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HB

Hello my name is Shana Chapman my husband and I have three children and one of which has special needs. His name is Patrick and he is 14 1/2 years old. He had a very difficult birth and he had neonatal seizures. We had never been around anyone with disabilities that we knew of so we didn't know much about disabilities. But I did know something wasn't quite right with Patrick. We had no idea of the stress, financial burdens, the adjustments our family would need to make and the daily challenges families deal with when one is disabled. Quality Life Concepts came into our lives helping us along the way, teaching us about disabilities in general and with the specific disabilities our son has. They provided us with resources and support, among many other things. This agency has done tremendous work with our son and family. Since his birth he has had great medical providers who have taken wonderful care of him. Over the years he has had a team of many therapists, which will include his younger brother, all working diligently to help him overcome his obstacles. He was diagnosed with Strabismus, Cerebral Palsy, and Epilepsy. He received services with Medicaid, which relieved a lot of financial burden and stress. When he turned 3 he became eligible for the Special Education Program is currently still in the program. Patrick is and has been very complex and over the years he has had a lot of diagnoses. At age 12 he was diagnosed with Autism. Patrick has brought us a lot of joy and laughter into our lives. He also has taught us many things including patience and compassion. I am a better person today because of him. He has received services with Eagle Mount and Special Olympics. He has flourished physically and socially with these two programs as well. He has received services with mental health providers, which is currently a work in progress. We as a family push Patrick so he will be able to be as independent as he can possibly be. Patrick was supposed to have lived his life in a wheel chair but because of everyone's involvement with our son, he has had a better life. It has not been one person or one program that has got him where he is today but rather everyone and all these programs that I have mentioned. With my husband being overseas for the last two years, I don't know how I would have gotten through this time without the support of these programs. And my husband would not have been able to successfully carry out his mission in the Air Force without the support being provided for his family. (This hasn't been the only time he has been away)

With the services being provided and Patrick improving in all areas he will be an asset to society rather than a drain socially and financially. This will save the state money because he will not need full-time care when he gets older. I am not sure of all the programs out there, but I am concerned as my son matures to an adult what services will be available to him. We want him to become independent but that also will depend on the quality and availability of services as he matures. Being disabled doesn't mean you're broken, it just means life takes you down a different path. I would like Patrick's path to be a productive path for him as well as society. For a better quality of life not one person is more deserving than another. This isn't just about the money, it's about the people, the children, the families and you have all of us in the palm of your hand. Please protect the funding of these programs who give people a better quality of life. We are one example of the success of funding these types of programs. Life is precious and is very valuable to each one of us. At any given time any one of us can become disabled.