

## **Dedication Statement**

**by**

**Meryl Teitelbaum Associate Director, Starting Early DDI**

I first want to welcome The Caballero and Brennan families and their guests, the Alexander Angel organization; especially Esther Gomez-Nieto and Michael O'Connell as well as the DDI staff here this afternoon to dedicate this very special garden.

I want to thank the Alexander organization for making this a dream come true. I have had the honor of participating in the planning and creation of this garden and for that I thank you.

As we dedicate this garden and celebrate the lives of Sienna and Shane I would like to share a few thoughts about my experiences with both of these families.

As a director I actually have a very easy job as well as the best job. The reason I say that is because I am typically the first person that families meet when touring our program, especially for enrollment in our specialized program for children with Down syndrome. And while I will always remember these amazing two children, there was one common thread that both Mr. and Mrs. Caballero and Mr. and Mrs. Brennan had that is not always present when your child has a disability and you begin school. Both sets of parents had the same single vision for each of their children, - that they would be treated like any other child and that they would be taught to achieve and learn at their highest potential. They were involved in all aspects of Sienna's and Shane's education, learning alongside their children.

So not only am I celebrating and dedicating this garden for Sienna and Shane, but I am celebrating their families as well. So to Sharon, Tony and Skye and to Sue, John and Cassidy, you will always be a part of our family now and forever.