of all Pete....

To find out more about the CASSP program and other services that Family Continuity provides in your community to families like Pete's, or how you can help, contact us at (866) 219-3320, or on our website at www.familycontinuity.org.