



JAMES' STORY

Until James was diagnosed with autism shortly after his fifteenth birthday, everyone labeled him a “problem kid.”

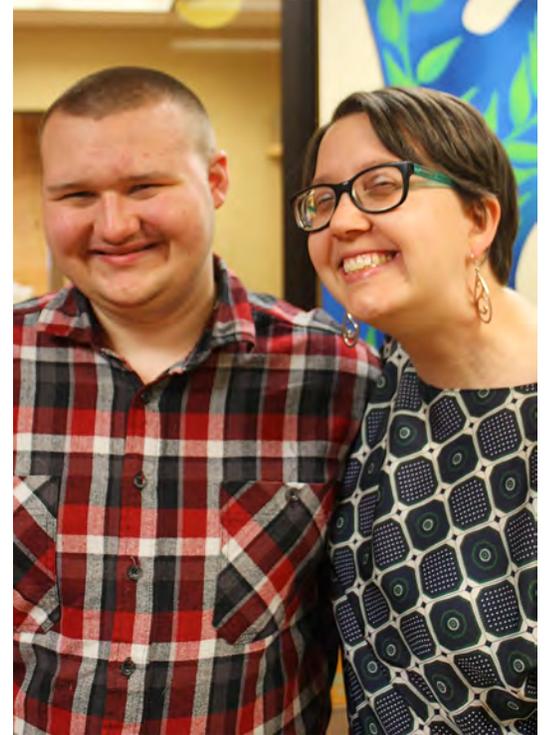
“I was bullied big time in middle school because of my behavior” James says. “I became depressed and disruptive in school as a result, and I was failing my classes. At home I’d just escape by using my phone to play video games. I wasn’t getting along with my family. At times, I felt suicidal.”

His mom, Diane, learned about autism after talking with another mom during a high school camping trip. James says the diagnosis helped him understand himself better. “I realized I’m not a bad kid. My brain is just wired differently. Knowing I have a disability with social interactions inspired me to use the techniques I learned in therapy to interact with others. That changed my outlook on life.”

James is currently mentoring a younger teen with autism who is struggling in middle school. They met at CTC while participating in fitness center classes together. When given the opportunity to become a mentor, James says, “I jumped right on it. I relate to what he’s going through. I wanted to share my experience and hear his as well. And I want him to know that therapy helps.”

For a teen who once thought he had little to offer the world, James is surprising even himself these days. In addition to completing his high school coursework online, he volunteers his time at the King County Humane Society. “I used to think no one needed my help,” he says. “I was wrong!”

His therapy team at CTC in Tacoma is hoping to bring him on as a program volunteer after he turns 18. “James inspires us all,” says Molly. “He is a completely different kid than when he walked in the door for his first session. He has worked hard, and therapy has been an absolute life-changer for this teen and his family. We don’t want to let him go!”



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