Transforming Lives: Tanya’s Journey

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Conference was life-changing! I will forever feel empowered and thankful!”

Jimmy’s superpower

Jimmy has an incredible visual memory, Tanya says. “It’s as if he’s going through life taking pictures in his mind.” This strength, we tell her, will be the key to his success.

Transforming Lives: Tanya’s Journey

Because of you...

“You have given me hope, and the support I so desperately needed.”

Jimmy had received special education help in school since 1st grade. But at 13, his difficulties had become so overwhelming, Tanya says, she was afraid he might not make it through high school.

Working full-time as a single Mom, Tanya fought his school for three years – alone, desperate, and afraid.

“I trusted the school system,” she says. When Jimmy was tested and diagnosed with ADHD, “I believed them. But something inside me said, ‘Something is not right.’ I thought, there’s something more, something deeper.”

At first, Jimmy did well in middle school. He made great strides socially, Tanya says. He’s an outstanding athlete and has good friends. But increasingly, he was falling behind academically. Her anxiety became overwhelming as Jimmy approached high school.

Finding the answers!

The turning point in Jimmy’s story came when his mother signed up for the February 3rd Smart Kids Parent Conference. She describes her reaction when she arrived: “Oh my God! I’m not alone! Look at all this support!”

She had a powerful emotional response to what she describes finding at the conference: Acceptance. Knowledge. Empowerment. Her son’s rights, and the terminology to access them.

“Negotiating for special education help is not an easy process,” Tanya says. “The Smart Kids

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Thank You!

I am incredibly grateful to each one of you, who made the 2024 Minds In Bloom Gala a huge success. Your love and support for these children make an impact that will last for a lifetime. We could not be more proud of all you are doing to help these kids realize their dreams!

Jane Ross, Executive Director

Parent Conference 2024: An Unforgettable Experience

Once again, Winston Prep School in Norwalk, CT hosted our 2024 Parent Conference. “Exceptional presentations” by leading experts included programs on ADHD, dyslexia, assistive technology, anxiety, sibling issues, proactive parenting, the transition to college – and children’s legal rights – as well as our first-ever Ask the Experts session.

“Charismatic and knowledgeable presenters, great food, friendly people, incredible cause”

Parent Conference 2024: An Unforgettable Experience

Our Amazing, Inspiring, Unstoppable Youth Achievement Honorees

Meet our 2024 Fred J. Epstein Youth Achievement Award Winners, recognizing young people with learning challenges who have already accomplished great things.

Fred J. Epstein Youth Achievement Award
Devon Kiessling, Piscataway, NJ

“The Reading Roar: A Magical Learning Journey” ranks among Amazon’s top 50 children’s books on disabilities.

Honorable Mention Awards
Bryce Hunter, Englewood, CO

Bryce found a way to navigate challenges that include ADD, Dysgraphia, Auditory Memory Dysfunction, as well as anxiety, processing, and mood disorders. He told guests at the 2024 gala: “Thank you for allowing me to feel seen and heard and understood. This means way more to me than you may know.”

Joseph Turley, New York, NY

Joseph credits his ADHD for fueling the multiple awards his art has won, including displays at the Metropolitan Museum and Barney’s in NYC. He says, “I see my ADHD as a good thing that I embrace, something that makes me who I am.” He encourages other kids with ADHD to “celebrate and use this gift.”

2024 Youth Achievement Award Winners (left to right): Rory Audrilik, Austin Janssen, Devon Kiessling, Bryce Hunter. Not pictured: Joseph Turley