



Dear Flyin Ryan Hawks Foundation,

I would like to refer Kierce Thompson in support of his Adventure Scholarship application. I am the owner and Program Director for Spectrum and Beyond, a Maryland Autism Waiver company. I have been Kierce's Family Consultant and Supervisor for his direct staff for a year. I am also a mother of a child with developmental disabilities and have known and supported Kierce's mother for the last several years through a mutual developmental mom's group.

I have witnessed, as well as have helped, Kierce cope with the challenges that have come with his comorbidity of autism, metabolic disease, and most recently type 1 diabetes. Kierce's drive for adventure and autonomy is second to none! His love for fishing acts as not only a stress reliver for him, but it's an amazing way for him to connect with others. This all can be very challenging with the difficulties he has to work to overcome with his autism. When the challenge of type 1 diabetes was added to his plate recently, Kierce's drive and strength to return to normal activities like fishing and basketball shined through! Not only did he want to continue with these activities that relieve so much stress for him, but he was also motivated to learn how to monitor his food intake and insulin so he would not have to depend on others. His strive for independence is unmatched.

Kierce's mother had to make the difficult decision to remove him from school temporarily because of the lack for supervision, bullying, and physical harm that was constantly occurring. Nature has been a stress reliever for Kierce. It brings him peace in a world where he keeps getting a lot of heavy "stuff" thrown at him. Having the chance to explore new environments, new species of fish, and being able to share that with others would be a dream come true for Kierce!

I fully support Kierce's request for financial assistance to travel and experience a fishing adventure across the Eastern Southern states. This opportunity will encourage his love of adventure, his motivation for autonomy, and most importantly be a positive experience to share and remember to give this wonderful kiddo the break he deserves.

Sincerely,

Rhiannon James, MA
Program Director/Family Consultant
Spectrum and Beyond
240-630-HOPE (4673)