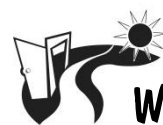


**High School and Beyond:
*A Family Perspective***

**Student &
Family Stories**



Windsor-Essex Family Network

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In 2014, family leaders with Windsor-Essex Family Network began working on a series of stories about their family experiences at different stages of high school life: preparing for, during and beyond high school. Families assisted each other with the writing and interviewing. Some families and students wrote their own stories together.

More recently, families have provided 'tools' they used to share information with their schools and others. To learn more about the tools used and where to get working documents or templates, see the links on the tool sheets shared.

High School and Beyond: A Family Perspective

Student & Family Stories

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Beating the Odds

By: Cindy

As a mother of four children, I have watched each of them grow and find their path through life. Each of my children was unique, and as a parent I learned to recognize the individual strengths and the areas where they needed the most encouragement.

My third child is now 22 years old and is graduating from the University of Windsor. This might sound like an everyday occurrence, but to me it holds a special place in my heart. This is not to say that I am not proud of all my children, for I am, but this particular daughter beat the odds and showed us all what determination and the right support can do.

At seven years old, she was diagnosed with a Learning Disability that affected her processing of information. She would have difficulty in very specific areas such as reading, writing, spelling, and working memory. Once we knew what we were dealing with, life became a little less stressful for her. She worked at the regular curriculum with some modifications to the amount of output required.

As she grew, she showed such determination. She wanted to write the grade 3 EQAO test like everyone else, and when teachers thought she would be upset with the results, I quickly explained that we would handle it. And we did handle it. Determination to do things like other children should never be stifled. She accepted the results, and this only made her more determined.

When her spelling test word list was shortened, she would ask “can I work my way back to the same number as the other kids”? She spent an average of five hours per night doing homework, painfully slow at times, but would not quit until she was done.

Every teacher she had recognized her determination, and one even said they’d take 30 students like her any day. When entering high school, we decided to have another assessment done, and the results were amazing. Somehow, unexplainable to the psychologist, she had come up in so many areas that she barely qualified any longer for an exceptionality. It was recommended that she could do a college program, and then after she had the hands-on experience, may be able to attend university in a related field.

Well, that wasn’t good enough for her. In grade ten she came to me and wanted to retake certain classes to upgrade to a university level because she wanted to go directly to university. I supported her, knowing her determination would continue to serve her well. We had to talk a Guidance Counsellor into this, but I believe in the

end my daughter's sincere and steadfast approach made it impossible to say 'no' to her. Because she had to go back and repeat courses at a higher academic level, she exposed herself to double the courses in the area of her greatest need. As typical with her though, she remained committed and proved that she could pass with grades that eventually lead to her acceptance at university.

Since reading speed was still affected, we knew that some extra supports might be needed in order to keep up with the workload that university requires. Prior to starting that September, she met with the Student Disability Services department (SDS), and this connection helped with her success. One week prior to the start of her first year, a course was also offered by SDS which provided insight and tips into being successful at university.

SDS was also a wealth of knowledge in terms of accessing funding for technology and in making a referral to receive the required assessment as an adult at a sliding scale cost. Other supports specific to the Learning Disability were then offered, following the recommendations of the assessment. She completed the exact same work, wrote the same papers and exams, however, some technology was available to assist. She qualified for programs that would scan her textbooks and read them aloud, dictate papers to print, extra time for exams if required, and wrote exams in a quieter area. She was also able to receive the textbooks she purchased in CD format.

These supports were very important particularly in her first two years. Once she became more familiar with the requirements of university classes, she hasn't found all these supports necessary; however, she had them, if needed.



When she walks across the stage this June at graduation, I will be like any other proud parent, but there will be something extra special because I know the original prognosis would have never led here. I know that she overcame the odds and worked harder than most to get where she is. I also see the impact of having to work longer hours, even as a young child, that built such a strong work ethic and character. She accomplished exactly what she set out to do, and that is to prove that she can do what everyone else does.

My Son's High School Transition

Our son is in Grade 10 now. When I think of his transition to high school, I remember that it was very overwhelming. He was in a unique situation where he had to go to high school after Grade 7 as a result of his age. This meant we had to start planning early and explore every option. It was important to us as a family that he worked toward a high school diploma and hopefully goes to college in the future. That was the driving force for us.

He was diagnosed with PDD- Autism at the age of 3. Even though he had a good start in kindergarten, for the most part elementary school was not easy. From the beginning we wanted our son to be fully included in the regular classroom and working within the Ontario curriculum expectations. There were many challenges with the school with regard to his needs. In grade 4 we decided that we would home school him. A year and a half later we felt he was ready to go back to school. He returned to school in the regular grade 5 classroom. In grade 6 he had difficulties and had to stay out of school for over a month, which caused him a lot of anxiety and stress.

During this time, we also learned that his school was closing in a year. We decided that it would be best for him to go directly into high school instead of starting him at a new elementary school. We started calling high schools in our neighborhood and inquiring about the programs and supports. We were often referred to the personnel responsible for the students with disabilities. This gave us an opportunity to see how receptive they were to giving us information about their high school and gave us a sense of how it would be to work with them as a team. We also spoke to families who had children in high school to get their perspective.

Once my son started Grade 7, we started touring schools. By then we had talked to the board staff and planned for him to transition to high school at the end of Grade 7. It was a scary time. He had just gone through the bumps in Grade 6 and was settling back in school in Grade 7, and we were now planning for another change. We were worried that he was not ready for high school but it seemed better for him to start high school and get that time to settle down instead of going to a new school for just one year for Grade 8 and change schools again for Grade 9.

Once we figured out which school we thought was best for him we approached the school board. Unfortunately, they did not agree. They recommended that he be placed in a life skills program where he could possibly work toward a certificate. We did not agree with the placement options that were given. It was sad that our son was defined by the challenges he had in Elementary. We wanted his potential to also be taken into consideration when deciding where he went to high school and which program he would be in. We had to go through a couple of IPRC meetings and had to file an appeal.

We went through the summer without knowing where our son would be placed in September. All through this we were supported by mentors from Windsor-Essex Family Network. We had worked with them since the time our son was in Grade 1. They helped us through the whole process of this transition planning as well. Finally, we were able to come to a compromise with the board and agreed on an appropriate placement. This was not the school we had requested but we were able to fulfill our dream for our son, which was an opportunity for him to earn a high school diploma.

Come September, we met with the team at the new high school for a transition meeting and shared strategies. They were apprehensive and nervous looking at my son's profile from Elementary. But we pressed on. We worked closely with the school planning for his transition. Our son visited the school. He started Grade 9 in the last week of September, a little later than other students. Once he started, we had close contact with the school. We worked together to make a plan to help him adjust to the new school routine, so that he could get the best out of it. He amazed every one of us with how well he did. He moved from class to class on his own after some support in the beginning from a Child and Youth Worker. The staff was very well trained and the supports were excellent. We were very happy with his placement.

In the past three years, he has hit a few road blocks now and then. But for the most part, he has been doing very well. Our son is now in Grade 11, and we are hopeful for his future. We have a good working relationship with the Principal, Teachers, LST, Guidance and the support staff at his school. This has helped us to approach them with any concerns.

Things that have helped us the most are: a positive attitude, believing in a fresh start, talking to other families and reaching out to family mentors from Windsor-Essex Family Network. The past few years when our son had rough times we learned valuable lessons on working with the school and the school board. It was important to respect one another in spite of our differences and to work as a team.

We had to be creative in planning courses and schedules. Our son has done some e-learning courses that were not available in his school. He has become more and more involved in asking for courses he wants and is talking about college. The biggest challenge as a parent has been to stand back and let him be more independent and to communicate with the teachers and the school directly. It has been a good experience. The planning and research we had to do and the struggles we had along the way have proven to be very fruitful.

By: Priya



Our High School Experience

by Sharon and Nick

School, for us, has always been a struggle. We changed grade schools three times looking for the right fit for our family. Whenever I needed to advocate for my son, I was made to feel like I was overstepping my boundaries, so I would second guess myself. By grade six, we finally settled into a school where we felt most comfortable. By grade seven our son was taught only by his teacher, no educational assistant, we were told this was to prepare him for his independence in high school. His teacher would have his peers help him during group times and he was part of a small literacy group within his class, he also would be removed from class occasionally for extra resource.

In grade 8, his teacher requested an interview in November to discuss high school. The teacher was concerned about where our son may be placed in high school. He was sure Life Skills stream was not a good fit, however, Essential Stream (Locally Developed) would be a big challenge, due to the fact that my son could not read nor write, and his skills in math were very limited. We took the teacher's advice and made an appointment with the resource department at our high school in December.

My son and I met the Resource teacher to go over what his high school career would look like. We were told he could receive a certificate of achievement instead of a diploma. For us, this was not an option. Our goal was a High School Diploma.

Despite the fact he could not read or write, we were told an Educational Assistant would not be provided that in high school, he must be more independent. I went into the interview knowing that they would try and steer us towards a life skills path. I also knew about "K" coded classes (classes where the student does not get credit for the class but does most of the work). I firmly expressed to the Resource teacher that, *"life skills would be taught at home, and he was going to school for academics"*. . . I simply told them, *"I am not an educator, I would support them in any way they needed at home, but in school, they would need to figure out how to teach him so he could learn"*.

My son has a great memory, so I suggested they use that to their advantage. In his high school career, he was K-coded for two courses because the teacher felt he could not earn the credit. In both cases, he re-took the course and passed. (He learns by repetition). Both classes were a requirement for graduation, so he needed them.

In grade 10, he did not take the Literacy Test; the school felt he was not ready. He then took it in grade 11, with accommodations, which he did not pass; this is again, a requirement for a diploma, so he was enrolled in the literacy course. We worked very close with his teacher, she gave us tips and we in turn gave her tips, and together, with much hard work, he passed his course. We found out two weeks before graduation that he would be graduating, with his peers from grade 12, with his diploma!

We were not prepared for this, so he reluctantly went back for a fifth year. He stayed in school for the year, doing co-op for credit until we figured out what was next. He had received three semesters of co-op, the first placement (grade 12) was a half day, so he would have classes in the morning and then his co-op. The second placement (5th year, first semester) was the same; however, he had a spare, so no classes. The third placement (5th year, 2nd semester) was full day, one day at school twice a month. This was his favourite - the less time in school by that time the better. Out of his three placements, I had found two for him, the two he enjoyed the most. He is currently working part time for the business where he had his last co-op placement. He is a valued employee whom they depend on.

Every situation is different, but here's what I found worked best for us:

Choose your battles

In high school you are dealing with four teachers instead of one, choose your battles, ask yourself if the fight is worth your energy, because there will always be something.

Be inclusive

Have your student join you in meetings; ask his/her opinion regarding course choices. I have found that when my son is most interested, he will learn more. History was one of my son's subjects where he achieved his highest grade.

Inform yourself

You will know who has your student's best interests at heart by having a conversation with the different teachers. Put your energy into those who believe in your student. Know what you want and stick to it. There will be some who will not agree; learn to work around them.

Self-advocacy

Teach your student to be their own advocate. Give them the words and conversations to have when standing up for themselves.

Obviously for some situations you will need to step in, but if you think your teenager can handle a situation - let them. This will help throughout their life as well. I always gave my son the choice. I asked, did he want me to handle a situation, or did he want to himself. I was surprised how many times he handled it himself. Those times we would have a conversation about what to say in advance.

Today we are proud of our son. He has worked hard to be where he is - he doesn't give up. And he is proud to be employed in a valued and paid role in a business that also fulfills his passion.



A Before and After Interview with Nick

While in High School, 2012

Q: Do you remember how it felt to start high school?

A: When I first started high school, I went to the open house, I just waited until someone told me where to go, and they showed us some classes. Our first day, the school gave me a sheet with my classes and I asked my principal to help me since he was just standing there watching the kids. He told me the name of the class and the number on the door, also whether it was up or downstairs. Every year they hand me my schedule and I ask someone for help, sometimes I'm late, and sometimes I'm not.



Q: What's the best thing about school?

A: Favorite thing about school is history class and lunch because I talk to my friends.

Q: What is the hardest thing about school?

A: Hardest thing about school is math class, I hate Sudoku puzzles!

Q: Was there a time where something happened at school and you worked it out on your own? Can you tell us about it?

A: Another student was bullying me with words and I ignored him, and stayed away from him, which was hard because he was in a lot of my classes, but not now. My friends helped me ignore him too.

Q: Do you have any advice for kids who are going to high school next year?

A: My advice to kids starting high school is to be nice to people, because then people will be nice to you. Not all kids are mean in high school, but if they are, just walk away. I say hi to kids and they say hi back, some don't say hi, but they don't know me.

Q: What do you want to do when you are done school?

A: When I'm done school, I want to be a producer, a policeman, a hockey coach or a food taster.

After High School, 2015

Nick's 2012 interview was first published as part of a larger story about his high school journey. At the time family leaders with Windsor-Essex Family Network were working on a series of stories about family experiences at different stages of life. Parent leader, Tina Szymczak spent time talking with Nick so he could share his own perspective as a high school student.

Three years later, it made sense for Windsor-Essex Family Network leaders to catch up with Nick. We knew he had graduated with a high school diploma and had been out of school for more than a year. We wanted to find out what he was doing after leaving high school and what thoughts he had for others. Nick and his mom chatted about the questions we put forward. Below you will find Nick's answers. We believe that Nick's straight forward approach will encourage other young adults and their families as they think about the future.

Q: You have been finished with high school now for a year and a half. What is the best thing about being out of school?

A: Being out of school and getting a job.

Q: What is the hardest thing about being out of school?

A: Finding stuff to do that I like.

Q: What sort of things have you done since being out?

A: There has been a job from my co-op, and hanging out with my friends during the day.

Q: Do you have any advice for other recently graduated students?

A: You should try and find a job and a good hobby.

Q: Can you tell me your goals?

A: To make some new videos, join a film class, and play and practice sledge hockey.

Q: What is your favourite thing since finishing high school?

A: I get to hang out with my friends more.

Published as a team effort with Nick and family leaders.

(Sharon – Nick's mom, Tina and Michelle) from Windsor-Essex Family Network



It's All Good!

Our Son had a Positive Transition to High School: Good Planning, Respect for Parental Knowledge & Excellent Teamwork

High school was coming fast and just the thought of it filled me with dread. Our son, Corbin, was still only attending school part time in the 8th grade. This was due to many factors and was agreed upon by all parties including us, his parents. He had support of an Educational Assistant (EA) though we felt the EA was not a good match for Corbin and was part of the reason he was not flourishing at elementary school. Thinking of high school was daunting particularly because he has a lot anxiety and does not do well with change. The idea of him at a school with 1200 students was enough to put me in a cold sweat.

Another parent I knew from Windsor-Essex Family Network guided me through part of the process. She was the one that had warned me they might try to 'k code' him. A class with the code 'k' stands for 'knowledge' and is a non-credit class. A student who is 'k coded' may take a locally developed or open course but they are not earning a credit.



In the spring of Grade 8, we went for a meeting with the head of special education for St. Joseph's (St. Joe's) high school and the special education coordinator. They were both exceedingly nice but as expected they wanted to 'k code' Corbin. Their reasoning was sound-- given that he wasn't very successful in elementary school they didn't want to set him up for failure. My reasoning was I'd rather give him a chance to show us he could earn credits. My husband Adam and I held firm to refusing to 'k code' him and the educators respected our choice.

When they told us that they couldn't guarantee Corbin would have an EA, particularly if he wasn't k coded I stuffed down my desire to scream and rant. Instead I looked at the Special Education coordinator and said "I know you know my son and what he needs to succeed" and to the head of special education I said "you know your teachers and which ones would be a good fit for a kid like our son. So we'll leave that in your capable hands." And I meant it. I was going to believe the best would happen for our son. We had all worked together to give him the best transition possible.

Plans moved forward to make Corbin comfortable with the move. His elementary school and high school worked together to make times for him to go to St. Joe's to get comfortable. Also St. Joe's has a Grade 8 day where all the grade 8's go to the high school and get put into teams and they do activities and walk around the school as an orientation. The visits to St. Joe's were dictated by Corbin's comfort level. As long as he wanted to do more visits the elementary school arranged them. By the time summer rolled around and we attended the school uniform sale several staff stopped to say hi to Corbin.

On the first day of school he had an EA for each class and he had very understanding and flexible teachers. Of course Corbin had to be flexible about the courses he took the first year so they could match him with the right subject and right teacher. The compromise was worth it as he received all his credits the first year.

Also in Grade 8, in preparation of high school and beyond, we did a process called a MAP. Corbin invited a group of people (adults and peers) to support him as we planned for his future. According to Inclusion Press, the creators of this process, Maps is "a series of empty container questions that ask a person to tell us some of the milestones on their journey, so we can get to know them, dream with them, and begin to build a plan in the direction of their dreams." That gave us insight into what would be important for him in high school - such as not being isolated and wanting to be part of a team. We continue to work on Corbin's dream, goals and actions identified on his Map.

Corbin benefits from having a quiet place to go when he needs it and the freedom to hang out with friends when he wants to so he thrives at St. Joe's. So much so that last year he tried out for and made the football team. Corbin 'hangs out' with different groups of friends at lunch and can often be found 'working the door' at the cafeteria for which he earns free pizza for making sure everyone stays in a neat line to enter the café.

As it stands today he has earned 14 credits. Every class he has taken he has earned a credit. He has yet to write his Literacy test – that will happen this school year and he has more than half of his community service hours done. Corbin is thriving in his high school, in ways we never could have expected but have always imagined.

by Tina

Christine's Story

A Night of Inspiration: For Families Navigating High School

Adapted Transcript of Christine's Video, November 2016

Hi my name is Christine and I'm going to talk to you today about my experience with having a learning disability. I was initially diagnosed when I was 8 years old, and at the time I didn't really understand what a learning disability was. I just remembered that school was extremely frustrating at times and I had teachers that didn't really understand what learning disabilities were. They thought I was lazy and that I wasn't trying hard enough. Sometimes I would get bullied by kids for being "stupid" or not being able to keep up with everyone else. I eventually attended a private school. When I went there the work was a bit harder, and the kids also didn't understand what learning disabilities were either. But the class sizes were smaller which made it a little easier on me to have more attention with the teachers. I also was exempted from French which meant that I had a whole period to catch up with other kids.



When I was in Gr. 7 and Gr. 8 I had 3-5 hours of homework a night, which was a lot of homework! It was very frustrating at times if I wanted to do other activities. I did eventually catch up to the other kids at that age - not completely caught up, but close. When I was in Gr. 8, my teacher at the time decided to withdraw my accommodations. She said her reason was to make it easier for me in high school. I guess they take grades more seriously if you don't have accommodations, which is really unfortunate because I think they are there for a reason. I think I would have benefitted from still having them in place.

When I went to high school, initially during open house nights, I talked to the special education department. They recommended that I go into workplace level courses. At the time I didn't know what workplace was, but it is basically is the level to take if you're not going into college or university, but maybe you're going into trades. That's the perfect place for somebody, but for me I was really hoping to go to college or university. So, my mom showed them an example of my written work, and they were able to have me register in classes leading to college. In high school when I attended college level classes, I found them very easy. I actually got onto honour roll in Gr. 9 and Gr. 10. I really wanted to possibly go to university in the future though, so I made an appointment with my guidance counsellor and my mom. We talked about how college level classes were going and what we could do so I could go into university.

I started taking university level English, so that I could go to university, and I had to take my Gr. 9 and my Gr. 10 again in order to do this. I took 6 English classes in high school in total, which is actually the area of my learning disability. By the time I was in Gr. 12, I was trying to figure out what universities to apply to and what programs I would like. I decided that the social work program would be a perfect fit for me because I wanted to help other people. I was really interested in working with people with disabilities because my sister has an intellectual disability.

We attended the University open house for social work because I did get accepted into the program. They talked about the student disabilities services, which are provided at the University of Windsor. After that presentation my mom and I decided to make an appointment. We talked about the different services that were available. The only thing was that I had to get another assessment done as an adult to prove that I had a learning disability. That would be covered theoretically if I were eligible for OSAP money, even for 1 dollar. The student disability grant is available to students that have a disability and that qualifies for OSAP, and they can also provide money to help with the accommodations that are recommended during your assessment.

After that process was done, I was able to attend the student disabilities services for all of my midterms and my exams in a noise reduced room. I also had access to Dragon Naturally Speaking and Kurzweil programs when I was writing. I also had time and a half while I was doing written exams since those were the accommodations that were recommended during my assessment. The student disability services were able to help with those recommendations. They also have a program called "BUILD" which I attended when I first went to university. It was a week-long orientation for people with disabilities. You get tours and you get to meet others who have a learning disability who also are going to university, which was really interesting. You get to do social things and meet people that you're going to be going to university with. It's a very, very nice program to have when you're nervous about attending university for the first time.

I graduated with my Bachelor of Social Work and Disability Studies in June 2014. I have moved to British Columbia in the meantime. I work full time and I now do my Masters of Social Work part time at the University of Dalhousie. It's a distance delivery program and I am currently also going through the process of applying for a student disability grant. Basically, it's the same process, except I don't have to have another assessment done because it's already been done as an adult. I can use that assessment. I just needed a signature from the student disability services at Dalhousie University and the signature from the doctor that assessed me as an adult. I am still in that process, and once that's done I can receive the grant, as well as the accommodations through the University of Dalhousie.

Through this whole process of going to university, I've really learned that it's great to be determined and to want to do it myself, but the best way for me to accomplish my dreams is to accept the help and support from others, and the extra support that I get at school through accommodations. I hope that you enjoyed this presentation and I believe that my mom is going to talk next!

The Back Story & Our Final Interview with Nick

November 2016

Looking back

In June of 2014, Nick graduated high school. Since then, much has changed. He has seen that life has its ups and downs, and has learned we have to just keep going and not give up. Nick's first part-time position, assisting with the dogs at a kennel/dog grooming place, ended six months after it began (January 2015) due to a shortage of work. It was disappointing as he enjoyed working with the animals. This began the next chapter of life for Nick.

Despite the disappointment of his first job ending, Nick set out applying for other jobs. He looked for volunteer positions that would be a good match for him - where he could contribute his gifts and strengths. Sledge hockey was keeping him busy. He had also received some Passport Funding which helped him expand his community participation and involvement – trying different things. During this time, Nick also volunteered for the sledge hockey group at their functions (something he continues to do today). He obtained another volunteer position which in the end was not a good match.

Nick continued to think about his interests and hobbies as he looked for paid and volunteer positions. He had been connected with a facilitator from Windsor Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports who was assisting him to 'think about what he would like to do'. He was becoming more involved and active with his hobby – shooting videos and making movies using a GoPro Camera.

With the support of his family in the fall of 2015, Nick decided to get some assistance through the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to help him find a job. A connection was made with ALSO (Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario) Employment Services. This led Nick to a part-time position cleaning an office and washrooms two evenings a week. He has worked there for a year now where he is valued as an employee and does a good job for the company. Meanwhile his life has continued to evolve. Much has changed since our last interview with Nick in 2015.

New in 2016

In the spring of 2016 Nick started volunteering with a dog day care business for a few hours during the week. He loved this volunteer position; it matched his passion and love for dogs. Nick worked hard, the dogs loved him, and he became a strong asset for the company. An employment position opened up and Nick was offered a job. In November 2016, with support from the Unemployed Help Centre Youth Connections initiative, Nick began working in a part-time paid position five days a week.

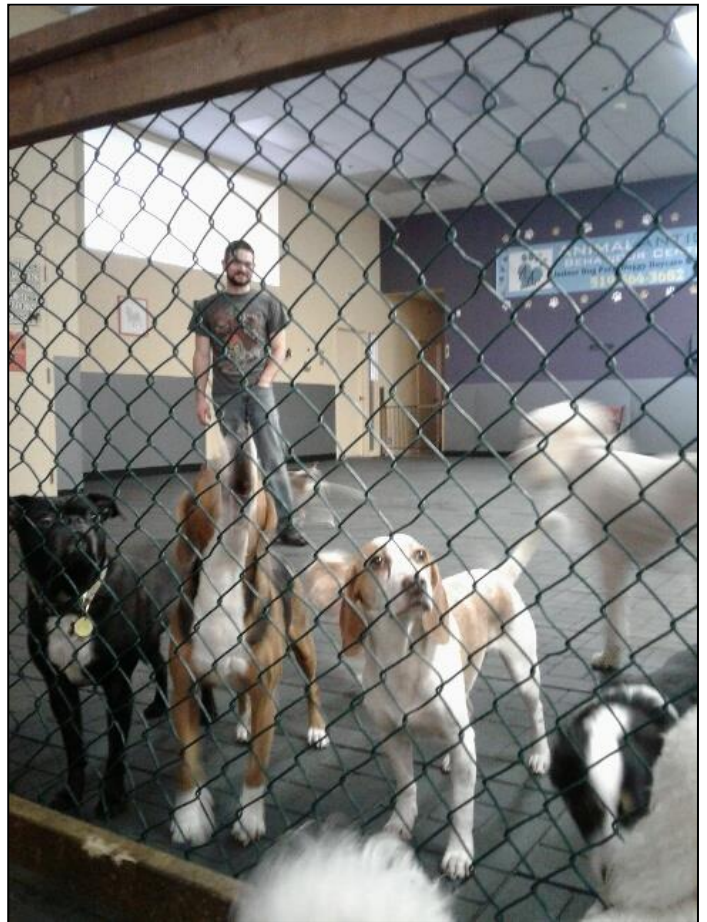
Nick has a well-rounded life. He is the busiest of all his sisters and brothers. He holds two paying jobs, contributes his time and talent as a volunteer, keeps physically fit through his favourite sport, enjoys leisure time with friends, and works actively on his favourite hobby.

Nick is appreciated in the many valued roles he has and is missed when he is not present. Some of his roles exist by being part of a family. Though busy, Nick enjoys spending time with family and friends.

For Nick to participate and contribute the way he does, it has meant some behind the scenes assistance – including lots of support with transportation from his family. We say: kudos to Nick for not giving up and kudos to his family for their support.

Valued Roles: Who is Nick?

*Brother, Son, Cousin, Nephew, Grandson
Sledge Hockey Player, Athlete, Team Member
Employee, Office Cleaner
Dog Daycare Attendant
Videographer
Movie maker
Volunteer
Friend*



Our Final Interview with Nick – November 2016

Q: Nick, you know what it is like to be laid off and then have to go and look for other work. What would you say to give hope to someone else who may be just starting to look for a part-time job?

A: Keep trying, don't give up.

Q: What is your favourite thing about working?

A: All the animals are my favourite.

Q: How does it make you feel knowing that people and dogs count on you?

A: It makes me feel good that I have a job, I like to help people.

Q: What do you see yourself doing in the future?

A: I don't know what my future will be; I just make it up as I go along.

Nearing Graduation

An Interview with Corbin

April 2017



Corbin is nearing the end of his high school career so we wanted to find out his thoughts about high school and what advice he'd give to others.

About Corbin

Corbin lives with his mom, dad and younger brother. He enjoys hanging around the house, using his iPad, and watching favourite TV shows. He follows popular YouTubers and shared his favourite video about "respect". Corbin explained that 'this' YouTuber believes there is not enough respect in the world and you have to do things to earn it.

When Corbin goes out, he likes movies, swimming, hanging out with friends, and riding his bike. He also volunteers time to Windsor-Essex Family Network. He's considering going back to swimming lessons to get his Bronze Medallion. Graduation is not far off and when he does graduate, he hopes to get his own computer.

The Interview

Q. Corbin, what do you remember about getting ready for high school?

A. I went to talk to the Special Education Coordinator at school to find out if I was going to take regular classes or get "K-Coded"¹. It was scary. I had a lot of problems and challenges in grade school so I wasn't sure how high school would go for me but I survived and it turned out better than I thought.

Q. What was the best thing about high school?

A. Friends.

Q. What was the hardest thing about high school?

A. Sometimes I felt like I didn't fit in or I was different. But that started to change in grade 10. People got used to being around me.

¹ 'K-Coding' means changing course classification to a "Knowledge course" which is not credit bearing.

Q. In grade 10 you joined the football team. What was that like?

A. It was fun. I didn't play a lot because I couldn't remember the play book. But I went to practices and I made friends. Glad I did it.

Q. Did you do co-op in high school?

A. Yes. I had a placement at the Thrift Store. I really enjoyed it.

Q. Do you have any advice for students getting ready for high school?

A. Approach high school with an open mind. Don't let anyone say you can't do something. If you believe you can't do something, you'll never be able to do it. If you believe you can't do something, it changes the way you are.

The only exception is if someone tells you that you can't do something because it's the rule. Always follow the rules.

Q. Looking back over your high school career, what advice would you give to teachers?

A. Don't judge by what you see. Take time to understand.

Q. What advice would you have for parents?

A. Do your best to stay involved in your son or daughter's school career. Always try to stay in the loop – what's going good, what's going bad. When you know what's going on, you can be the best help.

Q. Anything about high school that made you feel good about yourself?

A. Getting my credits and proving my elementary school wrong. They said I couldn't get credits but I did.

Q. What will you do after high school?

A. Work a part-time job - maybe at Springz because I get along with kids. I'm also thinking about becoming a YouTuber.



MY VISION

Cody

To have good friends, and lots of family time.

To learn and try new things at school and in my home town.

To use my gifts, talents and skills in school and around home.

To read and communicate better.

To have a meaningful day that is both busy and fun.

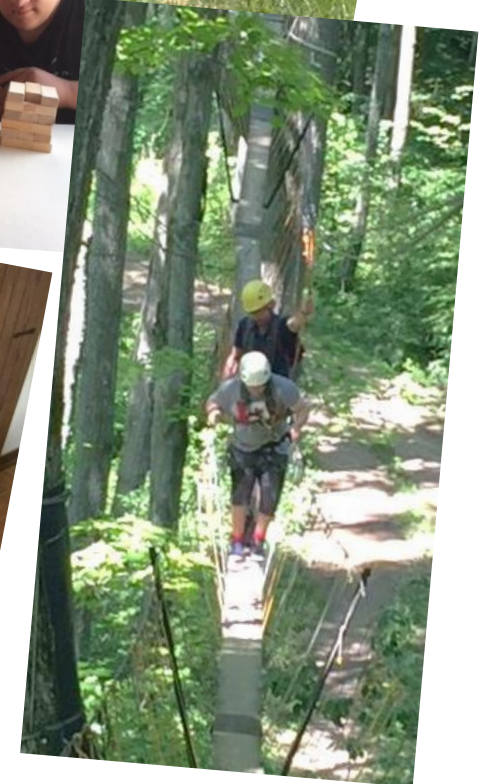
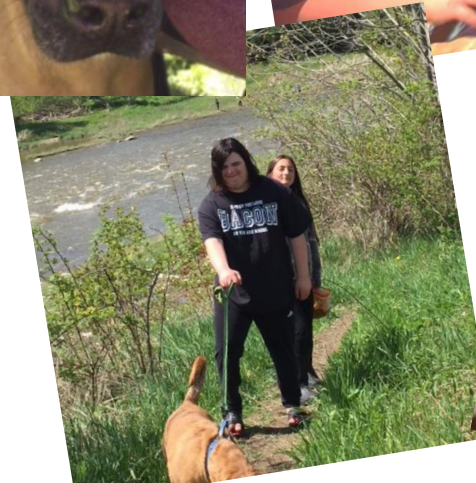
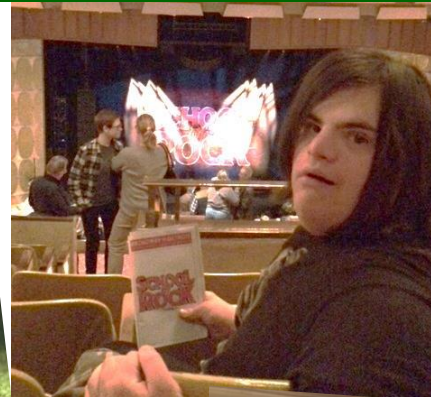
To work, volunteer, and have some recreational time.

To choose the things I would like to do, where I am going to live, what kind of work I would have, what I will do in my spare time.

To always have music in my life and go to as many concerts as I can.

To always have a dog in my life.

To go camping up north as much as possible.



Life Trajectory Work Sheet - Cody, 2018

Everyone wants a good life. The information below illustrates current experiences that are pointing in the right direction toward my vision for a good life.

Neighbourhood Involvement

I do lots of things in my neighbourhood. I go to: the library at the community centre, the local school to shoot hoops, the dog park with my dog, the local pizza parlour, and our corner store. It feels good to be greeted at the community centre, store or my favourite restaurant by people who know me. That's what I want in my future: to be known by people in my community.

Family Time - I go camping with my family in the summer. My mom, dad, and sister and I spend fun times together. I want to keep my relationships with my family strong.

Music, Arts and Culture

I like going to live concerts and art exhibits. I have been busy doing this with a mentor who also likes the arts.

Recreation & Leisure

I like to play one-to-one sports each week - hockey and basketball; I like being active with my support worker. I also play video games.

Independence - taking care of myself

I get ready for school each morning by myself following a daily routine. This includes being responsible for taking care of my long hair. I keep up my room.

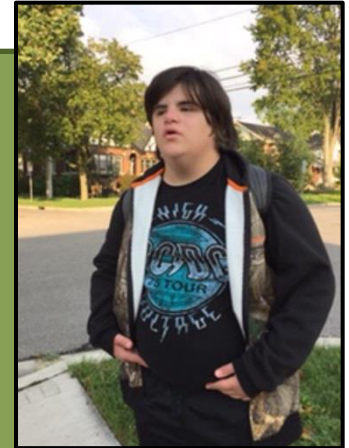
Home Responsibilities

I take out the garbage and recycling. I assist with my dog, Ace, by getting out food and water and help with his walks. I do dishes and help in the kitchen with cooking and baking.

MY VISION

Cody

- To have good friends, and lots of family time.
- To learn and try new things at school and in my home town.
- To use my gifts, talents and skills in school and around home.
- To read and communicate better.
- To have a meaningful day that is both busy and fun; to work, volunteer, and have some recreational time.
- To choose the things I would like to do, where I am going to live, what kind of work I would have, what I will do in my spare time.
- To always have music in my life and go to as many concerts as I can.
- To always have a dog in my life.
 - To go camping up north as much as possible.



What I don't want – my nightmare

- To be treated as a child; to be underestimated.
- To be bored; to do the same thing each day.
- To be without friends; to be isolated.
- To be centred out.
- To go to school to cook and recycle. This type of activity is not interesting and has made me shut down.

Adapted from the LifeCourse worksheet developed by UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD.

<https://www.ucuedd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Life-Trajectory-Worksheet-updated-february-2017-1.pdf>

My experiences as a student with a disability in high school, college, and university

By Brian

This talk was given on November 14, 2018 at A Night of Inspiration event designed for people and families living with disabilities who are navigating high school and life beyond.

Good evening students and parents. Are you at crossroads where you are deciding on where you want to go next? I am going to tell you about my own experiences with school and how I decided what to do for my future.

I live with Autism. This can be very challenging each and every day. I would like to tell you about my life, from my humble beginnings starting in grade school.

I grew up in Chatham and in elementary school I was placed in special education. I was put in a segregated class, which only had a few other kids in it.

The teachers put me into a special education program in high school also. It was called the ABLE program. It is similar to the STEPS classroom in Windsor schools. It was also a segregated classroom with only about 12 kids in it. I stayed there for 4 years.

From there I went to the OPTIONS program at St Clair College in Chatham for 2 years. It was like the Life Skills program in Windsor and they taught us daily living and employment skills.

But then I decided I wanted more. I enrolled in Adult Education and I earned my high school diploma in 2 years. I worked very hard to get this but I did it.

After finally graduating high school, I went back to St Clair College for the Developmental Service Worker program and graduated in 2011 with my DSW certificate. And later on, I went back to the college for my Child and Youth Worker accelerated diploma in 2013. Now I am now qualified as a Developmental Services Worker and a Child and Youth Worker!

I accessed many services to help me be successful in college. I used the free peer tutoring, academic advising and personal counselling. It was pretty smooth and it was a smaller campus. I felt like everybody knew who I was.

From College I went directly into the University of Windsor and enrolled in the Psychology program. I am currently working towards obtaining my Psychology degree.

The supports that I am accessing are the academic coaching and advising, student health services, student counselling services, the writing support desk in Leddy library and OPUS, which is the organization of part time university students where I can get student health and dental benefits.

I push myself hard to be successful. University is a whole different ball game because I have to act a certain way and if I don't, I get written up and reported and need to sign a Behaviour Contract. It is thanks to the people at my part time student union that advocate for students who are facing difficulty and my doctor and therapist who help me get through my struggles.

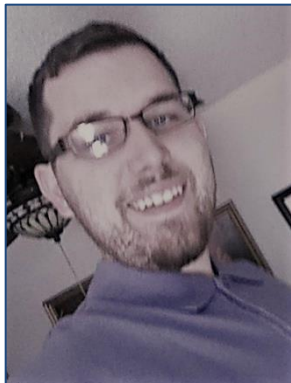
My personal experience is that students with disabilities are at a greater risk of being made to sign a behaviour contract. This means while students who have a disability have many more opportunities than they did 10 years ago, we still have a lot of work to be done with raising awareness about people who have Autism like me, or any other type of disability.

I collect ODSP and I manage my own finances. I live on my own in an apartment.

I face a lot of adversity in my life but I have become a very strong advocate for myself and would like the opportunity to help others advocate for themselves. I would like to be a motivational speaker and tell my story to help other people like me become successful and the best that they can be!

2021 – An update since Brian first shared his story in 2018

Brian has been working full time in the manufacturing sector for almost 2 years now. He is currently living independently. Brian's future plans include returning to university one day to complete his psychology degree as he is just 2 credits short.



Biography

Brian is a successful young man. Diagnosed with Autism at a young age, he has faced challenges each and every day. In both elementary and high school, Brian was placed in special education. As a result, he didn't receive a high school diploma.

Brian continued to believe in his *abilities* and what he could accomplish, rather than what he could not. When he left high school, he enrolled in the OPTIONS program at St. Clair College in Chatham where he learned valuable daily living and general employment skills.

Wanting more for himself, Brian enrolled in Adult Education and earned his high school diploma in 2 years. From there, he went back to St. Clair College for the Developmental Services Worker program and graduated with a DSW certificate in 2011. Then he continued his education and in 2013, received a diploma from the Child and Youth Worker program. Brian accredits the many support services available at St. Clair College as key to his academic success.

Still wanting more, Brian is enrolled in the Psychology program at the University of Windsor.

Brian would like to pursue a career as a motivational speaker and coach. His determination and strength, along with the support that he has accessed along the way, has helped Brian achieve his personal and academic goals. He would like to help others experience similar success and be the best that they can be!

Shawna

16 years old
Student

What people appreciate about me

- I am caring and loving. I am affectionate.
- I have a 'sweet' smile. I am a happy person.
- I am smart and have a good memory.
- I am friendly and sociable. I interact well with others.
- I really enjoy 'listening', to my classmates and friends.
- I know what I want and make my decisions known.
- I make people feel better when they are having a lousy day
- I like to help others. I am easy going.
 - I bring out patience in others.



What is important to me

- My family – mom, dad and Kyla. I like to do things or go places with them every day.
- Being around people. I love being part of a group with my classmates at school.
- Doing the same thing as everyone else in my class.
- Being with my girlfriends at school. Not doing things that are 'special'.
- Having my own space, both at home and school, to be alone and quiet at times.
- Going swimming at Adventure Bay every weekend with my favourite support workers. Swimming is my most favourite thing to do.
- Having my mini iPad with me at all times. I need this for my visual schedule and for my communication. I need to know what's going on ahead of time.
- Having my big iPad with me for relaxing, keeping busy, focusing and/or just 'killing time'. This works well at church and at school - especially during assemblies.
- Being busy outside school. Participating in one of my favourite leisure interests each day like swimming, shopping, walking the trail, music, horse-back riding, going out for lunch, cooking, dancing, skating, bowling, jumping at Skyzone.
- Shopping every now and then. I enjoy the mall and going to Indigo.
- Being able to count on promises made.
- Watching favourite DVDs.

How to support me

- Give me time to answer questions. I can't be rushed. It takes a while for me to process what is being asked. I will answer in my own way, sometimes with words, like yes or no, or with expressions or gestures.
- I respond positively when people talk calmly to me. A firm voice doesn't work for me.
- Prepare a visual schedule when needed as things change and let me know. I understand everything.
- Give me a 5 minute warning before a transition – I like to know what's next.
- I need people to take me to my leisure and recreational interests each day and on the weekends.
- I need the proper supports to learn. Sometimes I get things right away, sometimes it takes more time, but when I get it I run with it – my memory helps with this.
- At school, I need to know where my desk is, so that when I need a break I can go and relax.
- I need to do 'Conscious Care and Support' strategies (by Peter Marks) on a regular basis. This includes tapping, a trampoline, yoga ball, and sensory integration. If I have a lot of energy, let me bounce on a yoga ball. I look forward to Kyla supporting me with sensory every Saturday, and then going out for lunch.
- Teachers, family, friends, EA's, and others must follow through with promises made – I listen.
- I get headaches and need peppermint oil and liquid Tylenol to get through it. Roll just a little on my temples and next to my hair line. You can ask me if I want this.
- I have a difficult time each month during my cycle, I need to have less demands at that time.
- When I get stressed or feel sad, I might cry. It is important that people understand this and let me go through it, and reassure me. Pressure and hugs help to make me feel safe and reassured.

To learn about One Page Profiles and for sample templates:

<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/>

My Vision

Shawna



*To have a good life
in community once
school ends:*

To be included, participating and giving back in valued roles as an everyday, ordinary citizen.

Independence: shopping for my own groceries and cooking my meals.

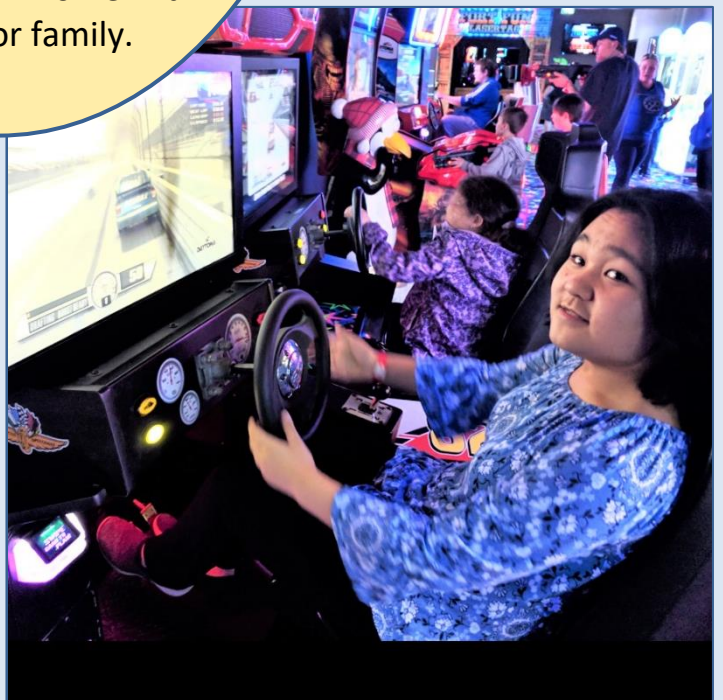
Opportunities & support for employment and meaningful volunteer work.

Continued education.

Reciprocal friendships & relationships: friends and natural supports.

Support to participate in my leisure and recreational interests.

Live in my own home with a friend or family.



Life Trajectory Work Sheet - Shawna

(As presented at the high school, Night of Inspiration, November 2020)

Everyone wants a good life. The information below illustrates **experiences** that point in the right direction toward my vision for a good life. Everything is being thought about more intentionally as to what points to my vision (and what won't) as my family helps me work toward a good life as an adult citizen in the future.

SCHOOL: LEARNING, AND FOR BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS. Being fully included in Elementary School has led to: me listening well during teaching lessons, having the confidence to walk the track (even by myself sometimes), hanging out with friends at lunch, playing board games together, and more!

NEIGHBOURHOOD INVOLVEMENT

I attend church every Sunday at the same time. Many parishioners, people of all ages including some of my peers from school, know me and greet me. These are natural supports that will keep me safe in the future.

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

I am doing more to help and serve by occasionally setting the table, and assisting with baking by measuring ingredients and stirring eggs. I am working toward helping out more as a responsible family member.

RECREATION & LEISURE

Doing what I love, swimming at Adventure Bay every weekend has led to building community relationships. I am getting to know the lifeguards, receptionists and other swimmers.

INDEPENDENCE - TAKING CARE OF MYSELF

I prepare for school each morning by packing my backpack. I fill my empty water bottle with water, then pack it and my iPad. I also help my sister by filling her water bottle (without being asked).

My Vision



To have a good life in community once school ends:

- To be included, participating and giving back in valued roles as an everyday ordinary citizen.
- Independence: shopping for my own groceries and cooking my meals.
- Opportunities & support for employment and meaningful volunteer work.
- Continued education.
- Reciprocal friendships & relationships: friends and natural supports.
- The right support to be able to participate in my leisure and recreational interests.
- Live in my own home with a friend or family; having the safety and security of home

What I don't want – my nightmare

- Exclusion; isolation; to be left alone.
- To be in danger, not safe. To experience a lack of support where awareness and safety is needed - examples: crossing the road, fire, risk of abuse.
- To be without friends and community relationships.
- No support to participate and give back.
- Getting sick, having poor health.

Adapted from the LifeCourse worksheet developed by UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD.

<https://www.ucuedd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Life-Trajectory-Worksheet-updated-february-2017-1.pdf>

Communication Chart			
What's happening (or has just happened)...	Shawna does this...	We think it means...	And others should...
Something exciting or positive stimulation occurred.	Shawna will get up, and start to run back and forth and is flapping her hands a lot.	Shawna is very happy and very excited. She doesn't know what to do with her excited energy.	If available, let her jump on a trampoline. Count to 20 with her so that she knows when to stop jumping. If she still has excited energy, let her jump again. She will let you know if she wants to do this or not. If no trampoline is available, let her bounce on a yoga ball.
<i>Someone is talking about Shawna in conversation (in a positive way).</i>	<i>Shawna will start giving you her 'side-eye' and will start flapping.</i>	<i>She is listening and she knows. She is excited.</i>	<i>Include her in the conversation. Reaffirm what the person had just said. She might not show it, but she likes to be included in the conversation.</i>
Shawna is being asked to do a task that she doesn't want to do.	Shawna is saying, "No, no, no," repeatedly and is starting to make crying sounds.	Shawna does not want to do the task, and should not be forced to do this task.	She knows what she wants. Ask her if she wants to do something else. Offer her an alternative but equivalent task to do (don't offer her iPad). Try offering the original task another day so that she can learn whatever the task was offering. Now that she has had exposure to it, she might not feel as overwhelmed.
<i>Someone is asking Shawna questions repeatedly and/or giving demands repeatedly.</i>	<i>Shawna is not responding or is 'zoning out'.</i>	<i>She needs time to process or does not like what she's being asked.</i>	<i>Shawna can respond to multi-step (2-3) demands, but she needs time to process. Give her a few seconds before repeating your question/demand. If she doesn't respond again, try to break it down or re-word it. If she doesn't respond to that, she might not like what you're asking. Ask her if she wants to do it – she will say 'Yes' or 'No'. You can tell her what she'll be able to do after she's done her task, or offer an alternative (but equivalent) task.</i>

Life Trajectory Work Sheet – Shawna, 2021

Everyone wants a good life. The information below illustrates **experiences** that point in the right direction toward my vision for a good life. Everything is being thought about more intentionally as to what points to my vision (and what won't) as my family helps me work toward a good life as an adult citizen in the future.

NEW additions =
brown/orange

SCHOOL: LEARNING, AND FOR BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS. Being fully included in Elementary School led to: me listening well during teaching lessons, having the confidence to walk the track (even by myself sometimes), hanging out with friends at lunch, playing board games together, and more!

NEIGHBOURHOOD INVOLVEMENT

I attend church every Sunday at the same time. Many parishioners, people of all ages, know me and greet me. *I am a regular at Oven 360 and A&W. They say hi and know my order. I swim at my neighbour's house on a regular basis. They ask about me and look out for me.* These are natural supports that will keep me safe in the future.

RECREATION & LEISURE

Because I am a regular swimmer at Adventure Bay, the lifeguards, receptionists and other swimmers know me. *Each week, I go out on the community trails for exercise. I choose which trail I want to walk on.*

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

Along with setting the table, and assisting with measurements for baking, *I also unload the dishwasher without being asked, bring up groceries, change the pillowcases, and set up for virtual mass. My home responsibilities have been increasing as I work towards helping out more as responsible family member.*

INDEPENDENCE - TAKING CARE OF MYSELF

I prepare for school each morning by packing my backpack. I fill my empty water bottle with water, then pack it and my iPad. I also help my sister by filling her water bottle (without being asked). *On laundry day I sort my dirty clothes; I pick my clothes/uniform and dress myself; I put my dirty dishes in the sink; I put away my garbage when asked; I take daily vitamins to keep healthy; I tell people when I need my medicine when I have headaches; Getting ready for bed, I brush my teeth, say my prayers, set up my pillows and blankets, and play my bedtime music. I work with my tutor at home on my literacy with Lexia, to prepare for the future.*

My Vision



To have a good life in community once school ends:

- To be included, participating and giving back in valued roles as an everyday ordinary citizen.
- Independence: shopping for my own groceries and cooking my meals.
- Opportunities & support for employment and meaningful volunteer work.
- Continued education.
- Reciprocal friendships & relationships: friends and natural supports.
- The right support to be able to participate in my leisure and recreational interests.
- Live in my own home with a friend or family; having the safety and security of home

What I don't want – my nightmare

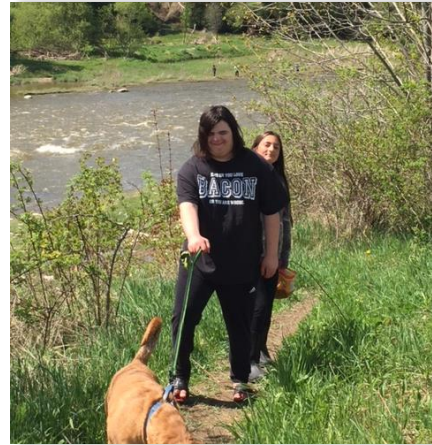
- Exclusion; isolation; to be left alone.
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- To be without friends and community relationships.
- No support to participate and give back.
- Getting sick, having poor health.

Heading Toward the End Game

Introduction

My name is Monica. My son Cody is a 19-year-old high school student. Cody is an amazing young man who loves music, camping, his dog Ace, his iPad and playing video games. **Cody is very clear that he wants to be respected and listened to . . . in other words to be treated like the adult he is.** He never likes to be bored, and is often willing to try new things and to make new friends with the right supports.

Cody currently attends high school and is in classroom for students with disabilities. This is his sixth year.



I am hear to talk with you a bit about what has kept us focused on what is important ‘to and for’ Cody these last few years. At this point in his life, we want to see him enjoying school as much as he can while experiencing some learning. But our recent focus has been more on assisting Cody to have meaningful days, experience different things, and prepare for the future outside of school.

His independent facilitator, from Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports worked with him a few years ago, helping him to express himself: what he liked and didn’t like, his goals, and a vision for his life. We have talked with him about his future and what he sees himself doing and what he doesn’t want. Together, with Cody, and with the help of others, we put his vision to paper. **It has become our ‘end game.’** We have used a worksheet trajectory to keep us focused on Cody’s future and what we all need to keep working towards the ‘end game’ – especially Cody.

Cody’s goal is to be actively working toward his vision at home, in his community, and at school!

Cody participated in a person-centred planning review with the help of a family leader who did some work in our community a few years ago. This is really how we were able to work on a path forward with Cody. The process helped us explore things like: Who is important in Cody’s life? What is important to and for Cody? What is important now and in the future? We discussed what good supports look like for Cody, and what was working and not working at the time, particularly with school.

Here are some of the tools we created around that time period that have guided us over the last few years. We have shared these with his educators and others to know him better.

One-page-profile

Cody’s one-page-profile explains “who he is” all in one page. Here are a few points from each of the areas we looked at:

What people appreciate about Cody (from his perspective)

- I am funny and fun to be with; I have a quick wit and love to tell jokes
- I am honest and straight forward; I have a creative imagination
- I like doing things with family and friends and I also like having time alone as I become more independent.

What is important to Cody (from his perspective)

- My mom, dad and sister, and my dog, Ace
- Listening to live music and going to rock concerts.
- Continuing to learn new things
- To learn more about “computer stuff”. I text and use voice recognition, I subscribe to many You Tube stations, I use my iPad. I am creative with the video games I play.

How best to support Cody (from his perspective)

- Offer positive messages and speak in a tone of voice that demonstrates that I am respected
- When learning something new, one-to-one assistance works best at the beginning
- Use a planned approach with my involvement in the development for entirely new things. This helps me to feel comfortable and leads to success
- When it involves new people, spaces and learning, it must be meaningful and broken down into smaller steps that I can follow.

Cody’s Vision

- To have a meaningful day that is both busy and fun; to work, volunteer, and have some recreational time.
- To choose the things I would like to do, where I am going to live, what kind of work I would have, what I will do in my spare time.

Nightmare

- *To be treated as a child; to be underestimated*
- *To be without friends; to be isolated*

Just imagine if you felt **underestimated and isolated**; it would be a nightmare for any of us.

Vision Trajectory – Our worksheet

This is really the highlight of my presentation. By having Cody’s vision in front of us, and the worksheet, we can make sure that everything Cody does today will keep pointing to his vision for the future. Here are a few examples of what Cody is doing on the path toward his vision, his “End Goal”.

Learning (from Cody’s perspective)

Reading is important to me for my future. I enjoy being to be able to look things up on line. I go for one-to-one literacy tutoring after school 2X per week. I work with the Special Reads program at home on a regular basis. I also work on a literacy program at school.

Music, Arts and Culture (from Cody’s perspective)

I like going to live rock concerts. Movie theatres as well. I enjoy working on independent art projects at home. I am starting to go to live concerts at the Coliseum downtown.

Work, Employment (from my perspective)

Cody started his first paying job in the fall of 2019 doing shredding at Brokerage. He had a pause during Covid-19 and is just getting back to it again recently. Cody is excited to be paid for work, and even more excited that he misses school on those days to go to work! So far so good. We hope to build his confidence and work skills for his future.



Conclusion: What we have learned

Ultimately School is only a small piece of Cody's full-life puzzle. A person-centred planning process has really helped our family and Cody focus on Cody's end game – his vision. We take the positives from school and fill in the gaps outside of school with things that all lead to fulfilling Cody's Vision.

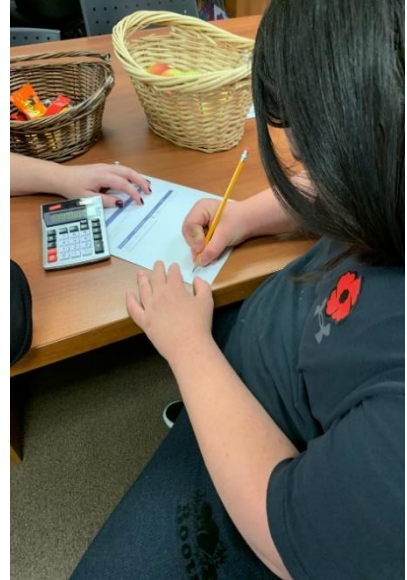
What's going on in Cody's life?

What Cody has been doing during the pandemic

- Independent Art Projects
- Literacy tutoring, 2X a week
- Home workouts, basketball hoops
- Special Reads reading program (see link below)
- Walking the dog
- On-line Drum Fit, and Tae Kwon Do

What Cody is doing to start getting out more . . .

- Working: shredding paper at Brokerage
- Going to the movie theatre
- Trying different restaurants
- Attending rock shows at the Colosseum in next few months
- Checking out stores in the mall



Links to some resources on-line

Tools we have used:

One Page Profiles - to learn more and for some sample templates, go to:

<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/>

What's working, what's not working template

<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/workingnotworking.pdf>

Life Trajectory Worksheet, Developed by the UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD.

<https://www.ucedd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Life-Trajectory-Worksheet-updated-february-2017-1.pdf>

Literacy program that we find works:

Special Reads for Special Needs, a Down syndrome literacy program designed to be appealing to—and effective for—teaching children with Down syndrome, autism/ASD, ADD/ADHD, and other developmental delays. <https://specialreads.com/>

Cody

19 years old
High School Student



What people appreciate about me

The people who know me the best and who I trust like that:

- I am funny and fun to be with; I have a quick wit and love to tell jokes.
- I am polite and kind; I show courage and try to be responsible.
- I am sensitive to others and notice what is happening around me.
- I am always listening, even when it doesn't look it to others at times.
- I may seem shy in new situations, but I am willing to try new things.
- I am honest and straight forward; I have a creative imagination.
- When I am with people I know and trust, I am able to share my feelings and thoughts.
- I like doing things with family and friends and I also like having time alone as I become more independent.
- I can express what I enjoy doing like: listening to live music, playing 1-on-1 basketball, being creative with art.

What is important to me

- My mom, dad and sister, and then my dog Ace.
- Listening to live music and going to rock concerts.
- Talking to people about music – I love that.
- Having time with my support worker to do things that interest us both: playing hockey, shooting hoops, playing guitar, etc.
- My neighbourhood: going to the park, going for walks, stopping at my favourite pizza place near home. They know me there and always greet me with a big smile!
- Doing the same things that other teenagers my age do – not being separated from things or centred out - not always only being with people with disabilities.
- Having friends. I would like to meet up with friends from my neighbourhood grade school and make new friends
- Continuing to learn new things at school and at home, especially to be prepared for life ahead, reading will be an important skill to learn for everything I want to do.
- To learn more about “computer stuff”. I text and use voice recognition, I subscribe to many You Tube stations, I use my iPad. I am creative with the video games I play.
- Doing lots of different things at home, at school, and in my neighbourhood and community; I don't like being bored and doing the same thing over and over again.
- Showing others what I can do and what I have done in the past; sharing the video of my life made by my sister.
- Getting outdoors, going to my grand parents' out in the county, going on vacation and camping at Southampton.

How to support me

- Be sure that I know what is going to happen next.
- Offer positive messages and speak in a tone of voice that demonstrates that I am respected.
- Avoid saying negative things about me or in a tone that makes me uncomfortable - I freeze, get anxious.
- Plain language is fine; I don't need anything less.
- Avoid pressuring me for answers or other things.
- Talk to me as an equal. When people talk to me as if I am a young child, I get upset. I am a 19-year-old man.
- When learning something new, one-to-one assistance works best at the beginning.
- Use a planned approach with my involvement in the development for entirely new things. This helps me to feel comfortable and leads to success.
- When it involves new people, spaces and learning, it must be meaningful and broken down into smaller steps that I can follow.
- Use of more technology. It helps me learn at home.
- Offer books that do not look primary. Teaching materials need to match my age i.e. Create social stories using IPAD compatible format using his favourite musician Jack Black. I feel centred out and disrespected when primary looking materials are used.
- Keep things interesting, change things up, offer choices that are motivating, match my interests. Avoid having me do the same thing again and again. When I get discouraged and bored, I shut down and give up
- Learning sessions that are an appropriate length.

To learn about One Page Profiles and for sample templates:

<http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles/>

Life Trajectory Work Sheet – Cody, 2021

Everyone wants a good life. The information below illustrates current experiences that are pointing in the right direction toward my vision for a good life.

Neighbourhood Involvement

I do lots of things in my neighbourhood. I normally go to: the library at community centre, the local school to shoot hoops, the dog park with my dog, the local pizza parlour, and our corner store. It feels good to be greeted at the community centre, store or my favourite restaurant by people who know me. That's what I want in my future: to be known by people in my community.

Learning - Reading is important to me for my future. I enjoy being to be able to look things up on line. I go for one-to-one literacy tutoring after school 2X per week. I work with the Special Reads program at home on a regular basis. And I work on a literacy program at school. I am committed to this!

Responsibilities at Home

I take out the garbage and recycling. I assist with my dog, Ace, by getting out food and water and help with his walks. I do dishes and help in the kitchen with cooking and baking.

Recreation & Leisure

I like to play one-to-one sports - hockey and basketball; I like being active with my support worker. I work-out at home now. I also play video games.

Family Time

I go camping with my family in the summer. My mom, dad, sister & I spend fun times together. I want to keep my relationships with my family strong.

Music, Arts & Culture

I like going to live rock concerts. Movie theatres as well. I enjoy working on independent art projects at home.

Work, Employment

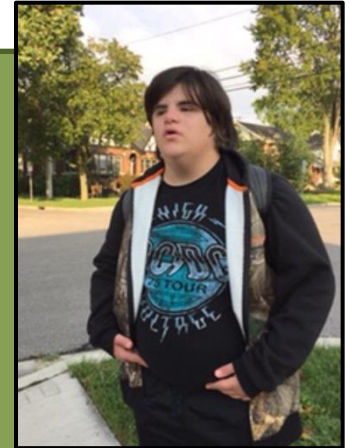
I have a small job working at an agency shredding papers once a week. I am just getting back into that work because of the pandemic.

Independence - taking care of myself

I get ready for school each morning following a daily routine. This includes taking care of my long hair. I keep up my room.

MY VISION

- To have good friends, and lots of family time.
- To learn and try new things at school and in my home town.
- To use my gifts, talents and skills in school and around home.
- To read and communicate better.
- To have a meaningful day that is both busy and fun; to work, volunteer, and have some recreational time.
- To choose the things I would like to do, where I am going to live, what kind of work I would have, what I will do in my spare time.
- To always have music in my life and go to as many concerts as I can.
- To always have a dog in my life.
 - To go camping up north as much as possible.



What I don't want – my nightmare

- To be treated as a child; to be underestimated.
- To be bored; to do the same thing each day.
- To be without friends; to be isolated.
- To be centred out.
- To go to school to cook and recycle. This type of activity is not interesting and has made me shut down.

