

Open Letter from a Grateful Family.

We joined By Their Side, in 1985. At the time, our son was 17 and was about to move into his present home with Target Community and Educational Services. He has been a resident of Carroll County and has, throughout the past 29 years, been in the most optimal of living situations. We are so grateful for the care and love he has experienced over this time. Indeed, he faces living challenges every day, but he has so many supports that we as parents feel that we are not alone. More importantly, he is not alone and those who live with him and care for him are aware of his needs as much as we are.

When we first became part of By Their Side, we did not fully comprehend what it would mean to us to have an advocate to support him when we are no longer in the picture. As we get on in years and watch D, as well as his brother and sister, progress through life, we are more aware than ever of what it will mean to have someone else who cares, to be there to advocate, communicate, and support his interests and needs. His siblings (both are younger) live out of state and, while they love him dearly, they have busy lives and responsibilities. Of course, if needed, they could come to his side, but it is a reassurance to them as well as us that there is , in place, an advocate to represent D's interests. This is a value that we did not recognize when we first joined. Now we see the value and the blessing. We are so grateful.

I have had the privilege to serve on the Board of By Their Side for over 4 years and the honor to currently serve as its president. I see up close and personal, the dedication of the staff and Board. Our Board is a dedicated and concerned group made up of parents, professionals, and community leaders. They, along with a skilled and talented Executive Director and staff as well as a cadre of experienced and caring professionals who are our personal advocates, are providing services and, more importantly, peace of mind to those families who required those services. And to those of us, who will be counting on these folks in the future, an assurance that our loved ones truly will have someone **By Their Side**.

Yes, we are a grateful family.

Mark Wagner

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