

Walk a Mile in OUR SHOES

My name is Matthew Hearn and I had to see my foot and ankle doctor and have a shot in my heel. Last fall I had a fracture and was in a boot for a long time. I also had a cardio appointment where they almost refused to treat me. Mom said they lost both of my heart monitoring results and didn't have me on the schedule. They finally agreed to a 30-day halter monitoring. The staff came in to put on the new halter monitor and after putting it on my chest said they needed to take it off because they didn't know I had an implanted loop monitor. I held my breath and pulled it off. They had to shave my chest and reapply. Please help us have access to quality medical specialist, and educational opportunities including post secondary college or vocational training.



My name is Gwen Vandenburg, and my son, Jon Jr, was born at 26 weeks weighing 1 lb. 13 oz. His early birth was by toxemia, blood poisoning from toxics due to a local bacterial infection. Jon Jr spent 7 1/2 months at a children's hospital. When he came home, he had an oxygen feeding tube and heart monitor. When he turned four, we got on the Medicaid Waiver through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD). We started physical, occupational, and speech therapies. After school, at the age of 22, Jon Jr was in a day program for 2 1/2 years. APD was there to help with his services. The last year he has been living at home receiving in-home support because he could not handle large groups. He now receives physical therapy twice a week along with behavioral services. We would not be where we are today if it was not for APD.



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Korey Huscher, age 27, enjoys living with friends in Hernando County. He loves laughing, kidding, and goofing around with his sister and friends. If you ask Korey, McDonald's is the best place to eat in the world! Shopping and going to movies are his favorite pastimes. Though born in South Korea, he is a true Floridian with a real soft spot in his heart for Long Island, New York. He was on APD's waiting list for more than five years before he began receiving Waiver services. Because of his services, especially behavioral, he lives in his home, living his life, and has become so much more self-reliant, independent, and part of the community. He has become more independent dealing with his activities of daily living. Korey works at several jobs, with the support of his companion. Korey especially loves blondes! He participates in the honor of voting, every year making his choices count, ever since reaching the age of adulthood. Korey does live with autism. It is part of him; though as you can read, it does not define who he is. . . Korey is Korey. As he says when asked how he is, he states "fine". And that certainly is the truth!



Emily Justice is 18 years old and has lived away from her family for 6 years due to the lack of supports and services in Escambia County. She has autism, as well as intellectual and developmental disabilities. She currently lives in St. Augustine at the ARC St. Johns. Emily receives Waiver services and lives in an extensive intensive behavioral group home. She is happiest when she is surrounded by her big brother, Earl, and her parents, and looks forward to their visits. She enjoys school, pizza, parties and cake, and going into the community on outings. She is very energetic and love popcorn and getting her face painted.



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