



Jacob's Story

as Told by His Mother, Linda Beam

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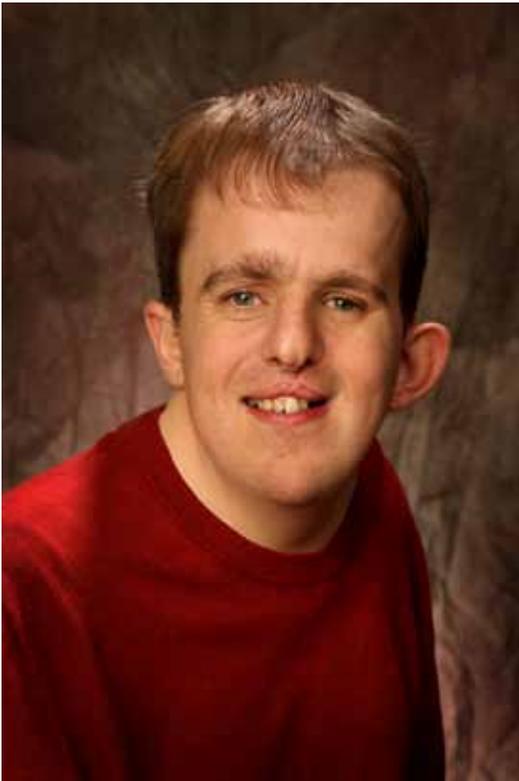
- Linda Beam

Jacob's story started in my last trimester of pregnancy. On a routine ultrasound we found that Jacob had multiple congenital birth defects and the prognosis was grim. We were told that Jacob would not survive pregnancy and would probably be still born. As my due date approached, Jacob surprised the doctors. When my pregnancy got to term, the doctors felt he would not survive the birthing process or if he did would pass shortly after. Jacob surprised the doctors again. After Jacob's birth, he was rushed to the NICU. They placed a breathing tube to help him breath and told us that if Jacob survived, he would need to be institutionalized. Once again, Jacob surprised the doctors.

Jacob's childhood was not an easy one. Jacob was born with hydrocephalus, Arnold Chiari malformation, congenital scoliosis, sprenkel's defect, cleft lip and palate, clubfeet, amniotic bands on his left arm and around his neck, and strabismus. He has had over 20 surgeries by the time he turned 12. Through all this Jacob has surprised the doctors at his tolerance to pain, his willingness to try, his spirit to never give up and his ability to make others smile.

During Jacob's NICU stay, we were given a contact for early intervention through UCP of Lebanon County (Now, Developmental & Disability Services of Lebanon Valley). Jacob's in-home therapies started shortly after coming home from the hospital. He received speech, occupational and physical therapy in the home. The therapist worked with Jacob to do everything that normally would come easily to other babies. They taught him to reach for toys, to roll from side to side, to discover his environment and how to get the things that he wanted. They helped with feeding ideas. With his cleft palate, feeding was sometimes difficult. They helped to expand his food choices so that he would not have aversions to different food textures. They gave us exercises and ideas to work with Jacob so that he could develop as an infant and gain skills that will continue to develop throughout his toddler and school age life cycle.

Jacob transitioned into the center-based program, administered by DDS. As a mom with a special needs child, I was very nervous about sending him on the van to "school." Needless to say I made many trips to the school and was always welcomed by the staff. Jacob was an observer as a child. It took a lot of encouragement for him to participate in activities. He modeled other children, which helped immensely in developing his speech and language. The staff worked very hard with and prepared him for entering the public school systems. He received his therapies at the center as well as we continued with private therapies within the community. Jacob met friends at the center that he would remain friends with throughout his school days.



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nce Jacob entered public school, most of his special needs were met through the school district and the IU. Jacob has wonderful memories of school. He met so many wonderful teachers and friends. He met his companion that works with him through his high school life skills class. He still sees some of his school friends on a regular basis. He has developed social skills, language skills and personal care skills that have made him the wonderful adult he is today.

Jacob’s graduation was a turning point in our life. Prior to graduation, we visited a few of the adult programs that were available for Jacob. It was a very difficult decision for us. We knew we had to do something because my husband and I both worked. We have family in the area but we did not want to rely on them as primary care takers and Jacob thrived with socialization and being out in the community. After a few months of the unknown and a few caretakers later, Dayl had approached us about being Jacob’s companion on a permanent basis. We have been so blessed to have her as part of Jacob’s life. He feels like he is part of her family and calls himself Jacob Klinger when he is with her. It is a true blessing knowing that when you are working your adult special needs son is being loved and taken care of. Dayl has kept him in contact with his old friends, involved him community volunteer opportunities, and introduced to him to many new friends. This has all been possible through DDS.

We are so grateful for the services that he receives. Jacob truly loves his life, which is more than any mom could ask for. Thank you for all you do for him. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have Dayl part of his life. Thank you for helping to shape him into the wonderful and loving adult he is today.



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