

# **DREAMS DO COME TRUE**

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I have two sons, Nathan, 12 years old and Nicholas, 10 years old. Nathan had been attending a Special School from the age of 6 months because of his disabilities and we thought that this was in Nathan's best interest. Specialist people teaching him how to get the most out of his body and mind. That was true, but his emotional and social needs were not met. Certain things started to change in our dreams and concerns for his future. Did he have friends who would be there for him like Nicholas's were? Did he have birthday parties with his school friends like Nicholas did? Did he have neighbourhood friends who would drop by to say "Hi" like Nicholas did? Did anyone in our community know he even lived there? "No!" and What would happen to Nathan emotionally and to his life style when I died? "I don't know."

They boys would say to me in the mornings when getting ready for school: "Why can't Nathan go to my school?" "Why can't I go to school with Nicholas?" I would answer them: "That's the law of the land boys and I can't change it." Well I can change it!

My children have the right to go to the same school of my choice regardless of one's colour, religion, non English speaking or disabilities. We looked at all the schools in our area and decided to transfer Nathan to the local SEU. We felt that because of his unknown educational abilities and known behaviour problems that this would be the best first step. Our biggest concerns were how he would get around the school because of his sight problems; how to improve his behaviour for a class room setting and establishing his education needs. Well the first two turned out to be minor ones and the third was continually looked at. Nathan was happily willing to explore the school and have real friends who could teach him how real friends act to each other and what is expected of you in return.

The following year my two sons attended the same school which my younger son had been attending since pre-school. We all had our concerns, but they agreed to give my son a chance and the opportunities of a better and new life style. Nathan has excelled and the professionals who knew him and worked with him in the past are just as amazed as we are. I knew my son belonged there and surprise, surprise, so did he. Nathan is attending his second year at that school and they are still believing in him and what he can do. He is in Grade 6 and the children in his class, and the rest of the school for that matter, know and accept him as Nathan. The change in him is just amazing. His old file no longer indicates the Nathan of now. There are no behaviour problems out of the normal, he sits and listens, enjoys learning which we had no idea he could do 2 years ago. He is considered a pleasure in the classroom, the children involve him as they do everyone else in the classroom. There is no

question in the minds of the children or in Nathan's whether he belongs there because he does and is.

I am very proud of my son and enjoy him more and more every day. He has a wonderful sense of humour that I was not aware of and I have only one regret - that I didn't do this years ago. I am also excited and amazed at the positive and pleasant change in the relationship of my two sons. They are brothers now. They do things together, they know the same people and teachers, they enjoy the same activities at school and have things in common for the first time in their lives. Now I ask myself those same questions - "Does he have friends that would be there for him?"; "Does he have birthday parties with friends from school?"; "Do kids from the neighbourhood drop in to say 'Hi'?" and is he known in the community?" "Yes!" "What would happen to him if I died?" He would have friends and family who would know what sort of life both he and I would want for him and continue to make our dreams come true.