

August 18, 2021

To Whom It May Concern;

I have had the great pleasure of being a part of the Autism Society of the Florida Keys since 2017. I found this group after my son, Dominic, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that same year at 4 years old. At a time when I felt lost and without hope, I found Jill and this amazing support group that has changed mine and my son's life!

The monthly support group meetings have given me so much hope to hear from other parents who are going through or have gone through the same struggles. It is refreshing to know that I am not alone and to also get advice and guidance on how to deal with the hurdles that come with a loved one on the Autism spectrum. Talking with other parents and professionals during these monthly meetings has taught me EVERYTHING I know about Autism. Jill has been such an incredible asset with always securing amazing and informative guest speakers that have taught me about ABA therapy, using visuals to assist my son, safety precautions for a child that elopes, Special Olympics, swimming precautions, aromatherapy practices for avoiding meltdowns, advocacy for creating the best IEP, and so so so much more! I genuinely look forward to each meeting and each speaker because I know that as a parent, Jill hand picks the very best and most knowledgeable sources to help us as parents. Our family has also enjoyed the social outings ASK coordinates so that our kids can experience different things without the fear of being judged or rejected. Dominic and his sister had so much fun during the open gym at Key West Sports Academy just being able to play and run around without any limitations.

Aside from the support meetings, my family has been so grateful to have ASK support several of our financial needs for our son's Autism journey. For about 2 years, my son went through a terrifying phase of elopement. He could not communicate and would become upset and bolt away from wherever he was. After doing some research I found a couple of different brands of tracking devices created for people with special needs. Jill helped us in purchasing an AngelSense device which unfortunately did not work well enough. So we tried the next device on my list, the Jobit. Jill assisted in purchasing that device for my son. That was about 3 years ago and we still use it every day. It has been a literal life saver for my son and has offered me so much peace of mind while he is away from me, at school, or when we are in crowded/large spaces. As I mentioned before, my son was nonverbal until about a year ago. ASK not only provided an iPad for my son to use to communicate but the communication software that goes along with it and as extremely pricey for an app! Thanks to that program, my son has not only learned how to speak and speak more clearly, it helped him to learn to read because the images he uses have titles as well. He is now able to use his device by clicking picture symbols to communicate as well as type out full sentences! ASK has also helped us with noise cancelling headphones to help Dominic with his sensory processing needs, school supplies each school year, endless fidgets to help with sensory needs, visual timers to assist in the classroom as well as at home, and weighted blankets to help with sleep issues.

Our family is forever grateful and so honored to be a part of such an amazing organization that does so many wonderful things for our Autism community! Not only do they help us as parents, but they do an amazing job of advocating and raising awareness all throughout the entire Florida Keys! I truly feel that so many more people in the community are accepting and ware of my son because of the efforts of ASK!



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