

## Kellen's Transition Story

### Kellen

Our son Kellen is 14 and has significant abilities and disabilities. Our transition story has just begun. It has been exciting over the last few years to see his gifts and talents emerge. We have used the process of Person Centered Planning to help guide and shape his future. Person Centered Planning puts Kellen in the center of his future, which is right where he belongs. After all, it is HIS future.

Person Centered Planning facilitators come to our house where we have a group of significant people in Kellen's life assembled comfortably around our living room. The facilitators have brought an easel and plenty of colorful markers. The group is there to celebrate Kellen. Who he is, the gifts he brings, the dreams he has. His history, his talents, what works for Kellen and what doesn't work for Kellen. His support needs, his likes and dislikes.

Since Kellen loves puzzles, we draw him into the process by writing his contributions on construction paper puzzle pieces. As we talk about his likes and dislikes, his supporters draw pictures on the puzzle pieces and Kellen arranges the pieces on a big piece of butcher paper. When we are done with his likes and dislikes map, there is a full page of colorful pictures. Pepperoni pizzas, DVDs, his furry black cat Max, and a cowboy hat signifying country music on the "likes" side. On the "dislikes" side there are pictures of mushrooms, steaming hot food, and tucked in shirts.

These series of gatherings help us focus on Kellen as an individual. They help us think about what he might like to do for employment and where he might like to live in the future. One of Kellen's favorite things to do is to organize. He loves to come into the bathroom in the morning and straighten up after the rest of the family. He puts the hairdryer away, puts the wet towels in the laundry basket and pulls the shower curtain across the bathtub. If he doesn't get a chance to do this in the morning, he will do it after school. If we "mess up" the bathroom, he doesn't get upset; he just straightens it up again. He seems to enjoy putting chaos back in to order. About a year ago I saw an employment video of a young woman with a developmental disability working at a hospital. She was restocking the exam rooms with gauze pads and other supplies. All of a sudden I thought of Kellen and how he would love to work at a job like that. He could spend his working hours putting chaos in to order for pay!

I feel that part of my job as Kellen's parent is to help others catch Kellen's dream. Help them to get to know Kellen so that they can better support him towards his vision of his future. We have done his person centered plan in order to formalize this process. It is a way of grounding us in who Kellen is and showing others how they can support him in where he is going.