

Cathy just turned 15 and finished her freshman year in high school.

When she started high school she left behind her Special Day class that she'd be in since 2nd grade. She is now in a regular class room with no special accommodations. This was not recommended by her previous school but rather based on the fact that we got her into a very good Charter School that gave ALL students the same accommodations that Cathy needed (more time on tests, more time for mastery of skills, individualized instruction). She worked extremely hard and managed to eek by each semester with 1 A, 1 B and 3 C's. She had a couple of tough classes including Algebra 1 and Physics. One thing we did have to do to make this work for her was "skip" one class to give her an additional study period each day. She is making up that class (Geometry) during the summer through an online course.

Cathy had several big accomplishments this year (in addition to passing!). The first is she not only made the volleyball team (after NEVER having played a sport), she was given the "Most Improved" award. Additionally, at the end of the school year she was given the "Courage" award (one of her school's core values). She received this award because even though she shows some signs of anxiety and shyness, she's always willing to step forward and put herself out there. At the end of the year, she gave a speech to her entire Freshman class on Trisomy X Awareness. At the end of the speech, she admitted she has it. Her class took it very well and there was no teasing. Her teachers try very hard to keep the environment positive...so she felt safe doing this. And, she managed to get one of the top spots in her school musical. Tomorrow night she will have several lines and has two duos! She's extremely excited.

Cathy is still socially awkward and struggles with speech and is a slow learner. I will say that if she had not had support from her teachers, her father and I, she likely would not have passed. There were many nights with one of us helping her in some way. Often, I would let her dictate her papers to me while I typed. We would then sit together and edit until it was good.

As for friends, she started at this school with 0 friends as it's not our community High School. Quickly she found a very nice little group of friends (mixed male and female) who all liked anime and video games. One of the teachers commented that they all sit together at lunch, reading their own books, not really interacting much, but all happy to have friends to hang out with. She's also just "acquired" a boyfriend. I'm not ready for this, but I guess I have to suck it up. So far it seems to be a positive, but I'm watching it very closely.

Finally, she's about to embark on her Girl Scout Gold Award. She's chosen the topic of Trisomy X awareness! Once this is approved by Council, she will likely reach out to the Trisomy X community with her project.

As you can tell, I'm very proud of her. She still has many struggles, but seems to surpass them by working harder than her most of her peers.

I hope this gives some insight what some of you with younger children might expect in the coming years.

- M -

(mom to Cathy, age 15, dx at age 5)

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