

# What Defines You?

December 2015

Anyone who has survived their middle school and high school years know what it is like to be labeled. Whether we were labeled by ourselves, our friends or classmates – most of us were defined as being one of the popular kids, jocks, nerds, punks or outcasts. But what about our special needs children? Where do they fit in? The truth is - most of them don't. Many are labeled with a diagnosis before they even enter school. Whether by appearance, abilities, or behaviors, they have trouble fitting in with their classmates and many children will shy away from them. While this is heartbreaking, we often see amazing resilience among these children. Despite their hardships they can be some of the kindest and most loving of people. We can learn a lot from them.

With the dawn of a new year upon us, I would like to challenge all of Joe's friends to think about what defines you. Is it your circumstances, or how you respond to them? Whether you have faced hardship or blessings this last year, you have chosen to make a positive difference in your community by supporting our special children. Thank you for your continued support of these amazing kids. We wish you blessings in 2016.

*- Rebecca*

## New Staff

You will be seeing some new faces around our clinic! Welcome to Annette Sage-Schrader, CCC-SLP, and Mindy Conner, DPT.



Annette



Mindy

## SAVE THE DATE

5K Splatter Dash  
May 7, 2016



The staff and volunteers at Joe's Kids would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We are excited to look ahead and see what 2016 brings to Joe's Kids!

Rebecca  
Ship  
Michele  
Lynn  
Joy  
Arielle  
Amy  
Kara  
Lisa  
MConn  
Amber  
Tami





# JOE'S KIDS Superstar

My son, Xavier, started attending therapy at Joe's Kids in April of 2015, a couple months after he turned 3. When we started, he had not yet been diagnosed with ADS, but he was very quiet, lacked motor skills, and was having frequent meltdowns. He was mostly unresponsive to the world around him except for his grandparents and me. His doctor referred us to Joe's Kids to start with speech therapy.

We met with Amber, the speech therapist, and she was warm, friendly, and very professional. Amber works very well with Xavier. Since she has started working with him, he went from being a very quiet little boy to a little chatterbox. He is constantly talking, naming animals, counting, saying his alphabet, and he has started to voice his requests. His meltdowns have decreased drastically and he seems happier overall since he has picked up these language skills. Amber suggested we look into occupational and physical therapy, and we met with Laura and Rebecca.

Xavier took to Laura, the occupational therapist almost immediately. She has done wonders for his temperament, and he is becoming very helpful with carrying bags, opening the doors, and even attempting to dress himself. She has given me a lot of great suggestions on how to soothe him when he is having meltdowns, redirection techniques, as well as helping me to get his sleep schedule on track. Thanks to Laura and the occupational therapy assistants, Xavier is drawing circles, straight lines, and he can write a few letters of the alphabet, he's able to zip up his sweatshirts and coats, stack blocks, books, and anything else he feels needs organized. With direction, he picks up his toys without much argument. Due to sensory issues, he hates his hands to be dirty, so I always had issues with getting him to play with Playdough and finger paint. He is now a willing participant, and I attribute that to the occupational therapy he is receiving.

Xavier likes working with Rebecca and the physical therapy assistants. They help him build up and exercise muscles that help him with balance, posture, and coordination. Xavier walks on his toes, but thanks to the physical therapists and a few suggestions, he has been walking on his toes a little less than when we started, and they have suggested we look at braces to stretch the tendons that keep him walking on his toes. Xavier loves his physical therapy sessions because he get to be physically active, and he always has so much fun with the different exercises they do with him.

I am very thankful for the whole staff at Joe's Kids. They have been very helpful with helping us find resources to improve the quality of Xavier's life. Even the office staff is a great resource for information. It's great to see Xavier excited and looking forward to going to therapy, and it really has benefited his life and helped him to be a happier, more aware child.



*-Brittany Oldfather, Xavier's Mom*