

March 12, 2007

**To Whom It May Concern:**

It has been a long journey for my son. With many years of misdiagnosing, he was finally diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome when he was approximately 17 years of age. However, with his reluctance to accept the diagnosis and not finding appropriate personnel who understood or treated this disability, we floundered in our search to meet his needs. His involvement with legal issues brought things to a startling entanglement with police, probation officers, public defenders, lawyers, judges, court, etc. Then, he became part of the Special Populations Program with Northwest Mental Health Center in Torrington, CT. Our struggles continued, but to a lesser degree. And after many more evaluations, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers, therapists Garrett was released from the program and his probation through the work of a public defender assigned to his case who gave little thought to the consequences. With a brief time that had no legal problems, we now are once again faced with legal issues. As a result however, Garrett had become more receptive last summer to begin counseling sessions again and recently has agreed to take medication. Additionally, he attends two ½ day sessions at Harbor Health in Branford for structured social activities. Missing from this picture are training in social skills and employment or volunteer work with a job coach that would be suitable for his level of competency and interest. The puzzle has many pieces and we need help to make the many aspects fit properly for a clear and complete picture. In speaking with Dr. Dan Brockett, who had devised a behavioral plan for Garrett that never got implemented, he recommended contacting the CT Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot Project. We were part of the families who spoke at a hearing in Hartford to help support this Project last year. It is our hope that you will broaden this program so that it will be inclusive of all adults diagnosed with this disability who will greatly benefit to help them lead more productive lives. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Terri Santillo