

Last week, I received a call from my 24 year old son Kevin telling me about his upcoming travel plans. Everything Kevin does brings us joy; his work, activities and social life have all surpassed our widest dreams! There was a time when we prayed that he would graduate from high school. I cried many times in those early years.

Just before Kevin was 3 years old, friends referred me to Dr. Tiegerman and told me to have Kevin tested. I was hesitant, but they were persistent. Two weeks later, I learned that Kevin was delayed in Speech, and in July, he entered the new SLCD as a 3 year old. As I look back, I realize that he had no means of communication. When he was hungry, he opened a kitchen cabinet and ate from a box of cheerios. I took him outside and I could not get him to understand the difference between our property, our neighbors' property and the street; so, his first language was sign. SLCD opened the door.

There are many Kevin stories. He fed the new VCR crayons. He fed the new computer hard drive pennies. The first time my husband laughed. The second time he smiled. The third time was the last time. Now Kevin's older brother and 2 older sisters tell me that they blamed everything on Kevin! They knew I would not punish him. We had to watch Kevin constantly. We never knew what he would do. He put glue on the cat. He found a cord with a live end and plugged it into the electrical outlet; as a result his abdomen was burned. He left the house alone a few times, so, we kept the doors locked. It was exhausting to be the parent of 2 teenagers, a 10 year old and an adventuresome Kevin.

Kevin remained at SLCD for 4 years, and then returned to our home district of Manhasset to repeat the first grade. He continued in special education until the beginning of the 8th grade. He finally played with children in the neighborhood when he was 9. Before that his best friend was Bobby our teenage neighbor and his older brother's friends. His brothers and sisters all played an important part in Kevin's learning and growth. I like to think that Kevin was lucky in that he had 5 parents.

At age 12 Kevin suddenly became a person. He saw the world around him. At that time, we began to learn that Kevin has the gift of intelligence! In high school, he made friends, and took advanced classes and science research. We had to take him to college libraries so that he could do proper research. Before his senior year, Kevin told us that he wanted to study physics. He attended the University of Chicago where he worked in a lab for 4 years and graduated with a double major in math and physics. I do not know his GPA; Kevin does not care about grades. Kevin just wants to learn. At present, Kevin is in a six year doctoral program at Stanford University. He is working towards a PhD in physics. He is working on a research team studying radioactive decay. He enjoys research and hopes to become a University Professor doing research.

For us, his family, we are happy that he works, has friends and is happy. He has always been a hard worker and will certainly get where he wants to go. We just love telling the Kevin story. He brings us joy.

- Kevin O'Sullivan's mother